**“CLASSROOM DEBATE”**

**Guidelines**

1. **DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY**

In a debate, students argue for and against a given topic without trying to find a solution. It’s an activity designed to help students reflect and learn about a given topic. The debate begins with a question or statement. There are two parties (‘teams’) who then defend different positions. The purpose is to develop communication skills, analytical thinking and respect. While doing so, students improve their knowledge on a specific topic.

The activity outlined below is designed for a 50 min lesson. The debating rules and approach may be used for different subjects as well: History, English, Ethics, Tutorials, etc.

1. **GENERAL RULES**

* All students have to contribute to the conversation using simple and clear arguments. Each argument must be presented by a different member of the group to ensure that most students participate.
* Students should focus on the question presented. They can’t change the subject.
* It is compulsory to listen carefully to classmates and respect their comments. Disqualifying and mocking is not allowed.
* Students learn to dialogue using clear arguments and evidence. Students who don’t follow the rules are removed from the debate and become part of the audience.

1. **DISTRIBUTING DIFFERENT ROLES**

**TEACHER’S ROLE**

The role of the teacher in the debate is to introduce the activity, to assign the different roles, to state the topic or question and to present an overview of the activity.

The teacher also writes the conclusions of each team on the blackboard to have a final general view of the topic and offers a final reflection about the activity.

**MODERATOR**

One student. He or she directs the debate, assigns turns to speak and ensures that the general rules are followed.

**BELL-PERSON**

One student who helps the moderator track time. The bell-person rings a bell when time is up so that each team is allocated the same amount of time to speak.

**OBSERVERS**

Two students. Each student observes only one of the teams and has a chart with the things he/she has to observe and note down. They tick the level of achievement of each item. After the debate, they present their conclusions.

If the group is very large, there could be two observers for each team.

**TEAMS**

There are two teams: one for the proposition and a second one for the opposition. The maximum of students in each team is 10-12, depending on the number of students in the class. If the group is any larger, it is advisable to subdivide the teams to prepare their arguments so that all of them participate.

Students present their arguments, ask and answer questions and draw conclusions.

1. **SELECTING THE TOPIC**

Proposed questions and topics are listed below, or in the PPT on the Homo’poly website.

1. **AFTER THE DEBATE**

After the debate, students review and evaluate. The observers present their conclusions and the teacher closes the activity.

*SUGGESTION: Students could be asked to write an essay based on what has been debated.*

1. **TIMINGS**

Suggested timings are described in detail in the lesson plan (printable materials).

1. **ANOTHER OPTION: HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR RESEARCH**

For this activity, you will need two teaching hours:

* One for research: in this case students are taken to the computers room with the topic of the debate and the “for and against teams selected”. They do research on the topic during a class to prepare their arguments beforehand.
* Another one to focus on the debate itself as described before.