

Art of Debate

Goal: To introduce an articulate way to express opposing ideas

Objective: By the end of this activity participants will be able to:

- Develop an opinion
- Come up with facts to support their opinion
- Articulate a coherent argument to others in a debate.

Time: 2 hours

Leader's notes –

1. Tell students they will learn about debating today.
2. Debating is when two or more people formally argue opposing thoughts on a topic.
3. Debating builds critical thinking skills because you have to...
 - Research a topic
 - Develop an opinion
 - Find facts to support your opinion
 - Anticipate or try to predict what the opposing team's argument may be
 - Create ways to discredit the other side's argument
 - Create ways to effectively support your position
4. Tell students they will participate in a debate during the next class.
5. Break students up into groups of 2.
6. Tell students that before debating, they will have to pick a topic from below.
 - School Year Round vs. School for Nine Months with Summer Off
 - Metal Detector in all Schools for Safety vs. No Metal Detectors
 - Students should be allowed to bring cell phones to school vs. Students should not be allowed to bring cell phones to school
 - Students should wear uniforms to school vs. Students should be able to wear whatever they want to school
 - Students should be given homework everyday vs. Students should not be given homework
7. Challenge students to argue a side they don't particularly agree with.
8. They will pick a side to argue and then do research.
9. Research can be done with books or the Internet.
10. Research must consist of the following...
 - Picking a topic
 - Developing an opinion
 - Find facts to support your opinion
 - Anticipate or try to predict what the other side's argument may be

- Research ways to discredit the other side's argument
- Research ways to effectively support your position

Leader's notes- Day 2

1. Tell students they will debate their topics for 15 minutes.
2. Have chairs set up on opposite sides of the classroom.
3. You can create a podium where students will speak.
4. Another option is to have students sit in chairs and debate from their seats.
5. Student will start the debate by stating their topic and point of view.
6. Students should take a total of 15 minutes to develop their point of view and argue their side.
6. Give each team a chance to make their point.
 - For example: Group 1 will argue their side
 - Then Group 2 will argue their side
 - Keeping going back and forth in this manner.
7. At the end of 15 minutes, have each team state their closing argument.
8. You can have the class decide who won (or you can delete this step)
9. After each debate, debrief by asking the following...
 - What were good points made by both sides?
 - Did everyone argue a side they agreed with?
 - How were you able to create an argument for a point of view you don't believe?
 - How did researching the topic help you?
 - Other observations?