

The Great Debate - Pros and Cons of Nuclear power

SOL PS.5 abc, 7ab

Objective: The students will research nuclear power, form an opinion, and participate in a class discussion. Each student will say at least one fact they learned or theory they came across during their research, with at least 95% of students participating in the class discussion.

Day One (approximately 3-4 days prior to class discussion)- Notes 3b- Fission and Nuclear Power will be completed in class as lecture and part of their available notes during research time.

Day Two (1 day prior to class discussion)- Students will be given 30 minutes to do their own research on nuclear power. They will be allowed to use the internet as well as a set of books about nuclear power borrowed from the library.

Day Three (Class discussion Day!)- First, daily warm-up Journal question (5 minutes)

Students will be given basic discussion guidelines- speak clearly, with conviction but not emotion. No name-calling or insults will be tolerated. You can say “I disagree” but you cannot say “You’re wrong.” Everyone is expected to say at least one thing about what they found, and if it comes down to “they said what I was going to say” then that is okay, you can say it again. (5 minutes)

Students will then split into two groups - “for” and “against,” and then, depending on class/group size, students will split into smaller groups of 3-4. They will share their findings with each other and begin forming ideas of what they will share with the opposing point of view to get their point across. They will work together to create one concept/story/fact for each person to share from their combined research that supports their view during class discussion. They will be given 10-15 minutes to talk in small groups and work out what each is going to share during class discussion, practice, and ask me for pronunciation as well as any clarifying questions. (15-20 minutes for explanation and small group discussion.)

The Great Debate- Students will take turns on each side of the debate (pro or con), sharing the one fact/story that they agreed to share during the small group discussion. After everyone has shared their one fact/story, the floor is open to people sharing their opinions from each side, with a 2 minute limit (timer kept by teacher) for opinion sharing per person, again passing it back and forth between the two sides. Students are also encouraged to share what things came to their mind new and fresh that they hadn’t considered before due to the discussion. If there is time, students will be allowed to switch sides if they had a change of heart to see where the class opinions lie now. (30 minutes)

Day Four (Evaluation) - Students will answer survey questions in a google form about yesterday’s debate. How do they feel it went? Pros and cons of doing it that way? Did anything that other students said change your opinion or perspective? How do you feel about using this as a way to learn in general? (5-10 minutes)