



Tag Team Debate

(ABOUT 40 MINUTES)

Leadership & Responsibility:

Leadership & Responsibility is about students feeling confident voicing their opinions and ideas. This activity encourages students to articulate opinions and listen respectfully to the opinions of others.

Objective:

Students will be able to articulate and voice their opinions while listening respectfully to the opinions of others.

Materials:

Devices with Popplet app for extended learning; six chairs.

Steps:

- What does it feel like to voice and defend an opinion? What is your overall opinion about school?
- Students should write down three controversial school issues that matter to students. This might include the dress code, homework policy, and discipline rules.
- Have the class resolve each of the issues into a statement—for example, “There should be a more relaxed dress code.” “There should be no homework.”
- Select one of the statements and randomly assign teams to make arguments either in favor of the statement (pro) or against it (con). Assign a third group as observers. Students need not actually agree with the position they are defending.
- Give students five to ten minutes to develop sound points in defense of the opinion their group must support. Have the observers anticipate the arguments others will make.
- Allow the pro and con groups to debate the issue by each putting forward their students to start the debate. Set up three chairs facing another three chairs. Other students on the team can have a seat at the debate table by tapping one of their classmates on the shoulder and taking their place. Only three students from each team can be debating at one time.

- After each debate, ask observers which side was more effective and why.
- Repeat with other topics. Rotate the groups so observers have a chance to debate.
- Make sure everyone gets a turn participating.

Personal Reflection:

- What was it like to argue for a position you do not agree with? What was it like to argue a position you do agree with?
- What did you learn from being an observer?
- Why do leaders need to consider both sides of an argument? Describe a situation when you considered both sides before making a decision.

Group Reflection:

What was difficult? What suggestions were most appealing? What would have helped the debate be stronger? Did anyone's viewpoint change? Why? Why not?

Extended Learning:

Invite students to research a controversial issue that you are interested in. Obtain evidence for both sides. Next, students should create a Popplet graphic organizer to display both sides of the argument.

Notes:
