
Lesson Name: The Great Debates

Category: Canadian and World Politics

Course Code: CPW 4U1

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School: Markville Secondary School

Level: Grade 12

Time: 3-4 research periods, 5 periods of debates.

Rationale:

The Great Debates: The Great Debates is an exercise that directly addresses the Course Expectation “Methods of Political Inquiry”. At this stage of the course students have been versed in preliminary research techniques, various debate styles, and encouraged to have conviction in supported beliefs. The Great Debates brings students to the level that they debate issues with solid evidence to support everything they say.

Opportunities: The debates have been presented in various formats. The first time, in collaboration with the Instructor of HSB4M, we pitted class against class debating topics that worked for both classes. This was an excellent formula for intense debate. The second time we were unable to debate against another class, so we held the debates in the library and invited anyone with lunch/spare to watch the debates, and have an opportunity to speak their minds on various issues.

Expectations:

The Great Debates while focusing on Content Expectations, the key lies in addressing effective Methods of Political Inquiry

Overall Expectations

- correctly use social scientific methods to gather, organize, and synthesize information;
- develop supportable conclusions about political events, issues, and trends and their relationships to social, economic, and cultural systems;
- communicate knowledge, beliefs, and interpretations of politics and citizenship, using a variety of formats;
- use political knowledge, skills, and values to act as responsible citizens in a variety of contexts.

Specific Expectations**Researching, Recording, and Organizing Information**

- formulate meaningful questions that lead to a deeper understanding of a political issue and of the different ways to approach an issue;

- collect data from a range of media and sources (e.g., print or electronic media, interviews, government and community agencies);
- classify and clarify information by using timelines, organizers, mind maps, concept webs, maps, graphs, charts, and diagrams;

Analysing and Evaluating Information

- distinguish among opinions, facts, and arguments in sources;
 - describe some of the key methods of analysis used by political scientists;
 - draw conclusions based on an effective evaluation of sources, analysis of information, and awareness of diverse political interpretations.
- **Communicating Research Results**
present ideas, understandings, and arguments effectively in a variety of contexts (e.g., in role plays, interviews, simulations, debates, group presentations, seminars), using graphic organizers and displays (e.g., graphs, charts, images);
- use political terms accurately;
 - include correctly documented citations and bibliographies, demonstrate academic honesty, and avoid plagiarism.

Responsible Citizenship

- think creatively and analytically to develop potential resolutions to a series of given issues and issues that they select;
- work effectively both individually and in groups;
- demonstrate the ability to seek and respect the opinions of others;
- communicate and exercise their own political views and convictions in a responsible, democratic manner.

Instructions:

1. **Introduction:** Students are asked to look at handouts provided in the Course Pack. After thoroughly dissecting the instructions and evaluation criteria, students are given the opportunity to find a partner, topic and two people to debate against. To insure that students have a variety of experiences in the class they are told that they must choose to work with someone different than their partner for the IR Sim and the PSDs.
2. The instructor must then organize the resources for the students. We use the Taking Sides series of books. I will usually refer students to both the YES and NO articles of their debate issue, this is the first step that they must tackle prior to research. The Taking Sides books frame the issue. Depending on how many students you have you may choose to make the teams 2v2, 3v3 or even 4v4. The essential element is that all students understand that they must speak during the debate.

3. Students are given 3 periods to prepare for the Great Debates. If possible book time in the Resource Centre at the school, or ask students to prepare themselves with research. The internet is also useful for this assignment.
4. For the actual debates it is necessary to have a Moderator and Timer that understand the Debate format below.
5. **Debate Format** 1 Debate per period
Intro Yes: 2 Minutes
Intro No: 2 Minutes

1st Argument: Yes Side 5 Minutes
1st Rebuttal: No Side 3 Minutes

1st Argument: No Side 5 Minutes
1st Rebuttal: Yes Side 3 Minutes

2nd Argument: No Side 5 Minutes
2nd Rebuttal: Yes Side 3 Minutes

2nd Argument: Yes Side 5 Minutes
2nd Rebuttal: No Side 3 Minutes

Free for All: 10 Minutes

Closing: Yes 2 Minutes
Closing: No 2 Minutes

Question Period from Audience: 10 Minutes

Debriefing and Decision of Winner: 10 Minutes
6. **Activity Closure:** Each debate will be debriefed at the end, led by the instructor. I usually ask questions to analyze the debate: “What were the strongest arguments? Weakest Points? Turning Points? Best and Weakest Evidence? General Impressions?” This is also an opportunity to assess the accuracy of facts and relevance of arguments presented.

Upon the conclusion of all the debates, another short session can be held to debrief the assignment as a whole, and make connections to the formation of public policy and social and governmental debate.

Materials:

- ⇒ Taking Sides series of books (Political Issues, Moral Issues, Environmental Issues, etc... should be used. Also Taking Sides: World Politics edition can be used remembering that it will be the focus of the PSDs.)
- ⇒ Debate Days (Overhead, TV if required, Computer/LCD if required)
- ⇒ Course Pack
- ⇒ Research Period at Metro Reference Library
- ⇒ Great Debate Handouts
- ⇒ Textbooks: Allen Sens, Peter Stoett, Global Politics: Origins, Currents, Directions, 2nd Edition, Nelson – Thomson Learning, 2002. For more information go to the publishers website: <http://www.globalpolitics2e.nelson.com/>

Assessment & Evaluation:

1. The Great Debates is evaluated on the oral component during the debate according to the rubric provided for the activity. If there is any question about the validity of sources or materials, students may be required to submit or justify sources.
2. Assessment is constant throughout the research phase of the debates. Students should be assisted in developing their ideas from the moment they choose a topic. Due to the nature of the assignment, students will have opportunities to receive assistance during the development of the assignment.