



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Debate

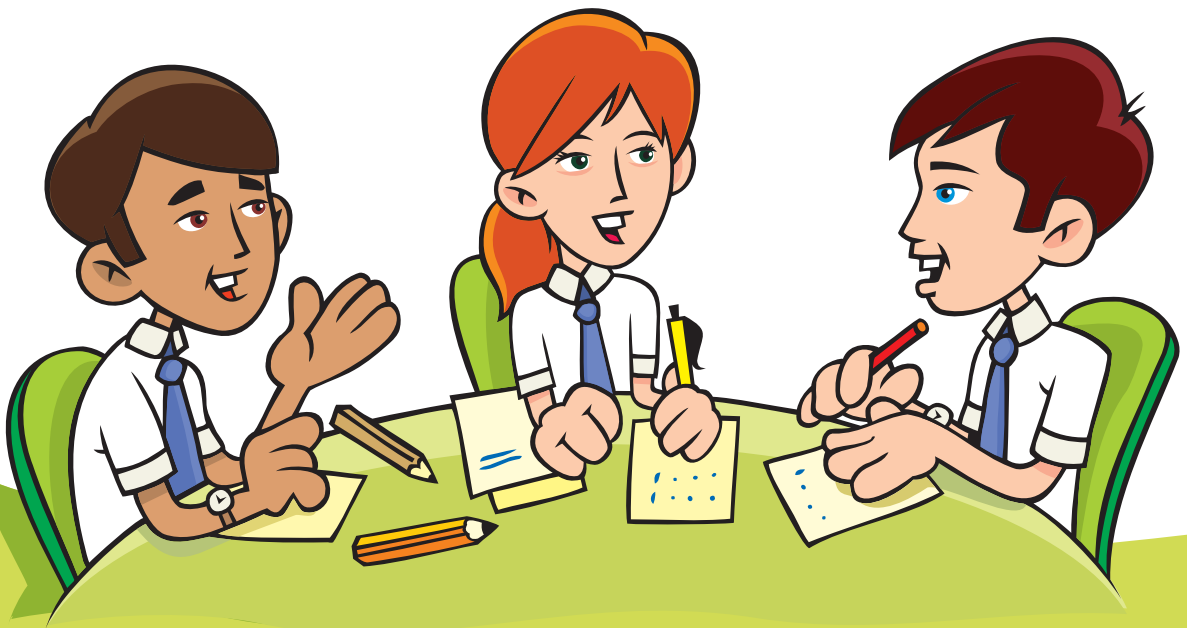
Curriculum Guide:

Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education,
Language, Literacy, Expressive Arts

Teaching Levels: 1, 2, 3 and 4 (P4 - S4)

Citizenship Themes:

Political Awareness, Peace Education



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INTRODUCTION

This activity is designed to mirror as closely as possible a debate in the Scottish Parliament. It allows the teacher scope to use it to discuss school/local/national issues and to decide whether the research part of the activity is extensive or limited. There is also room for some role playing, although it is perhaps advisable that the teacher takes on the role of senior clerk during the debate.

The debate may be used as a 'stand alone' activity or can be linked to **Petitions** or **Committees**

Preparation

You will need:

- Lesson Plan
- A Request to Speak card and set of three voting cards for every pupil
- A Duties sheet for every pupil
- The Presiding Officer wording sheet
- For and Against worksheet x number of groups

If your school has a voting system which links to a whiteboard, you could use it in this activity to control who would like to speak, and the voting at the end of the debate, as this is how it is carried out in the Scottish Parliament.

Before the Debate decide on a suitable motion (topic for debate). Some suggested motions are:

- This Parliament believes cars should be banned from city centres
- This Parliament believes that smoking should be made illegal
- This Parliament believes that the Scottish Government should ban all exclusions from schools
- This Parliament believes that school tuck shops should only sell healthy snacks
- This Parliament believes that anyone under 16 years of age should be indoors by 9:00pm every night

For older classes, a current issue might be used instead

You might also like to consider the areas over which the Scottish Parliament can legislate. These are called Devolved Matters. A list of the devolved matters can be found in the **Who, Why, What?** section.

The teacher will need to familiarise the class with new vocabulary that will be used in the debate e.g. Presiding Officer, motion, abstain, etc. See **Wordbank** (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/education/resources/teachingResources/wordBank.htm>) for a full list of terms and meanings.





LESSON PLAN

T Give out the Duties sheet to everyone to read. Go through the duties everyone could take on so they understand the roles and can choose which they would like to do. Elect or choose two or three clerks to help you run the debate.

Cl Clerks write motion of debate on board.

T Divide class up into 3 or 4 groups. They don't have to be the same size – political parties in Parliament don't have the same number of MSPs. Each group should discuss and vote on a name for the group.

Cl Clerks hand out For and Against worksheet to each group.

Wc Groups should select a scribe and then discuss and provide arguments for and against the motion.

T Teacher allocates sides to each group – either for or against, so there is a split in opinion.

Wc Groups finalise argument and choose a spokesperson who will speak first in the debate.

Cl Clerks arrange seats in a horseshoe shape.

Wc Whole group elects a Presiding Officer.

KEY: **T** Teacher **Wc** Whole Class
Cl Clerk **Po** Presiding Officer





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LESSON PLAN (CONTINUED)

T Emphasise that the role of the Presiding Officer is to be fair and control the debate and that the Presiding Officer will give up membership of the group and not be allowed to give their views in the debate.

Po Presiding Officer takes up seat at front of horseshoe. Clerks sit beside them. Teacher (Senior Clerk) might also want to sit beside the Presiding Officer to guide them through the debate.

Cl Clerks distribute the Request to Speak card and voting cards to each member of the groups. Clerks could help to set up an electronic voting system if that is being used.

Po Presiding Officer chooses spokesperson from each group to start the debate. After all the spokespeople have been heard, the Presiding Officer opens up the debate to the rest of the group.

Wc If someone would like to speak they should raise their Request to Speak cards. Only people who are called to speak by the Presiding Officer will be allowed to speak.

Po After the debate, the Presiding Officer will inform the class there will be a vote on the motion.

Wc Decision Time: Everyone votes by holding up “yes”, “no” or “abstain” card.

Cl The Clerks count the number of “yes”, “no” and “abstain” cards that are held up. Or the Clerks could supervise the vote on a voting system linked to a whiteboard.

Po The Presiding Officer announces the result. If there are more “yes” votes, then the motion is carried. If there are more “no” votes, then the motion falls. If more people abstain, then the result is still based on the number of yes and no votes. If the result is tied, the Presiding Officer has the casting vote and will usually vote to keep things the same.





FOR and AGAINST WORKSHEET

Our party is called:

The motion is:

FOR	AGAINST





PRESIDING OFFICER

1. Presiding Officer:
The motion for debate today is

.....

Read out the motion on the board.

The Clerk will tell the Presiding Officer who the spokespeople are for the groups

2. Presiding Officer:
I call

.....

After all the spokespeople have made their contributions the debate is opened up to all members of the groups.

3. Presiding Officer:
All members wishing to speak in this debate raise your request to speak card now.

4. Presiding Officer:
I call

.....

I call

.....

who will be our last speaker

5. Presiding Officer:
That concludes this debate

6. Presiding Officer:
The motion today is

.....
(read from the board)

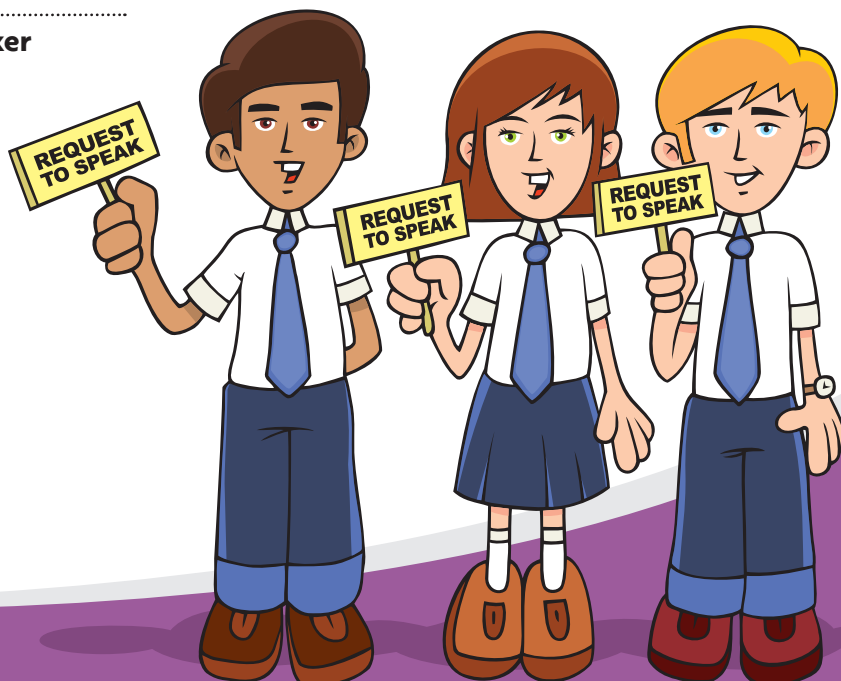
MEMBERS PLEASE VOTE NOW

7. Presiding Officer:
The result is:

YES **NO** **ABSTAIN**

The motion is agreed to/not agreed to.

(If there is a tie in the yes and no votes)
There is a tie. As I have the casting vote, I will vote to keep things the same, therefore I vote so the motion is agreed/not agreed to.





DUTIES

Everyone has an important part to play when you have a debate. Use these points to help you with your role.

Duties of the Presiding Officer

- The Presiding Officer is impartial – you must give up membership of your group
- You can have a clerk to help you with your duties
- You must make sure everyone has a Request to Speak card and a set of the three voting cards
- You must chair the debate and let everyone have a chance to speak. You must make sure that no one gets too long to speak or too many turns. You can punish someone if they misbehave by stopping them speaking and not allowing them to take part anymore

During the debate, you have a number of duties. Use the Presiding Officer outline sheet to help you chair the debate and keep everything running in order.

Duties of Members of the Groups

- Decide on the name for your group. Hold a vote if there is more than one suggestion
- Discuss the motion. Think about all the good points and bad points. Try to see it from other people's point of view too (older people, other people it might affect)
- Choose someone to write down your ideas onto the worksheet
- Your teacher will tell you which side you will be supporting – you will either be for or against the motion. Think again about anything connected to your side of the argument. Add them to your list. Have answers for any arguments the other side might come up with
- Elect a spokesperson to give the first speech outlining your group's position

- Give your spokesperson support when they are speaking
- When the debate is opened up to everyone, raise your request to speak cards and take part in the debate when you are called to speak by the Presiding Officer
- Vote at the end of the debate by raising the appropriate card

Duties of the Clerk

- You must help the Presiding Officer with their duties
- You must write the motion on the board so everyone can see it
- Divide the large group into three or four smaller groups
- Hand out the For and Against worksheet – one to each group
- You must arrange the seats into a horseshoe shape
- You tell the groups where to sit (keeping them altogether)
- You issue the request to speak card and the set of three voting cards
- You get the name of the spokesperson for each group and give it to the Presiding Officer
- You help the Presiding Officer during the debate by saying who wants to speak next and counting the votes at the end of the debate





VOTING CARDS



NO



YES





VOTING CARDS (CONTINUED)



**Request
to Speak**



Abstain

