Teacher Guide

LingoLift

ELA · Science · Social Studies · ELD

That's Debatable

A persuasive writing kit for any subject. Students take a side, back it up with evidence, and answer the other side.

Inside this kit:

- A debate routine for any story
- Persuasive writing graphic organizers for 3 levels:
  - Take a Side
  - Build Your Argument
  - Argue Like an Expert
- Debate prompts for grades 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12
- Sentence frames for English learners

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Why teach argument with the news?

Students already have opinions about the world around them. What they rarely get is a structure for backing one up, or practice hearing the other side. A short, real news story gives everyone the same evidence to work from, and listening first means students who are still building reading fluency can join the debate.

The debate routine

Depending on your students' level, you can stretch this across the class period, a week, or even a whole unit.

Step		What Students Do
1	Listen & take a side	Listen once for the gist and once for evidence, filling in Before and While. Then a five-minute quick write.
2	Debate	Pair students who disagree. Each partner restates the other's argument before responding, then adds one new reason to their organizer.
3	Write	Draft a persuasive piece – either a paragraph or a full essay – with evidence, a counterargument, and a closing.

How to use this kit

1. **Pick a story** with more than one side. In LingoLift, search "that's debatable." The debate question is already built into each lesson's open-ended questions.
2. **Hand out the organizer** at the level your students need: Take a Side, Build Your Argument, or Argue Like an Expert.
3. **Post the prompts and sentence frames** (page 6) where everyone can see them during the debate and the writing.

> **For multilingual learners:** Let students brainstorm reasons in their home language first. Slow the audio, show the transcript, and have partners rehearse their claim out loud before anyone writes. The sentence frames work for spoken and written arguments.

Take a Side

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Name _____ Date _____ Story title _____

1 BEFORE YOU LISTEN

What is the question we are arguing about?

What do I think right now? Circle one.

Yes **No** **Not sure**

Key words

Word	Picture	In my language

2 WHILE YOU LISTEN

A reason to say YES	A reason to say NO

I heard the word _____ and it means _____

3 AFTER YOU LISTEN

My claim: I think _____

because _____

In the story, _____

Someone who disagrees might say _____

But I still think _____ because _____

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Build Your Argument

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Name _____ Date _____ Story title _____

1 BEFORE YOU LISTEN

The debate question: _____

My first opinion, before I listen: _____

What do I already know about this topic, and where did I learn it?

2 WHILE YOU LISTEN

First listen: this story is mostly about _____

Second listen: sort the evidence.

Evidence FOR	Evidence AGAINST

3 AFTER YOU LISTEN

My claim: _____

Reason 1: _____

Evidence from the story: _____

Reason 2: _____

Evidence from the story: _____

The other side says _____ But _____

Did my opinion change? Why or why not? _____

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Argue Like an Expert

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Name _____ Date _____ Story title _____

1 BEFORE YOU LISTEN

Who is speaking in this story, and who has something at stake?

My position before listening: _____ How sure am I? 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5

2 WHILE YOU LISTEN

CLAIMS I HEAR	EVIDENCE OFFERED

Words that show how sure a speaker is ("we know," "studies suggest," "critics say"): _____

3 AFTER YOU LISTEN

The strongest argument for the side I disagree with:

My response to it: _____

Write it up

CLAIM	EVIDENCE	REASONING

What would change my mind? _____

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Debate prompts

Pick a question for your grade band, or use the one built into a That's Debatable lesson.

GRADES 3–5

Take a Side

? Should students get to choose their own seats?

? Should kids get homework on weekends?

? Should kids get an allowance for doing chores?

? Should zoos exist?

? Should your school have a class pet?

? Should recess be longer than lunch?

GRADES 6–8

Build Your Argument

? Should students be allowed to use AI to help with homework?

? Should kids under 13 be allowed on social media?

? Should school start later so students can sleep more?

? Should exotic pets be banned?

? Should social media apps label videos that are old or edited?

? Should phones be banned for the whole school day?

GRADES 9–12

Argue Like an Expert

? Should students be allowed to use AI on essays if they disclose how they used it?

? Should the government set a minimum age for social media?

? Should high schools be required to start after 8:30am?

? Should social media platforms be held responsible for false information users post?

? Should museums use AI to recreate the faces of people from the past?

Say it: sentence frames

For talking and writing. Cut out the strip or post it on the board.

TAKING A SIDE

"I believe ___ because ___."

"In my opinion, ___."

GIVING EVIDENCE

"In the story, ___."

"One reason is ___. For example, ___."

ANSWERING THE OTHER SIDE

"Some people think ___, but ___."

"That's a fair point, but ___."

AGREEING & DISAGREEING

"I agree with ___ because ___."

"I see it differently because ___."

Pair these activities with our current events lessons

Every story is real, authentic media from real, human voices. Selected for students and prepped for teachers.

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