

GALE LESSON PLAN

Pro-Con Debates with Gale In Context: Elementary

GRADE LEVEL: 4-5

SUBJECT/CONTENT: Current Events

FOCUS QUESTIONS: How can you argue respectfully? What are some strategies to get others to understand your opinion?

RESOURCE: *Gale In Context: Elementary*

LEARNING EXPECTATION: Students will be able to effectively research and argue an opinion on a chosen current issue.

Materials Needed: Computers with access to *Gale In Context: Elementary*.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

Students will work in pairs (or small groups) to argue a topic of their choice utilizing the information they found within *Gale In Context: Elementary*. They will present their arguments to the class in an informal debate format. As students present, viewers will be asked to think critically about the arguments and to pick the side they agree with the most.

PROCEDURES:

Steps/Activities for the Teacher:

- Provide students with computers and ensure they can sign into *Gale In Context: Elementary*.
- Review how to use the platform, including basic search and browse strategies, topic pages, as well as the tools available (for training tutorials visit support.gale.com/training/videos).
 - Walk through the **Highlights and Notes** feature so students are prepared to use the tool for their research.
- Have students choose pairs, or assign them pairs (or small groups).
- Distribute a list of potential topics (found later in this lesson), and have each pair choose one.
- Designate which student will be pro, and which will be con.
- Allow students time to research, and supply them with a debate graphic organizer like this: <https://support.gale.com/doc/organize-argue>.
- Provide time for debate presentations, and facilitate each pair's debate.
- Hand out the Debate Presentation Audience Assignment for students as they listen to each debate.

Steps/Activities for the Students:

- Students will select a topic of interest.
- Students will take time to research their topic utilizing *Gale In Context: Elementary*.
- Students will develop an argument and prepare to debate with their partner.
- Students will run a mini-debate against their partner for the class.
- While other students present their debate, students will complete the Debate Presentation Audience Assignment.
- Students will complete their assignments by completing a one page argument write up utilizing the **Citations** tool within *Gale In Context: Elementary* to cite their sources.

Pro-Con Debates with Gale In Context: Elementary

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS:

In this project you are going to work in pairs to research a current event topic. The catch is, you will be arguing different sides! This is called a pro-con argument and is used to discuss different opinions about a topic.

To do your research you are going to use the online resource *Gale In Context: Elementary* to find information to support your argument. You'll be able to find news and magazine articles, videos, images, and even statistics to help you prove your point. To help you remember important facts and information from your research you can use **Highlights and Notes**, and even save the information for later.

Each step of the project is listed below. At the end of the project you will debate your point in front of the class, and write a paper about the research you completed.

CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC

Once you have your partner, choose a topic from the list below to research or find your own. All topics have to be approved.

- School Uniforms
- Cell Phones in Class
- Homework
- Field Trips
- Climate Change
- Cats vs. Dogs
- Social Media

CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH

- Start by running a Search for you topic. Look at the results of your search, what results support your view of your topic?
- Use Highlights and Notes to highlight important parts of articles that you want to use in your argument.
- Save any articles or images you use to your Drive so you can look at them later.
- Keep searching for different ideas that are related to your topic.
- Your goal is to find as much evidence as possible to prove that your opinion is correct. You're trying to convince your classmates!

Pro-Con Debates with Gale In Context: Elementary

WRITE YOUR PAPER

- Use the outline provided to frame your paper.
- Make sure you explain what your topic is, as well as what your opinion is.
- Be sure to include all the research you found to make your argument stronger.
- Finish your paper with a work cited page, where you are going to cite all the sources you used.

PRESENT YOUR ARGUMENT

- Make sure you remember the points of your argument. You can write them on a flash card, but be sure to speak to your audience.
- First you and your partner will give the background about your topic and why there are different opinions about it.
- Pro arguments will go first. That person will provide their argument and evidence.
- Con arguments will go second, and will present their argument.
- Pro will have a chance to respond to con, and then back to pro.
- Note: this is a respectful debate, so you cannot speak when it isn't your turn.

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

- As your classmates are presenting their debates, complete the Debate Presentation Audience Assignment.
- You will fill out the information for each debate, and choose whichever side you agree with more.

PRO-CON DEBATE PAPER FORMAT

INTRODUCTION

Introduce your topic in an interesting way, include the key ideas you're going to use in your argument.

Thesis Statement: A one sentence description of your argument found at the end of your introduction.

BACKGROUND PARAGRAPH

Information to help the reader understand your topic. This is where you will include your basic research about the topic, not your argument. Think of this as teaching readers the facts before you argue your opinion.

ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH ONE

Explain your first argument. Make sure you include the research you found to back up your claim.

ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH TWO

Explain your second argument. Make sure you include the research you found to back up your claim.

ARGUMENT PARAGRAPH THREE

Explain your third argument. Make sure you include the research you found to back up your claim.

CONCLUSION

Restate your thesis statement, and summarize the main points of your paper. Provide any additional insight you have into your topic.

PRO-CON DEBATE AUDIENCE ASSIGNMENT

TOPIC:

PRO DEBATER:

CON DEBATER:

PRO ARGUMENTS:

CON ARGUMENTS:

YOUR OPINION:

TOPIC:

PRO DEBATER:

CON DEBATER:

PRO ARGUMENTS:

CON ARGUMENTS:

YOUR OPINION:

GALE LESSON PLAN

Pro-Con Debates with Gale In Context: Elementary

Element	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points
Research Paper Completion	Did not submit a research paper.	Submitted an incomplete research paper, or did not follow the format.	Submitted a complete research paper that followed the format.
Research Paper Grammar	Many grammatical and/or spelling errors that made the paper difficult to read.	Some grammatical and/or spelling errors.	No or very few grammatical and/or spelling errors.
Presentation	Did not complete a presentation.	Presented their information, but was missing key elements of the topic description or their argument.	Presented their information, and created a clear picture of their topic and their argument.
Audience Participation	Did not complete the audience assignment.	Partially completed the audience assignment.	Completed the full audience assignment for all presentations.
Total: /40			

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LESSON MODIFICATIONS

Increased Collaboration:

- Separate students into small groups.
- Assign each group a topic and either pro or con argument.
- Each group will work together to build their argument and debate as a team.

Simplified Activity:

- Have students complete their research individually.
- Choose between either having a debate, or writing a persuasive paper.

Extended Activity:

- In addition to the activities listed above, have students create brochures to hand out to the class.
- Each brochure should be a guide to their topic and their opinion.