

Debate your point of view - Perspective

EXPLANATION:

Debating is a great way to help students develop perspectives, points of view and on balance judgements as well as find their voice. Students will benefit from listening, speaking and critical thinking skills and justifying varying perspectives on a range of topical issues. Those students who are forced to argue against their natural point of view get opportunities to realise there are two sides to the coins!

YEAR LEVELS: Years 11–12

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group discussion – debate teams

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

Senior Secondary Curriculum: English

In Unit 4, students examine different interpretations and perspectives to develop further their knowledge and analysis of purpose and style. They challenge perspectives, values and attitudes in literary and non-literary texts, developing and testing their own interpretations through debate and argument. Through close study of individual texts, students explore relationships between content and structure, voice and perspective and the text and its context. This provides the opportunity for students to extend their experience of language and of texts and explore their ideas through their own reading and viewing.

Link to General Capability:

Ethical understanding: In *English* ethical understanding is explored through the selection of texts for study, for example, when students engage with ethical dilemmas presented in texts, considering reasons for actions and implications of decisions. They explore and question values, attitudes, perspectives and assumptions in texts, examining how they are presented, their impact on audiences and how they are reflected in their own responses. Through the study of *English* students come to appreciate and develop greater empathy for the rights and opinions of others. They develop increasingly advanced communication, research and presentation skills to express viewpoints.

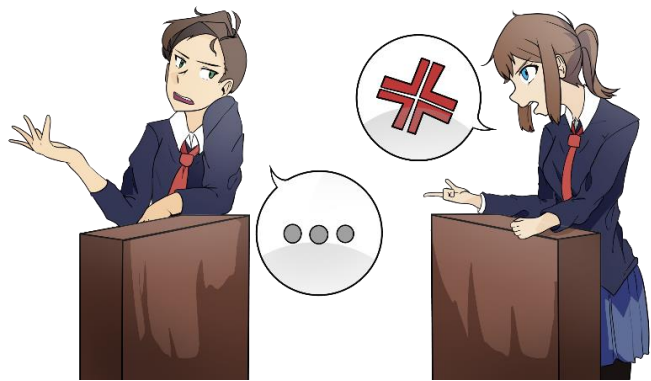
SCOPE OF TASK

1. Many but not all students have had the opportunity to participate in ‘Debating’. It may therefore be necessary to introduce the group to the concept of debating by either, the teacher outlining the process, or an experienced student debater being called upon to provide an outline. If you need more details about debating videos are available on YouTube. Conduct a 5 min internet search to discover information about debating.

2. Regroup and share findings – ask a student to scribe and list what the class has discovered about debates.
3. Perspective-taking is an essential skill for friendships, relationships and future work and university engagements. It is a social expectation that, as an adult, we will listen to and respect the opinions and experiences of other people. Before commencing this exercise, redefine terms such as ‘perspective’ to ensure that students share the understanding that perspective is an appreciation of how someone else sees the world. Additionally, cover the necessity to be able to work together, communicate effectively and show empathy to, and understanding of, other points of view.

Share the task with students – they are going to conduct a debate! When working with your class to choose a topic that challenges the students to consider different perspectives and to be cognitively flexible. Topics that might be of interest to Senior students include:

- Are violent video games appropriate entertainment for teenagers?
- Bullies should be prosecuted by the law
- All people should be vegetarians
- How essential is university education to getting a job?
- Do social media contribute to teenage suicide?
- Sexting is a normal way to communicate with friends
- Climate warming is a conspiracy theory.



Please note: Debate topics should be chosen in accordance with School Policy and should consider the needs and experiences of the students.

4. Students engage in a debate and explore the processes and questions.
5. Questions post-debate should require students to reflect on how they felt when considering the points of view of others and why this is a life skill. Very importantly, for those students who were required to argue against their natural point of view – how did they feel? Some conclusions might include highlighting:
 - The necessity to work effectively with others
 - The importance of communication
 - The ability to display empathy and understanding
 - The importance of building understanding in relationships.

Conclusion: When considering the perspectives and points of view of others, we help to grow our own feelings of empathy, awareness, problem-solving skills and relationships.

RESOURCES

- Computer and internet.