

Using DISCUS to Argue

Michelle Chase, MLA, MLIS
Chester Senior High School

Scdiscus.org

- ▶ State supported database for students, educators, everyone.
- ▶ Smart search
- ▶ Search by grade level, by subject, or A to Z
- ▶ discuss2020
- ▶ learn1!
- ▶ Go to Opposing Viewpoints in Context database

Reading Tools

- ▶ Content Reading Levels
- ▶ 1 - Lower elementary
- ▶ 2 - Upper elementary
- ▶ 3 - Middle school
- ▶ 4 - High school
- ▶ 5 - High school and college
- ▶ Text to speech
- ▶ Larger fonts

Opposing Viewpoints in Context



- ▶ Pro and con viewpoint essays
- ▶ Articles, maps, charts
- ▶ Images, videos
- ▶ Targeted to social studies and science
- ▶ Lexile levels
- ▶ Covers “hot” social issues, everything from gun control to immigration, to marijuana
- ▶ Differing viewpoints - it gives you both sides of every topic
- ▶ Content is updated daily
- ▶ Google and Microsoft integration
- ▶ Download, print, share or email articles

Text Features

- ▶ Overview article
- ▶ Featured viewpoints are selected by the database's editors, will show both sides
- ▶ Key events
- ▶ Critical thinking questions
- ▶ Vocabulary
- ▶ Timelines
- ▶ Viewpoints are essays that have a commentary and questions to consider as you are reading the article (so 2 citations)
- ▶ Also have related resources

More features

- ▶ Text to speech
- ▶ Translation
- ▶ Enlarge text
- ▶ Citation: MLA is the default, can be changed to APA or Chicago
- ▶ Highlights (different colors for pro and con)
- ▶ Notes (for annotating)
- ▶ To save highlights and notes, send article to google drive or one drive, email the article, print or download it
- ▶ To get back to the article, use “Get Link” tool. Don’t use the URL in your browser.

Research Process

- ▶ Task Definition - what do you have to produce
- ▶ Information seeking strategies - determine all possible sources, select best sources
- ▶ Locate sources, find information within sources
- ▶ Use the information - read, extract relevant information, notes
- ▶ Synthesis - organize and present your information
- ▶ Evaluation - judge what you produced, compare it to your rubric

Handouts

- ▶ Judging information
- ▶ Concept webs
- ▶ Organizing a report
- ▶ Thesis statement
- ▶ Argument
- ▶ Conclusion

Fake News and Social Media

- ▶ Over 400 different featured issues in the database
- ▶ “misinformation” vs. “disinformation”
- ▶ Social media supports “echo chambers” - lack of balanced information
- ▶ Troll farm actors focus on divisive issues (like immigration) to divide the public into opposing sectors, to make the voting tendencies of each group easier to manipulate
- ▶ Influenced the 2012 Russian election, the 2016 US Presidential election, the 2018 US mid terms and will influence the 2020 US Presidential election
- ▶ Are sites publishers or platforms? Publishers are legally liable, platforms are not.
- ▶ MLA citations available.

