



DEBATES FOR CLASSROOM DECISIONS

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students debate with each other over issues relevant to the classroom.

MATERIALS

Anything that could aid in holding a classroom debate (mock podiums, etc.)

GET READY

- ✓ Find a tape of a debate, preferably a former Presidential or Vice-presidential debate. (Refer to the “Recommended Films” section of the Bibliography.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Show parts of the videotaped debate to the class.
- ✓ Discuss debate form and etiquette with your class.
- ✓ Hold debates in class concerning classroom decisions:
 - ✓ Center the debate around an issue that the students care about and will have divided opinions over: What should we play at recess today? Should we have math in the morning or afternoon tomorrow? Etc.
 - ✓ Identify students who want to represent and defend their point of view.
- ✓ Each student debater should present and defend their argument and be prepared to critique other students’ arguments.
- ✓ Following the debate, have your students vote and decide the issue.
- ✓ Implement the results of the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What is the purpose of holding a debate?*
- ★ *Are debates an effective way to get information about candidates and issues? Why or why not?*
- ★ *How were people effective in presenting their point of view during the debate? Why was this effective?*
- ★ *What can we learn from a debate that we can’t learn in other ways?*
- ★ *How else can we get information before making important decisions?*