

Teacher Instructions

Earth Day Activity: Environmental Debate

Either in class or for homework, assign students to research a policy (passed or proposed) in their state senate or city council that addresses a current environmental issue in their community. Then, have students debate the (anticipated) effectiveness of the policy.

What You Need:

- Access to a library or other resource sources
- Some “starter” information on an environmental policy for students

What to Do:

1. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group to argue for the policy and the other to argue against it.
2. Allow each of the two groups debating to brainstorm their positions and their counterarguments for 20–30 minutes. Let the students decide on two team representatives who will go before the class to speak.
3. The debate will last for five rounds. During each round, each team speaks for 90 seconds to state their claim. Allow 60 seconds for counterarguments. Each round should focus on a different piece of supporting evidence to defend their position.
4. Decide which side put together the more persuasive argument. The more convincing group gets five bonus points on the next quiz or test.