**Method:** Pro and Against Debate

**Material:**

Internet or a library for research, a long table to sit around for the debate, chairs for the viewers[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Age group:**

10-adult

**Aim:**

* Practice to form and express opinions.
* Listen to each other.
* Investigate how you can influence others.
* Become active participators in a democratic society.

**How to:**

1. Introduce a subject to debate.
2. The students gather information about the subject.
3. Ask the students about their opinion on the subject. Make notes.
4. Divide the students into two groups. Your personal opinion is not what is important here, but to express an opinion. Half of the students in the class should be pro and half should be against.
5. Research the subject and gather useful information in the groups. Come up with your group’s opinion. Think of yourselves as a political party.
6. Choose a spokesperson.
7. The teacher picks a leader of the debate. It can be a student or a teacher.
8. The leader of the debate introduces the two groups, welcomes the audience and gives an introduction to the subject.
9. The two spokespersons give an introductory speech for 1-3 minutes.
10. Open debate for about 15 minutes.
11. After the debate, the leader asks the audience for their opinions and impressions of the debate.
12. Ask the students again about their opinion. Compare notes. Is it the same or has the result changed? If so, ask them why.

**Example:**

1. The teacher asks the students what they think of if they hear “smoking”. The teacher steers the conversation to smoking in public places.[[2]](#footnote-3)
2. The students are told to gather information about the subject.
3. The teacher asks the students what they think and makes notes about the result. The teacher writes “Ban smoking in public places” on the board and asks the students to vote “Pro” or “Against”.[[3]](#footnote-4)
4. The class is divided into one pro-group and one against-group.
5. Both groups gather information about current regulations in different countries, health effects and government intervention.
6. Both groups pick a spokesperson.
7. A debate leader is chosen by the teacher.
8. The debate leader tells the class a little bit about what the situation is like today and describes a scene where they are all having ice cream on a square in the warm sun and somebody lights a cigarette.
9. The spokesperson for the pro-group tells the audience about how smoking causes negative health effects not only on the user but also on the environment. The against-group emphasizes people's right do decide over their own life.
10. The debate takes off! The spokespersons take turns. The leader decides whose turn it is to speak and for how long.
11. The leader asks the audience for their feedback.
12. The teacher asks the students again what they think and the class reflect on how the result has/has not changed.

1. If you want the students to use a digital tool to increase the chance of them being active participators the students need a mobile phone, computer or tablet. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. A word cloud be created together using for example: [https://www.mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [https://www.mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com/) could be used to let the students give their opinion if you write the statement and give them the option of answering “Pro” or “Against”. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)