



# Meat or Potatoes?

## Introduction

### Objective:

Student will learn the art of debating a controversial issue.

Student will prepare for debate by gathering information to examine both sides of the issue.

Student will create an argument to support their point of view.

### Academic Content Standards:

- ❖ National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association Standards for English Language Arts: #4
  - *Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.*
- ❖ National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association Standards for English Language Arts: #12.
  - *Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion and the exchange of information).*
- ❖ Ohio Academic Content Standards for Language Arts #9 Research Standard
  - *Students define and investigate self-selected or assigned issues, topics and problems.*
  - *Students locate, select and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference and technological sources.*
  - *Students use an appropriate form to communicate their findings.*
    - *Benchmarks: A, B, C, and D (4<sup>th</sup> Grade)*
    - *Benchmarks: A, B, C, D, and E (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grades)*
- ❖ Ohio Academic Content Standards for Language Arts #10 Communication – Oral and Visual
  - *Students learn to deliver presentations that effectively convey information and persuade or entertain audiences. Proficient speakers control language and deliberately choose vocabulary to clarify their points and adjust their presentations according to audience and purpose. (Communication is used in all content areas and should be incorporated within the instruction and assessment of the content-specific standards and benchmarks.*
    - *Benchmarks: A, B, C, D, E, and F (4<sup>th</sup> Grade)*
    - *Benchmarks: A, B, C, D, E, and F (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grades)*

## Getting Started

### Materials:

- Handout A
- Handout B
- Handout C
- Handout D

### Vocabulary:

- Debate
- Issue
- Objective
- Opinion
- Subjective
- Vegan
- Vegetarian

### Technology:

Internet access.

Web Links

<http://www.peta-online.org> (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals)

<http://www.animalrights.net/> (A web site aimed at *debunking the animal rights movement*)

Ask students to take notes about each web site in terms of:

- What persuasive techniques are used to get others to join their cause?
- What rationale is given for the chosen position or argument?
- Is sensationalism a factor?
- Define vocabulary words.
- Discuss student findings.

## **Lesson**

### Orientation Activity:

After introduction to the story and play, *Charlotte's Web*, ask students to vote whether or not the pig, Wilbur, should be slaughtered for food? This is a hot topic today for many people. Give students five minutes to write a paragraph that explains their individual opinion about the topic. Next, ask students to use the Internet to log on to the two websites that give opposing opinions about the animal rights issues.

### Learning Activity:

Explain to students that in posing the question about Wilbur, a debate will ensue. Some students will feel that there is no problem with killing Wilbur, where others will feel strongly that Wilbur should be saved.

Explain that there is a process and procedure for debate preparation. There is much thinking to be done before you begin talking. The first step is to gather information. On the board or overhead, illustrate with *Handout A*, and have students list as much objective information about the animal rights issue as possible, including any information about the laws surrounding the issue, as well as any other organized groups and their literature. Next, on *Handout B*, have students list reasons for feeling one way or the other about the issue. The third step is to have students clearly state their opinion about the issue and list ideas for defending their position in the debate. Read the rules of the debate on *Handout C*.

## **Evaluation and Follow-Up**

### Assessment Tools and Methods:

Select representatives for both sides of the issue to debate. Explain to students that they will have ten minutes (time varies) to present their argument and evidence and one minute at the end for a one-sentence closing statement. Review *Handout D* for ideas on how to use intelligent language during the debate. Representatives can confer with their group members during the debate. Non-speaking group members cannot talk. A small neutral body of students will sit between the debaters in a separate section. At the end of the ten minutes this group will have the opportunity to ask either side one question. After the debate, take a silent vote on the issue and read the final results. Explain that debates are often used in elections, in the media, and in Congress to decide upon new laws to be passed.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Language Arts: Have students write a persuasive speech about the issue of their choice.

Social Studies: Examine the importance of personal and civic rights and responsibilities.

- ❖ *Ohio Academic Content Standards for Social Studies: Citizenship Right and Responsibilities*
  - *Students learn to deliver presentations that effectively convey information and persuade or entertain audiences. Proficient speakers control language and deliberately choose vocabulary to clarify their points and adjust their presentations according to audience and purpose. (Communication is used in all content areas and should be incorporated within the instruction and assessment of the content-specific standards and benchmarks.*
    - *Benchmarks: B (4<sup>t</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grades)*

# Handout A

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Gathering Information

Issue \_\_\_\_\_

What do I know about the issue already?

What are the facts surrounding the issue?

Where could I gather more information about the issue if I needed to learn more?

# Handout B

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Both Sides of the Issue

Directions: On the spaces below, defend both sides of the issue.

For	Against

My opinion on this issue is...

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## Handout C



# Rules for the Debate

### Before the debate:

1. Be true to your opinion.
2. Debaters must have pre-debate paperwork complete to participate.
3. Listen to the moderator's instructions.

### During the debate:

1. Only the chosen representative from each group is allowed to talk.
2. Group members may talk to their speaker to help give them ideas for their argument.
3. No put downs.
4. No yelling.
5. Wait your turn.
6. Listen to the moderator's directions.
7. Abide by time limits.
8. Speakers cannot leave their area during the debate.
9. If rules are not followed, you cannot participate in the debate.



## Handout D

# Ideas for Phrases to Use During the Debate

I agree but...

I disagree because...

You have brought up a good point, but...

My point is...

I'd like to add...

I don't understand...

Could you elaborate more on...

Excuse me...

My opinion is...

When weighing the options, I think...