

Class Level: 6	Topic: Debates	Class Length: 3 hrs.	Date:
<b>Lesson Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language to express opinion and doubt</li> <li>• Practice engaging in polite disagreements</li> <li>• Participate in a simple debate about current issues</li> </ul>			
Language Skill Proficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Speaking</li> <li>▪ Listening</li> <li>▪ Reading</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> </ul>		Materials and Equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blank slips of paper (3 per S)</li> <li>▪ 4 Standard-Sized Pieces of Paper</li> <li>▪ <i>Functional Language</i></li> </ul>	
<h2>Activity Plan</h2> <p><b>Warm Up:</b> Provide each S with three blank slips of paper. Have each S write the name of a different object on each slip of paper (ex. The sun, teachers, shoes). Collect the slips of paper. Have Ss get into groups of 2-3 Ss (make sure there is an even number of groups). Have one S from each group draw a slip of paper from the pile. Write the question on the board: <i>What is the greatest gift to humanity?</i> Ask each group to tell you the name of the object they chose. As each group tells you their object, write it on the board randomly pinning two objects (groups) against one another (ex. Shoes vs. Pencils). Give Ss 3-4 minutes to prepare their arguments (why their object is a more important gift to humanity than the object they've been paired up against). Then give each pair of groups 3 minutes to debate with one another as to which object has been more important. Following each debate, have the listeners vote which group won the debate. NOTE: At this point, don't provide a means for judging the winning group of each debate.</p> <p><b>Introduction:</b> Ask Ss how they judged which group was more successful during a debate. Explain to Ss that today's lesson will focus on debates (Def. Arguments about a subject, especially in a formal manner.). In doing so, the class will focus on what makes a good debate: arguments, emphasis and language.</p> <p><b>Presentation:</b> Write the three terms on the board: <i>arguments</i>, <i>emphasis</i> and <i>language</i>. Go over the meanings of the terms ("arguments" means the quality of the arguments used by each team, irrespective of the listener's opinions about who is right; "emphasis" means use of pauses, inflection, stress, and so on, in order to convince the listener; and, "language" means the quality of the English used in the debate – is the vocabulary good? Is it appropriate?, etc.). Provide Ss with <i>Functional Language</i>. Go over as a class.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b> Have each corner in the class be labeled with a different sign: <i>Strongly Agree</i>, <i>Agree</i>, <i>Disagree</i> and <i>Strongly Disagree</i>. Read a discussion statement for the Ss (ex. Limiting gun ownership could prevent mass shootings.). Have Ss consider their opinion about the issue and relocate themselves around the room based on their opinion (ex. Ss who strongly agree should go to the corner labeled "Strongly Agree"). After Ss relocate, give Ss 5 minutes to brainstorm their supporting arguments with their group . Then have four groups debate the topic for 5-10 minutes using their prepared arguments to guide the discussion. Encourage the groups to use the language in the Functional Language handout. Stress that all speakers opinions are to be respected and that a different S can interrupt once a speaker has completed his/her sentence. Continue this exercise for several rounds as time allows. NOTE: Consider having scrap paper at each of the four stations for groups to use during brainstorms.</p> <p>Other ideas for discussion statements: <i>Government surveillance (access to email, phone records and/or cameras in public places) is necessary</i>; <i>Globalization will ultimately make borders unnecessary</i>; <i>Large vehicles (trucks and SUVs) should be charged an extra tax for additional gas omissions</i>; <i>GMO-food should be labeled</i>; and, <i>Women should be allowed to fight in combat</i>. For additional ideas, see <a href="http://www.usnews.com/debate-club/recent-topics">http://www.usnews.com/debate-club/recent-topics</a>.</p> <p><b>Practice:</b> Read an unused discussion statement to the class and have them again relocate to the corner that supports their opinion on the issue. Choose several Ss representing those in favor of and against the statement (ex. 3-4 Ss per side, for/and against). Have the two groups face one another in the center of the room. Explain that they are going to debate the statement supporting the opposite opinion (ex. the Ss agreeing with the statement will debate against it and vice versa). Give the two groups 5 minutes to</p>			

debate the statement in front of the class. Have the listening Ss adjudicate and decide which group has won the debate (and why). Remind listening Ss to be looking for strong arguments, emphasis and vocabulary. Repeat exercise as time allows.

**Evaluation:** Practice activity outcomes.

**Extension Activities:**

- Assign the Ss the task of bringing in statements based on current news either by reading the newspaper or watching the news. Have Ss share the statements as a class and create additional debate topics.
- Have Ss create and present dialogues in pairs demonstrating two people disagreeing about a controversial topic.
- Have Ss write a paragraph expressing their opinion about one of the statements (or both a pro-paragraph and a con-paragraph).

Acknowledgements: Adapted from [Keep Talking](#) by Friederike Klippel and [www.efl-resource.com](http://www.efl-resource.com). For more activities related to debates, go to <http://efl-resource.com/staging-class-debates/>.

### ***Functional language***

#### **Asking for opinions**

What are your views on... ?  
What's your opinion about/of... ?  
What do you think about...?  
How do you feel about...?  
Do you think...?  
What are your feelings on...?  
Do you have any particular views on...?  
Have you got any comments on...?

#### **Giving opinions**

I'm (quite) sure that...  
From a (*political*) point of view...  
In my opinion, ...  
I think...  
If I were... , I'd...  
Don't you think it would be good to...?  
In my experience, ...  
For me, ...  
From my point of view...

#### **Politely interrupting**

If I could just interrupt for a moment...  
Sorry to interrupt, but...  
If I could just come in here, ...  
Um... um... um...  
(raise hand and eyebrows, look at the speaker)

#### **Agreeing**

Yes, definitely.  
Yes, I agree completely.  
I agree (absolutely).  
I'd go along with that.  
Yes, you have a point there.  
On the whole, I agree.  
Exactly!  
I couldn't agree more!

#### **Disagreeing**

Yes, but on the other hand...  
I can't accept that.  
I'm afraid I disagree (completely).  
I'm afraid I can't agree.  
Sorry, but I don't agree.  
I don't agree at all.  
I'm afraid that's not how I see it.  
Well, that's as may be, but...  
I take your point, but...

#### **Expressing doubts**

I agree up to a point, but...  
You could be right, but...  
Maybe, but...  
Well, possibly, but...  
Well, my understanding is that...  
But don't you think that...?  
I'm not so sure about that.  
I agree to an extent, but...  
I don't know whether I'd entirely agree.