

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE



TOWN HALL MEETING

OVERVIEW

This activity can be used as a non-adversarial way to encourage students to explore multiple perspectives and challenging viewpoints.

It also serves as a good introduction to using the consideration of stakeholders' interests to generate ideas for a more formal debate or policy discussion.

TASK

Divide the students into 5 or 6 groups. Each group represents a group of people. Give students a motion. E.g. "Banning cars from city centres", where the groups might be shoppers, drivers, children, visitors to the area, local business owners, etc.

Ask each group to consider what their response to this policy might be, and give them some time to generate a short presentation to the group (2-5 minutes).

During this stage students should be encouraged to notice that not all shoppers, drivers etc. will have the same response to an issue! A compromise will be needed even within this group.

After the presentations, divide the students into groups with a mixture of roles (one shopper, driver etc. in each group). Each group should discuss the presentations that they heard, and try to reach a decision about whether the town should pass the motion "banning cars from the city centre".

Tip:

Alternatively, groups can be given a problem, e.g. "congestion in the city centre", and asked to develop their own responses. They can then be invited to try to form alliances with other interest groups, and negotiate joint policies to defend before a final policy is voted on.



OBJECTIVES

- To think about an issue from multiple perspectives
- To explore and balance different interests to reach a conclusion



RESOURCES

Topics and relevant stakeholders for the town hall meeting, e.g.

"Banning cars from city centres"
shoppers, drivers, children, visitors, local business owners

"Knocking down a library to build a football stadium"
librarians, students, parents, footballers etc.

