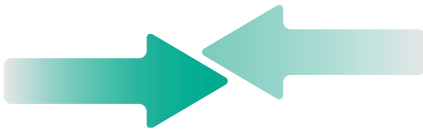


THE GREAT DEBATE



PROJECT GUIDE

Develop students' critical thinking and communication skills. Use this plan to help students analyze the debate around key issues within *Research In Context*.

Research In Context is available to students 24/7, and delivers trusted premium sources related to current events, language arts, science, social studies, and more.

GRADE LEVEL: 6-8

RELEVANT SUBJECTS: Social Studies, English

RESOURCE: *Research In Context*

TIME FRAME: 2-4 classes

MATERIALS:

Argument Analysis

- Access to computers or tablets and *Research In Context*
- Worksheet: Analyze Arguments (Print or download pages 4-5 of this packet)

Full Debate Extension

- Access to computers or tablets and *Research In Context*
- Worksheet: Prepare Your Argument (Print or download pages 6-7 of this packet)
- Handout: Follow the Argument (Print or download page 8 of this packet)

PROJECT PROCEDURES:

Day 1

Introduce Assignment

- Begin by reviewing the basics of debate and argumentation. Consider facilitating a discussion about how students make up their minds on major issues. What sources of information are most helpful to them? Why? What techniques do they use to discuss the issue or persuade others? What strengthens or weakens someone's arguments? Have they changed their mind on any major issues, and if so, why?
- Explain that students will be exploring topics in *Research In Context*, and will analyze arguments made about those topics.

Research and Analyze

- Review helpful features within *Research In Context* with your class. Use free tutorials and tools available at <https://support.gale.com/training/products/msic>, or ask your librarian or media specialist for help covering search options as well as features like **Citation Tools** and **Highlights and Notes**.

- Pass out or provide digital access to the “Analyze Arguments” worksheet. Choose one of the following topics for the class to analyze:
 - **Animal Testing**
 - **Death Penalty**
 - **Euthanasia**
 - **Homework**
 - **School Uniforms and Dress Codes**
 - **Year-Round Schooling**
- Help students access *Research In Context*, and search or use **Browse Topics** to find the topic page you selected. Have students click **Read More** to view the full topic overview. Give students time to read the overview and fill in the “Understand the Background” portion of the “Analyze Arguments” worksheet.
- After giving students time to work individually, discuss interesting facts and sides taken on the issue as a class.
- Break the class into groups of three. Assign half of the groups one side of the issue to research, and have the other half research the other side. Give groups time to find at least one source that presents their assigned side linked on the topic page in *Research In Context*. Groups should analyze and cite their sources using the “Analyze Side One” or “Analyze Side Two” portion of the “Analyze Arguments” worksheet.

Day 2

- After giving each group time to analyze their assigned side, pair them with a group representing the other side. Have these paired groups discuss the sources they found, and their analysis of the arguments presented by those sources. Groups should work together to ensure both the “Analyze Side One” and “Analyze Side Two” portions of their worksheets are completed. If desired, have these paired groups create a shared PowerPoint, Google Slides, or other visual to represent their analysis.
- Bring the full class back together. Have each set of groups present their sources and analysis.
- After all presentations, give students time to complete the “Take a Stance” portion of the “Analyze Arguments” worksheet. Collect the finished worksheets.
- Finish with a class discussion. You might ask:
 - What were the most effective arguments? What made them so persuasive?
 - What reduced the strength of an argument?
 - Did you change your mind on the topic? Why or why not?
 - How did your personal opinions impact your perception of the strength of the arguments?

EXTENSION OPTIONS (DAYS 3-4)

Additional Analysis

- Ask students to select one of the remaining topics within *Research In Context*:
 - **Animal Testing**
 - **Death Penalty**
 - **Euthanasia**
 - **Homework**
 - **School Uniforms and Dress Codes**
 - **Year-Round Schooling**
- Have students research their chosen issue within *Research In Context*. Ask students to compile their analysis of the arguments on both sides and take a stance on the issue in an essay, PowerPoint, or other format of your choice.
- After students hand in their project, you could go around the room topic by topic, and give each side of each topic one minute to make their best collective argument to the class. Then have the class vote about which side made the most compelling argument.

Full Debate

- Break students into groups of six. Assign each group one of the remaining topics within *Research In Context*.
 - **Animal Testing**
 - **Death Penalty**
 - **Euthanasia (has controversy section that talks about aspects of debate)**
 - **Homework**
 - **School Uniforms and Dress Codes**
 - **Year-Round Schooling**
 - Break each group into two sides of three students, and assign each a different side of the topic for the purpose of the debate. Provide a space within the classroom for each group of three, and ask students to move into their groups for the remainder of the project.
 - Explain the format of the debate (see below for full details).
 - Pass out or digitally distribute the “Prepare Your Argument” worksheet. Have each group use the worksheet as a guide to explore their topic within *Research In Context*, compose their arguments, and anticipate the opposing side’s points. When they have completed their worksheets, each group should plan an introduction and conclusion, and decide who will present each of their arguments. You may also choose to require each side to create a slide presentation or other visual to present their introduction, major points, and bibliography of sources.
 - On the day of each debate, while the two sides set up in front of the rest of the class, remind students of the need to participate in a respectful manner. Pass out or digitally distribute copies of the “Follow the Argument” handout to students who will be listening to the debate. Explain that the handout will be collected and reviewed at the end of the debate.
 - Introduce each debate’s topic briefly to the class, and then ask each side to present their opening statements, arguments, rebuttals, and closing comments as follows (tweak timing as desired):
 - Opening statements (2 minutes per side)
 - Three Arguments and Rebuttals
 - Side 1 Argument (2 minutes)
 - Side 2 Rebuttal of Side 1 Argument (1 minute); if desired, you may have students viewing the debate participate in the rebuttal
 - Side 2 Argument (2 minutes)
 - Side 1 Rebuttal of Side 2 Argument (1 minute); if desired, you may have students viewing the debate participate in the rebuttal
 - Closing (2 minutes per side)
 - Following each debate, allow the students who viewed the debate a minute or two to finish compiling their thoughts on the “Follow the Argument” handout.
 - Discuss the debate as a class while asking the next debate group to set up, or have a full discussion after all debates have been completed. Collect and review “Follow the Argument” handouts.
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ANALYZE ARGUMENTS

NAME

CLASS

DATE

Research In Context delivers credible facts and current insight into political and social issues, as well as topics in science, social studies, language arts, and more. Use this worksheet to research arguments about topics within *Research In Context*.

UNDERSTAND THE BACKGROUND

First, locate trusted background information on your issue. **Search *Research In Context* or click Browse Topics.** Read the topic page overview and note interesting facts you find. You may also explore and cite reference articles.

Interesting Facts

What are two of the main sides taken on this issue?

ANALYZE SIDE ONE

Next, read arguments within *Research In Context*. **Explore magazines, news,** and more. Outline the strongest arguments and evidence presented by one side.

Arguments

Supporting Evidence and Citations

What weaknesses do these arguments have? What questions do you have?

ANALYZE SIDE TWO

Now, list the strongest arguments and evidence presented by the other side.

Arguments	Supporting Evidence and Citations

What weaknesses do these arguments have? What questions do you have?

TAKE A STANCE

After completing your research in *Research In Context*, use the space below to explain your opinion on the topic. Cite specific sources to support your belief.

PREPARE YOUR ARGUMENT

NAME

CLASS

DATE

UNDERSTAND YOUR TOPIC

First, locate trusted background information on your issue. **Search *Research In Context* or click Browse Topics.** Focus on topic page overviews and reference articles.

Interesting Facts

Citations

What side will you take during the debate?

SUPPORT YOUR STANCE

Next, explore *Research In Context*. **Read magazines, news,** and more. Outline your arguments, and the evidence you will use to support your points.

Argument

Supporting Evidence and Citation

Argument

Supporting Evidence and Citation

Argument

Supporting Evidence and Citation

PLAN YOUR DEFENSE

Now, **research your opposition within *Research In Context***. List the strongest arguments you believe the other side could make. Find evidence and brainstorm how you will respond.

Opposition Argument	Rebuttal and Evidence/Citation
Opposition Argument	Rebuttal and Evidence/Citation
Opposition Argument	Rebuttal and Evidence/Citation

REFINE YOUR REASONING

Use the space below to tweak your original arguments and record additional notes after completing your research in *Research In Context*.

FOLLOW THE ARGUMENT

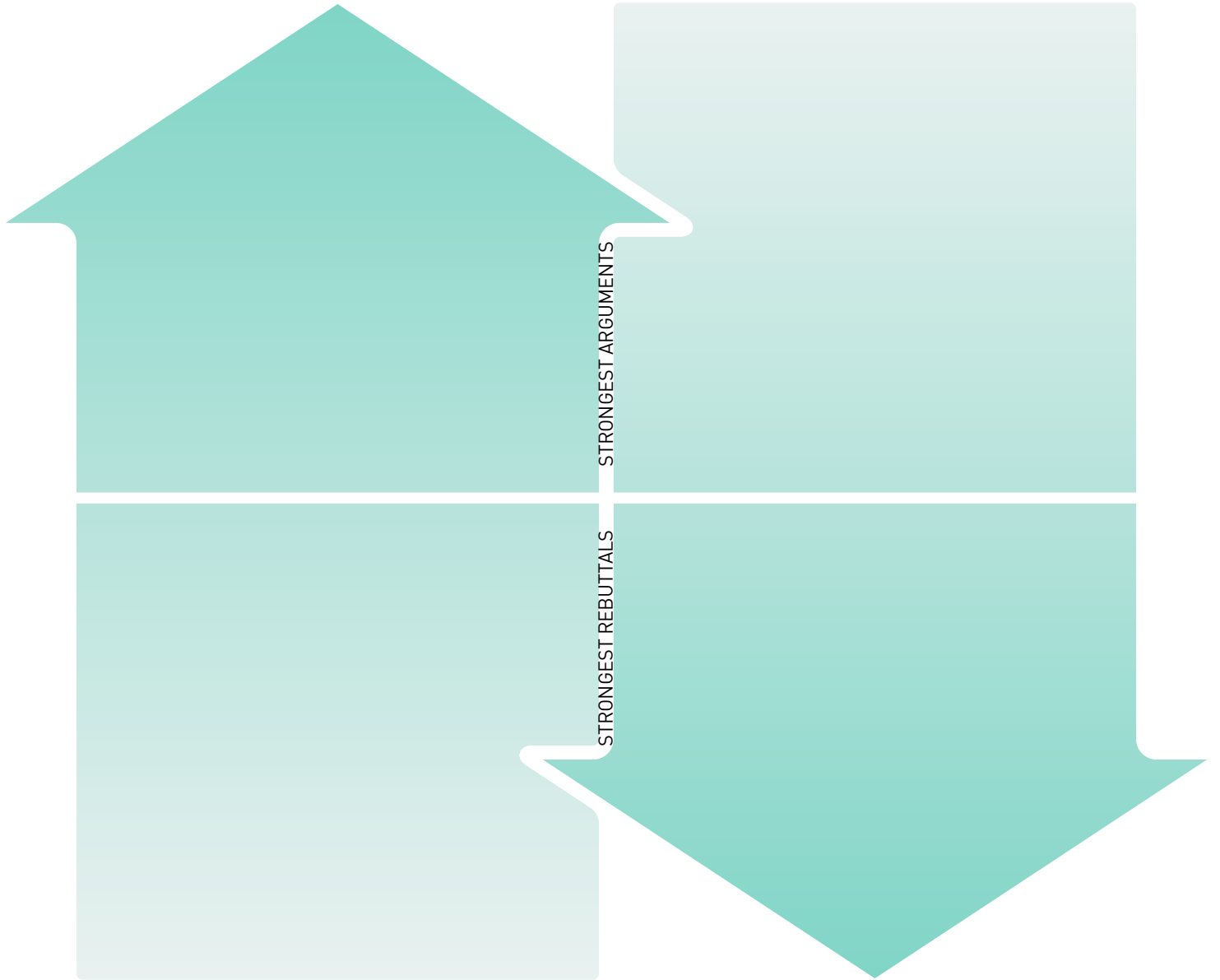
NAME _____

CLASS _____

DATE _____

TOPIC OF DEBATE: _____

SIDE 1: _____ SIDE 2: _____



WHICH SIDE DO YOU THINK WON? WHY?