

Debate Away

Background information stakeholders:

- Teachers
 - Teachers are instrumental in the success of a school because they create environments and plan lessons for improving student performance and maintaining school attendance levels. To do this, they engage with parents and other stakeholders to formulate the best way to deal with each child. The school's success is crucial for teachers and support staff because their jobs and income depend on it.
- Support staff
 - Support staff includes cleaners, kitchen staff, transport, security and office staff. These employees contribute to the daily running of the school. They ensure the premises are clean and hygienic, the meals students receive are nutritious, transportation to extracurricular or off-campus activities is safe and the building is secure at all times. Support staff also includes other professionals, such as social workers and psychologists. They help schools to support children with special needs and help them progress. As teachers, the school's success is crucial for them for their job and income.
- School board
 - School boards mostly consist of community members that the community elects to oversee the facilities in their local area and ensure that they provide a quality education that meets educational standards. They have a financial responsibility regarding using taxpayer money and other resources sensibly. Board members are responsible for ensuring that their schools help students succeed. They may request that administrators develop and implement programmes to meet educational goals.
- Students and parents
 - Students are the reason for a school's existence, and are therefore the primary stakeholders, whereas parents pay for their children's education and are thus key stakeholders. Students rely on the system to provide them with good education and the skills to succeed in life as adults, and parents want this as well for their children.
- Education policymakers
 - Policymakers determine the laws and regulations governing schools and other educational institutions. They also allocate funds to enable schools to remain effective in preparing students for life after school. Policymakers often collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that schools accommodate the requirements of students, their parents, local businesses and the community.
- Local businesses/community
 - Both the business community as the local community could benefit from an educated community. Well-educated students are provided with the knowledge and skills to enter the workforce and to become civic-minded and self-confident to participate in the local community.

Rules for the debate:

- Each stakeholder group presents their point of view on the statement clearly with a clear agree or disagree, that is well substantiated in maximum of 3 sentences.
- If a speaker makes a statement, they must be able to provide evidence or reasons to support the statement.
- Facts presented in a debate must be accurate.
- The chairperson assigns who will be the speaker.
- Interrupting a speaker is forbidden.

How-To Guide (for teacher/trainers)

Preparation:

Be explicit about the sources or types of evidence you want students to use to support their claims:

- Possible sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, books and manuscripts, magazines and newspaper articles, websites, and interviews with experts on the topic.
- Tell students they should avoid or limit claims based on personal experience or opinion, and explain why these are considered less valid sources of information in a debate

During:

- Write the statement on the board
- Monitor time limits and debate structure
 - Opening statements: Introduction of stakeholder and position in debate (in agreement or disagreement with statement) and why.
 - Main arguments per stakeholder group
 - Cross-examination (teams can question each other)
 - Negotiation
 - *optional: Closing statement (sum up the arguments and explain what is achieved in the debate)*
- Monitor participants
 - Keep track of students' contributions and ensure that everyone participates.

After:

- Open up the debate for comments from all students
 - After the debate, you may want to let everyone discuss the debate, ask questions and give each other feedback.
- *Optional:* Have students vote to indicate which stakeholder group presented the most convincing argument. You can also ask the students if anyone's mind has been changed by the debate and what changed their thinking.



School statements:

- Online learning is as effective as traditional learning and should be implemented more in the school system.
- Standardized testing should be abolished.
- The school system needs to offer more physical education.
- The school system needs to offer more mental health services.
- Students should be allowed to grade their teachers.

