



**Comprehension and
Collaboration**

Teacher Pack



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Materials Needed for the Projects in This Unit

Debate Topic Research

- Internet
- Printed articles about the debate topics (optional)

Debate Speeches

- A podium (optional)



Articles About Debate Topics

Note for the Teacher: Print the articles or provide the links for your students to access the websites online. They will use them for their research.

Suggested Articles:

Should students be allowed to have phones in school?

- [“Cell Phones at School: Should They Be Allowed?”](#)
- [“Cell Phones in the Classroom: Learning Tool or Distraction?”](#)
- [“Debating the Use of Digital Devices in the Classroom”](#)

Should children play video games?

- [“Hooked on Games”](#)
- [“Is Playing Video Games Good or Bad for Children?”](#)
- [“25+ Positive and Negative Effects of Video Games”](#)

Should school be year-round?

- [“The Pros and Cons of Year-Round School”](#)
- [“Pros and Cons of Year-Round School”](#)
- [“Pros and Cons of Year-Round School”](#)

Should cursive be taught in school?

- [“Should Cursive Be Taught in School?”](#)
- [“The Great Cursive Writing Debate”](#)
- [“The Pros and Cons of Cursive”](#)

Should students wear uniforms?

- [“Should Students Wear Uniforms?”](#)
- [“The Pros and Cons of School Uniforms”](#)
- [“Should Students Have to Wear School Uniforms?”](#)

Should students be required to do homework?

- [“The Homework Debate”](#)
- [“Do Kids Need Homework?”](#)
- [“The Pros and Cons of Homework”](#)



Class Rules for Collaboration



1. Respect everyone's ideas.
2. Take turns talking and sharing your opinion.
3. Listen carefully when others are talking.
4. Work constantly to accomplish all of your tasks.
5. Make sure all group members do an equal amount of work.



“Five Good Reasons” Topic Ideas



Give me 5 good reasons why people love pandas.

Give me 5 good reasons to have a pet worm.

Give me 5 good reasons why we should take brain breaks in class.

Give me 5 good reasons to make a chocolate cake.

Give me 5 good reasons to move to the North Pole.

Give me 5 good reasons why we should have a longer lunch.

Give me 5 good reasons to write a letter to someone.

Give me 5 good reasons to learn a new language.



Sample Pros and Cons Issue: Should animals be kept in zoos?



Pros	Cons
<i>#1 - Zookeepers take good care of animals when they're in zoos.</i>	<i>#1 - Animals are taken out of their natural environments where they are free.</i>
<i>#2 - People can learn about the animals and gain a greater appreciation for them by seeing them in zoos.</i>	<i>#2 - Animals feel sad when they are separated from their families and kept in zoo exhibits.</i>
<i>#3 - Zoos can help to increase animal populations by breeding the animals in captivity where they are safe.</i>	<i>#3 - People can see animals in other places, like in the wild or in a wildlife sanctuary, where they are in their natural environment.</i>



Debate Topics



Should students be allowed to have phones in school?

Should children play video games?

Should school be year-round?

Should cursive be taught in school?

Should students wear uniforms?

Should students be required to do homework?



Gathering Reliable Evidence



Claim #1 - *Zookeepers take good care of animals when they're in zoos.*

Reliable Evidence #1 - *Reputable zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums are held to high standards for the treatment of their animals. They have to put a lot of time and energy into "animal management and care, including living environments, social groupings, health, and nutrition."*

Reliable Evidence #2 - *Both accredited and unaccredited animal exhibitors are regulated by the federal Animal Welfare Act, which establishes standards for animal care.*

Claim #2 - *People can learn about the animals and gain a greater appreciation for them by seeing them in zoos.*

Reliable Evidence #1 - *Over 181 million visitors go to zoos each year.*

Reliable Evidence #2 - *The President and CEO of the Animal Welfare Organization, Robin Ganzert, says, "Zoos provide people, especially impressionable children, with the opportunity to see these remarkable animals up close. People won't protect what they don't love, and they can't love what they don't know. No matter how closely programs like Planet Earth depict animals, nothing will match the bond of seeing them in real life. Just look at a child's eyes at the zoo when he or she encounters a tiger or similarly majestic animal."*

Claim #3 - *Zoos can help to increase animal populations by breeding the animals in captivity where they are safe.*

Reliable Evidence #1 - *Zoos keep animals safe from poaching, climate change, and pollution. This, in turn, keeps animals off the endangered species list.*

Reliable Evidence #2 - *In 1982, only 22 California condors were living in the wild. Because of the breeding programs at the San Diego Zoo, there are now around 300 California condors flying free.*

Exploring Comprehension and Collaboration Quick Quiz



Directions: Read each question. Circle the best answer. Use information from your research to complete the sentences.

1. Which of these is an important rule to follow when working with a group?

- A. Always agree with the person who is speaking.
- B. Speak loudly so all of your ideas can be heard by the whole class.
- C. Respect everyone’s ideas.
- D. Have one person do all the work.

Another rule my group followed during group work was

2. Which of these is NOT a reliable type of evidence to add to your debate speech?

- A. Quotes from experts
- B. A person’s opinion
- C. Statistics
- D. Specific examples that support your claim

One piece of reliable evidence I found to support my claim was

3. Which of these claims supports the opinion that animals should not be kept in zoos?

- A. Zookeepers take good care of zoo animals.
- B. Zoos help visitors learn about animals.
- C. Animals feel sad when they are in zoos.
- D. Zoos help increase animal populations.

One claim I used to support my opinion was

Exploring Comprehension and Collaboration Quick Quiz

- Answer Key



Directions: Read each question. Circle the best answer. Use information from your research to complete the sentences.

1. Which of these is an important rule to follow when working with a group?

- A. Always agree with the person who is speaking.
- B. Speak loudly so all of your ideas can be heard by the whole class.
- C. Respect everyone's ideas.*
- D. Have one person do all the work.

Another rule my group followed during group work was *Answers will vary.*

.....

2. Which of these is NOT a reliable type of evidence to add to your debate speech?

- A. Quotes from experts
- B. A person's opinion*
- C. Statistics
- D. Specific examples that support your claim

One piece of reliable evidence I found to support my claim was *Answers will vary.*

.....

3. Which of these claims supports the opinion that animals should not be kept in zoos?

- A. Zookeepers take good care of zoo animals.
- B. Zoos help visitors learn about animals.
- C. Animals feel sad when they are in zoos.*
- D. Zoos help increase animal populations.

One claim I used to support my opinion was *Answers will vary.*

.....



Tips for a Good Debate Speech



- Start with a greeting.
- Tell a story to connect with your audience.
- State your opinion clearly.
- Support your opinion with facts.
 - Quotations from experts
 - Statistics
 - Specific examples
- Restate your opinion.
- Include a call to action by telling the audience what you want them to do.



Sample Debate Speech



Hello, fellow animal lovers! Think back to your last trip to the zoo. Remember the amazing feelings you had as you watched the giraffes stick out their long tongues to get leaves from the highest branches and as the tiger came up to the glass and stretched out for a nap right beside you. I remember when I saw my favorite animals, the otters, at the zoo. They were playing in the water and going down a slide. It was so cute! If you want to have more amazing memories like these, we need to keep zoos open. There are so many reasons to support zoos.

First, zookeepers take good care of animals when they are in zoos. There are a lot of laws in place to make sure animals have everything they need. Reputable zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums are held to high standards for the treatment of their resident animals. They have to put a lot of time and energy into "animal management and care, including living environments, social groupings, health, and nutrition." Both accredited and unaccredited animal exhibitors are regulated by the federal Animal Welfare Act, which establishes standards for animal care. All of these programs ensure that the animals in zoos are treated well and can live a happy life.

Second, people can learn about the animals and gain a greater appreciation for them in zoos. Over 181 million people visit zoos each year in the United States. Zoos can educate these people about the animals. The President and CEO of the Animal Welfare Organization, Robin Ganzert, says, "Zoos provide people, especially impressionable children, with the opportunity to see these remarkable animals up close. People won't protect what they don't love, and they can't love what they don't know. No matter how closely programs like Planet Earth depict animals, nothing will match the bond of seeing them in real life. Just look at a child's eyes at the zoo when he or she encounters a tiger or similarly majestic animal." Just think about when you were at the zoo. Wasn't seeing the animals in person so much better than watching them on TV?

Finally, zoos can help to increase animal populations by breeding the animals in captivity where they are safe. There are so many dangers in many of the animals' habitats that result in their death, and some animals are even becoming endangered and extinct. Zoos keep animals safe from threats, including poaching, climate change, and pollution. Some animal species have come very close to extinction, and zoos have helped them survive. For example, in 1982, only 22 California condors were living in the wild. Because of the breeding programs at the San Diego Zoo, there are now around 300 California condors flying free. Without zoos, this amazing species probably would have become extinct.

For these reasons, I believe animals should be kept in zoos. Future generations of children should be able to experience these animals up close and learn about their amazing qualities. You can donate money to help your local zoo continue its amazing conservation work.



Oral Presentation Mini-Lesson

- Use a loud, clear voice.
- Face front.
- Stand still.
- Don't hold any papers in front of your face.
- Make eye contact with your audience.

Exploring Comprehension and Collaboration Summative Assessment



Part A

Directions: Read the article “[Should Candy and Soda Be Banned From Schools?](#)” Write your opinion on this topic. Include two reasons to support your opinion and reliable evidence from the article to back it up.

Should candy and soda be banned from schools?

My opinion:

.....

Claim #1:

.....

Reliable Evidence:

.....

Claim #2:

.....

Reliable Evidence:

.....

Part B

Directions: Meet with your group. Discuss your opinions on this topic. Be sure to follow your rules for collaboration. Then, answer the questions.

What was one thing your group did well as you worked together?

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What is one thing your group can work on improving next time you meet?

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Exploring Comprehension and Collaboration Summative Assessment – Answer Key



Part A

Directions: Read the article “[Should Candy and Soda Be Banned From Schools?](#)” Write your opinion on this topic. Include two reasons to support your opinion and reliable evidence from the article to back it up.

Should candy and soda be banned from schools?

Check to make sure your students were able to clearly state their opinion and cite reliable evidence to support it.

Part B

Directions: Meet with your group. Discuss your opinions on this topic. Be sure to follow your rules for collaboration. Then, answer the questions.

Listen in as the groups discuss their opinions. Check their answers to the questions in this section, and use the checklist below to assess their collaboration.

Collaboration Checklist

Group Members:

Rule	Yes	No
Were all the group members respectful of others’ opinions?		
Did the group members take turns sharing ideas?		
Did the group members listen carefully when others were talking?		
Did the group stay focused and complete the assigned task?		

Teacher’s Comments:

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Exploring Comprehension and Collaboration Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Debate Speech Claims	The debate speech includes three claims that clearly support the topic.	The debate speech includes two claims that clearly support the topic.	The debate speech includes one claim that clearly supports the topic.	The debate speech doesn't include any claims that clearly support the topic.
Debate Speech Evidence	The debate speech includes at least six pieces of reliable evidence, including quotes from experts, statistics, and specific examples.	The debate speech includes four or five pieces of reliable evidence, including quotes from experts, statistics, and specific examples.	The debate speech includes two or three pieces of reliable evidence, including quotes from experts, statistics, and specific examples.	The debate speech includes one or zero pieces of reliable evidence, including quotes from experts, statistics, and specific examples.
Group Collaboration	The student always collaborated well in small groups by respecting the opinions of others, taking turns talking, listening to others, and participating actively in the discussions.	The student usually collaborated well in small groups by respecting the opinions of others, taking turns talking, listening to others, and participating actively in the discussions.	The student sometimes collaborated well in small groups by respecting the opinions of others, taking turns talking, listening to others, and participating actively in the discussions.	The student rarely collaborated well in small groups by respecting the opinions of others, taking turns talking, listening to others, and participating actively in the discussions.
Debate Speech Presentation	Both group members participated in the debate speech, and it was very organized and clearly presented.	The debate speech was very organized and clearly presented, but only one group member participated.	The debate speech was missing either organization or clarity when it was presented.	The debate speech wasn't clear or organized.

Teacher's comments:

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