

FACEOFF DEBATE

LESSON PLAN





Goal: Students will develop critical thinking and communication skills through research, collaborative argument strategizing, and oral debate.

Lesson Overview: Students will take a position on a current controversial issue. In small groups, students will plan and prepare a set of arguments and hold a structured debate.

Notes to Teachers: Make sure all collaborative documents are accessible/editable. Create, assign, and label breakout rooms before the lesson begins. Explain how to manage screen sharing options while the host shares so students can reference preparation guides (e.g., during screen sharing, instruct students to click on the “View Options” menu and “Exit Full Screen” in order to view other documents while also viewing the host’s screen).

Short Procedural Overview:

- Have students pre-read a Controversial Issues in the News article (example: Medicare for All).
- Review the community guidelines for how to use the Zoom platform and maintain respectful engagement during a debate.
- Reflect on the Controversial Issues in the News article and take positions on the Central Question.
- Create a Yes Team, a No Team, and a Judges Panel based on responses to the Central Question.
- Have the opposing teams prepare arguments as the judges prepare for evaluation procedures.
- Debate!
- The judges announce the debate winners.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of arguments, both by the team and individuals.

Time and Space: 60 minutes; the lesson can also be split into two shorter sessions or extended:

- First Session: If students cannot pre-read the article, or if you want to re-read it/read it with them, you can include a period of silent reading time before the group reflects on the article and takes a position on the Central Question. The session would end after the debate teams and the Judges Panel are established and (depending on time) some initial argument development has taken place.
- Second Session: After a brief review of the previous session, resume with debate preparation and argument development.
- Extended Session: Give students additional time to conduct outside research in support of their arguments.

Materials:

[Controversial Issues in the News article \(example: Medicare for All\)](#)

[Faceoff Debate PowerPoint](#)

[Debate Procedures \(Attachment 1\)](#)

[Yes Team Preparation Guide \(Attachment 2\)](#)

[No Team Preparation Guide \(Attachment 3\)](#)

[Guide for Judges \(Attachment 4\)](#)

[Reflection](#)

Alignment with Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task. (Curiosity and Perspective Taking)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used. (Perspective Taking)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (Drawing Conclusions)

Alignment with C3 (College, Career, and Civic Life) Framework

D2.Civ.7.9-12. Apply civic virtues and democratic principles when working with others. (Fosters Constructive Climate)

D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses. (Content Mastery)

D4.2.9-12. Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical). (Drawing Conclusions)

D4.4.9-12. Critique the use of claims and evidence in arguments for credibility. (Perspective Taking)

D4.5.9-12. Critique the use of the reasoning, sequencing, and supporting details of explanations. (Innovative Thinking and Civic Communication)

Time	Procedures	Zoom Instructions and Materials
Before class	Send the Zoom link to all students. Send the Controversial Issues in the News resource. Log in before the class begins and have links prepared. Create/label breakout rooms before the lesson.	Screen share the PowerPoint; SLIDE 1
1-5 minutes	Quickly review the Zoom guidelines and ask students to complete the bellringer by sending you a private chat message that answers the question: 1) What was the last movie or television show you watched? 2) Have you ever had a classroom debate before? If so, what was the topic of debate?	Screen share the PowerPoint; SLIDE 2
5-7 minutes	Share a few ideas generated by student responses to the bellringer. Review the agenda. Run through the community guidelines.	Screen share the PowerPoint; SLIDE 2 SLIDE 3 SLIDE 4
7-12 minutes	Run through the facilitator guidelines. Introduce the Central Question. Prompt students to respond with yes, no, or raised hand. Have some people respond while breakouts are being formed. Collect responses and create breakout rooms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes Team, No Team, Judges Panel (with an uneven number on the Judges Panel) 	Screen share the PowerPoint; SLIDE 5 SLIDE 6 Manage the participants' chat Stop sharing Manage participants Breakout rooms
12-15 minutes	Explain the debate procedures (Attachment 1). Explain the debate preparation documents. Send students to breakout rooms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes Team, No Team, Judges Panel 	Screen share the PowerPoint; SLIDE 7 Send the debate preparation documents in the chat: Yes Team Preparation Guide (Attachment 2) No Team Preparation Guide (Attachment 3) Breakout rooms
15-25 minutes	Enter the Yes Team/No Team breakout rooms and facilitate when needed. Enter the Judges Panel breakout room and facilitate conversation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why they were undecided on the topic. • The importance of their role. • The qualities of a persuasive argument. • How to use the organizer. 	Screen sharing off Breakout room, Yes Team and No Team Breakout room, Judges Panel Post the Guide for Judges (Attachment 4) in the Judges Team chat

<p>25-45 minutes</p> <p>*If splitting the lesson into two sessions, break after debate preparation and restart at the debate.</p>	<p>Return to the whole group.</p> <p>Explain the timer.</p> <p>Debate!</p> <p>At 15 minutes (or a lull in debate), call last round.</p> <p>Re-sort students into breakout rooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes Team, No Team, Judges Panel <p>Allow two minutes for sides to reconvene.</p> <p>Re-share the timer.</p> <p>Allow for closing statements.</p>	<p>End breakout sessions</p> <p>Screen share the timer</p> <p>Manage screen sharing options – exit full screen</p> <p>Breakout rooms</p> <p>Breakout rooms: Yes Team, No Team, Judges Panel</p> <p>End breakout sessions</p> <p>Screen share the timer</p>
<p>45-50 minutes</p>	<p>The Judges Panel convenes to determine the winner.</p> <p>Explain the reflection form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete the reflection for two minutes on their own. • Students signify when done. <p>Facilitate conversation with the Judges Panel.</p> <p>Return to the whole group.</p> <p>Announce the winner.</p>	<p>Turn off screen sharing</p> <p>Breakout rooms: Judges Panel</p> <p>Post the reflection form in the chat: Faceoff Debate Reflection</p> <p>Turn off video, turn on video when complete</p> <p>Join the Judges Panel breakout room</p> <p>Leave the breakout room</p>
<p>50-55 minutes</p>	<p>Conduct a whole-group reflection.</p>	<p>Screen share the PowerPoint; SLIDE 8</p>