ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

LESSON PLAN: DEBATING HUMAN RIGHTS

Debating is a great way to immerse students into current affairs. Students take an active part in a discussion and need to react to each other's thoughts. Seeing these discussions is a great way for a teacher to get an idea of the abilities of students in how they articulate themselves.

They also provide a great opportunity for peer-to-peer feedback and immediate feedback from you as their teacher.

The following games help structure conversations about human rights. The first game is best suitable for Key Stage 3 and 4.

The second game is suitable for all Key Stages.

At the end, we provide 4 simple viewpoints to enable you as a teacher to provide immediate feedback.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

The Citizenship Curriculum sets understanding human rights and international law as a target for Key Stage 4. Besides meeting targets, human rights are in the news on a daily basis.

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

GAME 1: WHERE DO YOU STAND?

	Group size: 2-30
	Classroom set up: some empty space with a line in the middle
	Time: 30-45 mins (dependent on group size)

This game helps students develop a more in-depth understanding of the practical side of basic human rights, and the challenges surrounding how we implement them.

Students will need some prior knowledge here. To take an active role in this exercise students need to know about the existence of human rights, and be able to name a few themselves. Please take a look at our TOP TIPS section for further reading and research.

Below you will see a number of human rights, and a scale below them. These are helpful examples for the exercise. Pick any of the following human rights, and draw a big line on the board. On one end of the scale ask your students to suggest a very minimalistic way of implementing that human right. On the very other end of the scale, ask your students to come up with a very extreme understanding of fulfilling that human right.

TOP TIPS

Other human rights you can use:

- Right to a fair trial
- Right to Freedom of the press
- Right to internet access
- Right to freedom of assembly

More information on Human Rights:

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights brought human rights into the realm of international law. The full document can be found here: http://bit.ly/1Q1DCSi

For more information about the UK Human Rights Act and to see the full list of all protected rights visit: http://bit.ly/HRAEN

For example:

Right to education:

Basic reading and writing — All-paid for education at Oxford for all

Now, ask your students to reflect on the following: is their interpretation of the human right minimal or extreme? If neither, where would they position themselves on the scale? Give them some time to reflect or make notes about their own thoughts.

Divide the classroom with a line in the middle which represents the middle of the scale. Identify the points of the two outer extremes. Ask students to stand along the scale which they think is a reasonable interpretation of this human right.

Ask students to list the reasons for why they stand where they stand. Ask everyone to list at least one reason. After that, ask whether anyone might have reviewed their position and wishes to move a step further down the line.

ESU
TEACHING
RESOURCE

Make it harder:

Ask students to respond to each other and try to convince people to come to their position on the scale.
Ask a few brave volunteers to defend the two extremes. This ensures a full discussion all over the scale.

Here are some more examples to facilitate discussion:

Right to free speech

Everyone can say what they want

Everything must be approved by the state.

Right to housing

Tin roof over your head.

A beautiful villa in Hollywood.

Right to health care

Basic surgery when very ill.

Free healthcare for mental, physical and cosmetic issues.

Right to freedom of religion

Anyone can start their own religion and preach to everyone else about it

Full funding for classes, buildings and proliferation of the religion, including having own jurisdiction.

This scale will work with almost all rights, and in every case will increase the insight and understanding of your students.

ESU
TEACHING
RESOURCE

GAME 2: STRANDED!

	Group size: 5-30
	Classroom set up: no specific set up required
	Time: 45 minutes

Imagine you are all on a cruise trip, but a big tropical storm makes the ship sink. Miraculously, you all manage to swim to a nearby island, and survive this terrible ordeal. When you reach the shore, you see that the island is really beautiful. There's fresh water, lots of fruit, waving palm trees – just like in a magazine! As far as you can see, there are no other islands, so there's no chance you will leave this island anytime soon. In order to make life bearable you will have to come up with some rules that will govern the island. In the evening you all gather around a crackling camp fire to discuss these rules. Only rules that you will all agree on will be implemented. Each of you will propose at least one rule, and we will debate whether we should adopt it, or reject it.

When discussing this, teachers can prompt discussion by asking students questions like:

- How do we distribute the resources on the island?
- Who should contribute to the production of resources on the island?
- Should there be any other activities on the island other than survival? What should we do, and who should be responsible for making sure these things happen?
- Who gets to decide when there is a conflict on the island between the inhabitants

A discussion about each rule should last around 5 minutes, depending on levels of engagement. If it is unclear whether the rules passes, ask for a vote.

Four viewpoints for immediate assessment and feedback

Reasoning and Evidence: Does the student back up what they say with an example of a piece of evidence? If not, encourage them to always ask themselves 'why' after each statement, to be followed with a 'because'.

Expression and Delivery: Does the student engage the whole group when they speak or do they mainly talk with one or two people they already know? Encourage them to make contact with everyone in their groups to add to their persuasiveness.

Organisation and Prioritisation: Does the student deliver their best arguments first, or are the best ideas muddled somewhere in between other points? Encourage the student to put their best ideas forward at the start, so everyone has enough time to process them.

Listening and Response: Does the student engage with interesting points made by others, or do they react to all their points all the time, or only to points that aren't key to the topic at hand? Encourage them to listen critically and engage with issues that are relevant, and not with all points, or with mainly ones that are tangential to the topic at hand.