

Title of Lesson Plan	Which sides are you on? A critical issue debate
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City and State	Winona, Minnesota
Grade Level(s)	High School (could be modified for Middle School)
Keywords (subjects covered)	Economics, politics, public speaking, science areas (forestry, hydrology, biology, geology, etc.), sustainability, social responsibility, etc.
Brief Description	Select a relevant broad topic to debate/defend various viewpoints (can be teacher decided or classroom generated). Partner students and have them randomly select a viewpoint. Students should research all relevant information pertaining to their view. Results can be presented in a debate forum.
Total Time Required	Approximately 8 days depending on class size, background information, depth of research into areas, debating skills, and research time given in class; requires pre-planning – arranging site visits
Setting	Classroom/field work/library
Lesson Objectives/Goals	Expand student awareness of complexity of most public issues; expand student awareness of local issues; develop student research, organization, writing, speaking, [technology use] and cooperation skills; allow students to experience defending a position different from their own personal view
Materials Needed	Local issue – contacts relevant to such for interviews/job shadows/site visits/survey participants etc. as appropriate for research; traditional research materials (library resources); supplemental specific information (brochures/pamphlets/videos etc. from involved parties); debate rules (or other class designated speaking/sharing forum guidelines); if possible – coordinate in conjunction with local city council meetings, public forums, etc.
Standards Addressed	Varies depending on issue selected (will affect main content area/s) and depth of project
Procedure	Pre-planning: Select a controversial/multi-perspective issue (example: expansion of a paper mill company to a location near a lake with a stream flowing into it) and have several viewpoints identified to stimulate discussion during brainstorming/analysis session (example: unemployed worker now able to get a job; pollution control worker; nearby resident; mill owner; competing paper company employee; lumber worker for company who supplies pulp to mill; wildlife biologist; hydrologist; recreationist on nearby stream that may have increased

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pollution (air, water, noise, aesthetic, etc.) with increased production; town mayor; resident not near plant – but taxes may be affected; school teacher in area; tourist who has regularly vacationed on lake near where new facility is to be located, etc.) Secure relevant specific research materials (see above – local contacts for site visits/interviews - example: current mill tour; job shadow with pollution control worker; proposed site location visit with hydrologist for water sample collection and analysis; resident surveys; brochures; films; historical documents related to issue, etc. - literature review and comparison to previous [historical] issues for area – interviewees: long-time residents, employees; obtain schedules for public meetings, etc. *If time and situation allow – have students do as much contact/set-up work as possible*

Session 1: Discussion of topic; generate viewpoints (or supply as needed – see above); establish present opinions from students & current information/misconceptions. Decide on an appropriate set of viewpoints and write-up brief outlines of details for ‘roles’ (or supply). Partner students and have them draw viewpoints (random drawing allows the possibility that students will select views entirely different from their own).

Sessions 2-5 (depending on class size, number of off-site visits, work done as ‘homework’, depth of research desired etc. this could be longer or shorter): Student research time – collect and organize background information related to their selected viewpoint (and others as appropriate) [may be best to actually have these work days spread out over longer period of time so students can coordinate off-site work/data gathering]

Session 6: Partner work to assemble/organize debate/speech/presentation [according to guidelines for your particular forum of sharing] – write paper or note-cards; power points/posters, etc. [may take longer depending on presentation requirements]

Sessions 7-8: Presentation time [may vary depending on class size and presentation forum guidelines] If possible – coordinate presentations to include other non-class

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Procedure con't	members (other classes/teachers on 'prep' time/non-classroom staff/community people/etc.) as audience to provide a mixed audience who has not necessarily done all the research into the issue– could have a 'vote' of sorts afterwards; have 'public' input/questions, etc. Depending on the issue chosen – pass results onto the actual responsible parties (mayor, company owner, etc.)
Assessment	Rubric Format/Checklist tailored to specific issue and based on depth of research expected (and level of students – high school or middle school). Checklists should cover discussion participation, research time (use of time, organization, conduct, material gained, etc.), writing/technical skills (from presentation requirements) and presentation format.
Literature Cited/References	NA/depends on local issue
Forestry Tour Attended	Escanaba, MI July 18-21, 2007

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