



My Voice and Choice

Voice:

This activity encourages students to think about voice and their opinions.

Objective:

Students will be able to defend their opinion or preference through writing. Students will be able to evaluate whether they have a voice at school.

Materials:

You will need to create a list of pairs prior to the activity; tape; a survey tool for extended learning.

Steps:

- Prior to the activity, create twelve pairs of words. Examples can be chocolate or vanilla, two rival sports teams, winter or summer, beach or mountains, juice or milk, math or reading, indoor recess or outdoor recess, packing your lunch or cafeteria food, waking up early or staying up late, video games or playing outside, reading silently or reading aloud.
- Use the following writing prompt: What does it mean to voice your opinion? What is your opinion about school?
- Discuss with the class the importance of making choices that are meaningful to them. Ask: What decisions do you wish you had a choice in that you currently do not?
- Have all the students gather in the middle of the room. Mark off a line between the front of the room and the back of the room. You may use tape or another visible marking. Explain to students that they will be making a choice and for each pair of words they should move and stand by their preference. For example, "I will call out chocolate (point to front of room) or vanilla (point to back of room) and you will physically walk and go stand at the line to show which you prefer."
- For each pair of words, remember to point where to go for each option.
- After students choose their sides, regroup in the middle of the room, and allow some students to give reasons why they chose what they did. Generate conversation.
- Repeat this exercise until all the pairs of words are used.
- Discuss with your students how they made their choices and what influenced them.

Personal Reflection:

Select one of the choices that you made. Write a persuasive paragraph justifying your choice. Next, describe a time when you had a choice or voice in school.

Group Discussion:

- What influenced your choices in this activity? Did your peers influence you? Did you follow your friends?
- How did you express your opinions and voice in this activity? How do leaders share their ideas with others? How do leaders get the opinions of others?
- Leaders have their own opinions and do not always agree with the opinions of others. Did this happen during the activity? Does this happen in school? Has this happened in politics or current events?

Extended Learning:

Have a discussion about students having a voice at school. Ask: Do you think students at school are able to share what they think about school and their experiences being a student at your school? As a class, invent a student voice feedback system that will allow students to share their opinions about school using a technology tool of their choice. Research options can be Socrative, Edmodo, TodaysMeet.com, or Survey Monkey. What kinds of questions should be asked? As a class or in small groups, have students generate questions. How will we make sure students feel comfortable with using their voice? Who could use this tool? When? With permission from key players, pilot your student voice feedback system.

Notes
