

Target

Today's target is...

Student-Led Discussion

The teacher or a student presents a statement for the class to consider

All students spend a few minutes writing their ideas about the statement and decide which position they'll take (agree, disagree, undecided).

Before beginning the activity, review the Rules of Engagement for Philosophical Chairs and the Participant Reflective Checklist for Philosophical Chairs with students.

To begin the activity, designate one side of the room as the "agree" side and the other as the "disagree" side. Optionally, set up seats in a U shape with undecided at the bottom of the U.

Starting with the "agree" side, alternate between the two sides as students debate the merit of the statement. The debate should move in an orderly, structured manner, back and forth between the two sides.

Encourage students to switch sides should they change their minds about the prompt.

Debrief as a class and/or have students complete a written reflection on both the process and the content of the activity.

Step by Step

The purpose of this issue is to provide a strategy and resources for engaging students in inquiry-based discussions that hone speaking, listening, and argumentation skills.

The Why

Today's discussion format is...

Philosophical Chairs

Format



Set Up

4

"Pesticides should be outlawed for food crops."

"The United States should withdraw from the United Nations."

"Social media does more harm than good."

Prompts

[Overview: Philosophical Chairs](#) (intro/how-to for teachers)

[Philosophical Chairs in Action](#) (YouTube video)

Alternative Formats: [Speed Formation](#) & [Jury Style](#)

Content Specific: [Math](#), [Science](#), [History](#), [English](#)

Resources

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