



## DEBATE THE ISSUE

(Two class sessions of 45 minutes each, plus prep time by eight debating students)

### OBJECTIVE

Students debate a topic and communicate effectively with one another.

### MATERIALS

*Debate The Issue* handout; stopwatch; debate films

### GET READY

- ✓ Think ahead of time of eight students that would be good candidates to debate formally in front of the class.
- ✓ Make eight copies of the *Debate The Issue* handout, so that each of your debaters has one.
- ✓ Have a stopwatch nearby.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ On Day 1, generate debate topics with your class and have them vote for the topic they most want debated (could be directly related to the area/subject matter you are currently studying).
- ✓ Thoughtfully select two teams of four: a team for the issue (the affirmative team) and a team against the issue (the negative team). Explain to the students that just because they are selected to represent one side of the issue doesn't mean this reflects their true feelings. Tell them they are role playing and in order to effectively role play, they might be part of a side they would not usually support.
- ✓ Have the class watch excerpts of former debates, preferably presidential or vice-presidential debates. (Refer to the "Recommended Films" section of the Bibliography.)
- ✓ Give each of your debaters a *Debate The Issue* handout.
- ✓ Ask team members to choose parts. The least challenging is Opening Argument which may be

written ahead of time and simply read aloud; the hardest and longest is Question Session.

- ✓ Ask debate teams to prepare their ideas in two columns on a separate piece of paper: "Our Arguments" and "If They Say, We Say." (This way, students are ready to stand their ground when they hear opposing arguments.)
- ✓ Students may finish preparations as homework that night and reconvene with their groups before the debate the following day.
- ✓ On Day 2, hold the debate, keeping to time limits with use of a stopwatch.
- ✓ If time allows, end the debate with questions from the non-debating members of the class.
- ✓ After the debate, have the class list the most convincing arguments from each team. Keep track of these on the board.
- ✓ Have your class vote to determine who the winners of the debate are.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What is the purpose of holding a debate?*
- ★ *Which arguments were the most impressive? Why?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to separate the seriousness of the arguments being made by your classmates from their everyday personality and behavior?*
- ★ *How were people effective in presenting their point of view during the debate?*
- ★ *What were some important things you learned from this debate?*
- ★ *Are debates an effective way to get information about candidates and issues? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What can we learn from a debate that we can't learn in other ways?*



## DEBATE THE ISSUE

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Affirmative Team Members**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

### **Negative Team Members**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Sequence of the Debate** (follow the numbers for proper order of speakers):

<b>Affirmative Team</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Negative Team</b>	<b>Time</b>
1. Opening Statement	3 min.	2. Opening Statement	3 min.
3. Rebuttal Argument	3 min.	4. Rebuttal Argument	3 min.
5. Question Session	5 min.*	6. Question Session	5 min.*
7. Summary	3 min.	8. Summary	3 min.

\*Debater answers four questions, one from each member of the opposite team; if time, also answers questions from the floor.