

## LEARNING CARD

# Argue and Debate

**Description** Students will debate a topic chosen by them using an online site to better organise their arguments and thoughts.

**Tag**

- Media
- Social Media
- Web

**Skills**

**PRODUCTION**

- Create and modify written productions

**CONTENT MANAGEMENT**

- Search, select and download
- Manage content dissemination and sharing

**SOCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- Collaborate
- Coordinate and lead
- Participate in social media
- Teach

**NARRATIVE AND AESTHETIC**

- Compare
- Apply

**IDEOLOGY AND ETHICS**

- Evaluate and reflect
- Apply

**Card language**

- Spanish
- English

## Structure

**Sessions** 1 o 2 (Variable)

**Duration** 80' (may vary depending on the teacher's choices and/or the topic)

**Number of participants** 10-30

**Age**

- 14-16
- 17-18

**Materials**

- Minimum one computer or another electronic device that can surf the internet per group. Ideally one per student
- Website to hold and organise debates. Example: <http://www.tricider.com/>
- Optional: social network or other platform to send messages and use as backchannel.

## Process

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### Key questions

- What kind of skills and reasoning does a debate require?
  - How do we benefit from being able to consider different positions on a topic or issue?
  - What can make me change my perspective? Am I ready to listen to and accept an alternative line of reasoning? What format should a debate follow to be fair?
  - How can I verify my ideas? Do I have evidence for what I am stating? Where can I find it? How do I work with online sources?
  - How can I clarify my ideas? Where can I find help?
  - On what basis can I challenge ideas? How should I present my arguments?
  - What counter-arguments can I think of for my arguments?
  - Does the online platform help me get organised and plan my line of thought?
  - What strategies should I use to convey a clear message online in writing and speaking to an audience?
  - What style, register and tone are appropriate considering the purpose, the audience and the topic being discussed?
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## Development

The teacher elicits from the students interesting and polemic topics they would like to debate.

As a group, students vote and decide on the topic they want to debate and if necessary on a clear statement regarding that topic. **(10' to 15')**.

Two or three students are appointed as moderators.

The teacher divides the rest of the students into two groups. One group will be in favour and the other will be against the statement. **(5')**.

The basic rules for the organisation of the debate are explained and negotiated between the two sides.

The teacher highlights the importance of gathering information and evidence to support the student's point of view.

The teacher also recommends that each group should cross-check the facts they find in different sources of information online.

**OPTIONAL:** This can be an opportunity to work on the importance of quoting and referencing sources explicitly and appropriately. **(10' to 15')**.

Each team will have time to prepare their interventions.

In order to do so, each team gets organised using an online debate tool. This way they will be able to value different arguments, discuss them and organise them according to their relevance and importance. This will allow each team to plan their strategy and also to try and anticipate some of the arguments the other team may be considering.

**Suggestion:**

<http://www.tricider.com/>

**NOTE:** In this case the students do not use the platform to hold the debate asynchronously, but rather use it to organise their case and to anticipate possible counter-arguments the other team may present.

Therefore, the teams will join separate debate sessions.

The moderators also use this tool. They have to think of possible arguments for and against and think of interesting questions they can ask the teams in order to plan the debate session.

**(Duration: variable depending on the complexity of the topic and what the students know about it. The debate is expected to last around 30 minutes.)  
IF THE TEACHER DECIDES TO CONDUCT THIS ACTIVITY IN TWO SESSIONS THIS WILL BE THE END OF SESSION 1.**

The moderators let the debate begin. They formally introduce the topic and nominate students to speak, alternating between for and against.

The modality in which the interventions occur may vary depending on the rules the group has agreed on.

Typically, there is an opening statement from each side with a time limit.

Then each team has a set amount of time to respond to the opening statement. And after that the moderators can ask questions allowing one side to answer and then the other to reply.

During the debate both groups should keep their online debate page open and use it to update the arguments that arise and the possible connections between arguments.

New arguments can be added or highlighted.

**Suggestion:** The teacher may also want to encourage the use of a backchannel for each group to communicate without disturbing the flow of the debate.

This real-time online conversation could aid the group when they plan their following interventions, and social networks or other platforms could also be used for this.

Session 2 ends with a group reflection on the development of the activity in which all of its stages and facets are considered. Rule establishment, research, planning, debating, back-channelling, moderating... **(Duration variable depending on topic and agreed rules - 15' approximately)**

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## Evaluation

The teams assess their performance in terms of their attitude during the debate, as well as regarding organisation and collaboration both online and offline. They also assess the depth of the research they conducted and the relevance of the information they presented, the clarity with which they presented their arguments, their delivery in terms of register and form.

The moderators assess their performance in terms of how well they managed timing, questions and answers, the relevance of their interventions, their clarity, register and form.

It would be interesting that students assess themselves among themselves, that is, among different groups and with the moderator and later discuss with the teacher their opinions about this.

Ideally, the teacher and students design a rubric together for each of the categories mentioned above **before starting the debate**. It is suggested to use an online site to do so such as [www.rubistar.com](http://www.rubistar.com)

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**References for professors**

• Tricider: <http://www.tricider.com/>  
Rubistar: [www.rubistar.com](http://www.rubistar.com)

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