

Make it Fun and Meaningful

Grade Level: 8

Subject: English

Topic: Persuasive Writing

Learning Goal:

Students will write a persuasive text that supports a clear argument using evidence and rhetorical strategies.

The Activity: The Great Debate – Student vs. Teacher Edition

Real-life scenario:

Students choose a school-related or teen-related topic (e.g., *Should students have longer lunch breaks?*) and prepare a persuasive speech or mini-debate. Select student groups challenge the teacher (or another group of students) to a “debate showdown,” judged by classmates.

How it is fun and meaningful

- **Real choice:** Students pick topics that matter to them (e.g., uniforms, screen time, gym class, homework).
- **Audience with purpose:** Students present to peers (and possibly administration or parents), making the stakes real.
- **Creative freedom:** Students can create slides, perform skits, or use props to support their argument.
- **Collaborative and social:** Groups support each other and practice together.

Built-in success and confidence

- Tasks are scaffolded: Students brainstorm, outline, and build ideas with peer and teacher feedback.
- Sentence frames are provided (e.g., “One reason we believe this is...,” “The evidence shows...”).
- Strong effort and improvement are celebrated as much as “winning.”
- Roles can be assigned based on student strengths (writer, speaker, researcher).

Supports for English learners

- Sentence starters and structured argument templates
- Topic choice based on familiarity or lived experience
- Visual cues or infographics as part of argument building
- Small-group rehearsal with peer feedback before public speaking

Why it Works

This activity makes persuasive writing **active, personal, and authentic**. It allows students to use their voices to advocate, collaborate and reflect, all while building argumentation, writing, and speaking skills in a fun, meaningful format.