

Lesson title: Global Regions Debates

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Summary: In these debates, students are put into groups and given a particular position to defend concerning a regional issue (such as whether African countries should rely on their domestic markets or integrate into the global economy). The student groups research the topic, prepare written opening statements and lists of questions to ask the opposition, then meet to debate in front of the class.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to critically analyze academic texts, international news, maps, histories, and their own received ideologies and received wisdom for assumptions, political and cultural points of view, and stated and unstated biases.
2. Students will understand how to use historical background, geographical context, political systems, economic structures, and socio-cultural milieu to better understand regional and global developments.
3. Students develop core liberal arts skills: reading unfamiliar information and making sense of it; thinking critically about what they're reading; synthesizing material; coming to a conclusion about it; and articulating that conclusion verbally and in writing.
4. Students should gain an awareness of international diversity and learn to think about what the world, or specific issues, might look like from other points of view.

Learning Outcomes:

- Students research on an international studies issue.
- Students choose a position and defend it.
- Students learn to engage an audience.
- Students learn to think on their feet (critical thinking in an unrehearsed setting).

Materials Required:

- Sign-up sheets (one for each student) to choose the global region they would be interested in researching (example below).
- Handouts assigning students to a group, an issue, and a position on that issue, along with the breakdown of the debate's formal structure (example below).

Lesson Activities:

1. Introduce assignment to students. Explain purpose, schedule of debates, etc.
2. Pass out sign-up sheets for students to select a world region and its issue to research. Explain that you will be assigning them to a group and a position to defend later, but that they need to fill these out and turn them in to you, first.
3. Assign students to groups, issues and positions.
 - A. Divide class size by number of regions covered to determine size of debate group pairs. (For example: class size is 40 students, five regions

will be covered, so 8 students should be involved in each debate—4 to each position, pro and con.)

- B. Create handouts for students so that they know what they are to research, and who their group members will be. Alternatively, post these lists to online course management system (such as Blackboard).
4. Optional: consider showing students a clip from a popular film or a non-fictional debate from some news source that models good debate etiquette and strategy.
 5. Optional: create a handout modeling a successful opening statement and list of questions for one position of a mock debate topic. Give to students, discuss.
 6. Optional: consider creating an assessment rubric to show students how you will be evaluating their group debate performance.
 7. Announce to students when you want their opening statements and question lists: one week before the debate? 72 hours before?
 8. The day of the debate: ask for a student to volunteer to moderate, which will include keeping track of time spent in each stage. (The volunteer will need a timepiece with a second hand. She or he will also need a copy of the required time limits.) Explain that she or he is in charge of making sure that the groups do not go over their allotted time, no matter what.
 9. When the debate is finished: allow the audience—the rest of the class—to discuss the salient points of the debate, to ask the debate teams questions, etc.
 10. Ask the class audience to decide who won the debate by a show of hands.
 11. Optional: consider giving extra credit to the team that won in their peers' eyes.
 12. Optional: consider requiring student groups to collaboratively write up some element of their research to turn in.

Assessment:

Teamwork is a difficult thing to manage and assess (who did the work, who did not, etc.) Consider adding an aspect of peer evaluation into your assessment: asking students to report back in writing about who contributed and who didn't, due after the debate.

Comments:

Some faculty build debates into the course as a standard component, repeated regularly during the semester. If the International Studies course you're teaching follows the textbook's division into regional and disciplinary units, one student debate can follow each regional unit, allowing students the chance to interact with and expand some of the topics raised in their reading and class discussions.

Instructors who have implemented these debates into their classes have found that the assignment succeeds due to the element of competition inherent in debate format: the students' peers are watching them and evaluating their performances—not just their instructor.

One of the greatest challenges of the lesson is keeping students to the time allotted for each round of speaking. Whether the instructor chooses to be or to appoint an arbiter from the class, this person needs to be strict about keeping students to their time limits. (This can feel rude when you have to cut students off while they're talking, and also may feel antithetical to an instructor's goal of getting students engaged with course material when you have to shut down the conversation at some point.) One way to disengage

personalities from the need to keep debates on schedule is to use a timer with an audible beeper.

Another consideration that might be beneficial would be to teach students to decide on a line of argument as a team, finding ways to back that argument consistently.

Debate Sign-up Sheet:

International Studies
Debate Preference Form

Name: _____

You have 10 choices for debate teams. Place a “1”, “2”, and “3” on the appropriate line for your first, second, and third choice for debate teams. I will place students on teams as I receive the forms. The earlier I receive your completed form, the more likely it is that you will receive your first or second choice. The last day to turn in a form is _____. If I do not receive a form from you by this date, I will assume you have no preference, and I will select a team for you.

DEBATE ISSUE	YES	NO
1. Is environmental conservation compatible with Asian economic development?	_____	_____
2. Is it possible to create a viable Palestinian state in the Middle East?	_____	_____
3. Is multi-party democracy taking hold in Sub-Saharan Africa?	_____	_____
4. Should the European Union adopt a constitution?	_____	_____
5. Has economic globalization been a positive trend in Latin America?	_____	_____

Handout Assigning Students to Region/Issue/Position:

DEBATE IV:

Group I. African countries should rely on their domestic and regional markets instead of integrating into the global economy

[**Place students' names here.**]

Group II. African countries should integrate into the global economy

[**Place students' names here.**]

Debate Structure

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Introductory remarks (I) | 5 minutes |
| 2. Cross-examination (II) | 2 |
| 3. Introductory remarks (II) | 5 |
| 4. Cross-examination (I) | 2 |
| 5. Second round of arguments (I) | 5 |
| 6. Cross-examination (II) | 2 |
| 7. Second round of arguments (II) | 5 |
| 8. Cross-examination (I) | 2 |
| 9. Q&A from the audience | 12-15 |
| I1 | |
| I2 | |
| II1 | |
| II2 | |
| 10. Concluding remarks (I) | 3 |
| 11. Concluding remarks (II) | 3 |

Due date for opening statements/list of questions: _____

Date of debate: _____