

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE



WHERE DO YOU STAND

OVERVIEW

This game is a good way of introducing debate to a subject area students have been studying.

It is also a good way to show students how a debate (with two sides) differs from a discussion (multiple perspectives).

TASK

Create some space in the classroom. Assign one side of the space as the 'Agree' side, and the other side as the 'Disagree' side. Call out a topic, and ask the students who agree to go to the 'Agree' side, and the students who disagree to go to the 'Disagree' side. Students who are unsure can remain in the middle.

Once students have chosen a side, ask a student on the 'Agree' side to provide a reason why they chose that side. Then ask a student on the 'Disagree' side to respond to that reason. Then repeat the process asking a student on the 'Disagree' side to provide a reason why they chose that side, and ask a student on the 'Agree' side to respond to that person. Repeat for as many new ideas as the students have.

After several reasons have been provided, allow students to move between the positions (from 'Agree' to 'Disagree', 'Neutral' to 'Agree' etc.) if they have changed their minds. Ask the students who move which argument convinced them to change position.

Tip: For more advanced groups, allow students to stand closer to the neutral line if they, for example, only 'slightly (dis)agree', reserving the far side of the room for 'strongly (dis)agree'. Let students adjust the strength of their position throughout the exercise.



OBJECTIVES

- To familiarise students with the process of coming up with justifications for their position.
- To help students come up with responses.



RESOURCES

A list of topics, e.g.
Cats are better than dogs
We should require people to pass a simple current affairs test before they are allowed to vote
We should allow the use of performance-enhancing drugs in professional sport

