



You and Your Community

Take A Stand

Introduction:

Sometimes it is easier to think through an issue if you are asked to “take a stand” on it. For this activity, students are asked to take a position and articulate their views on several contemporary issues that are related to population and resource consumption trends.

Materials:

Signs reading: “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “?”, “Disagree,” “Strongly Disagree”
Masking tape

Procedure:

1. Tape the signs up on the wall around the classroom.
2. Explain to the students that you will be reading several statements to them, and that they should stand in front of the sign that most closely represents their reaction to the statement you’ve read. They will then be asked to explain their particular stand on each issue. They are free to move to a different sign if/when their opinions change after hearing their classmates’ views.
3. When facilitating the activity, try to give equal time to representatives of different sides of the issue and solicit remarks from as many students as possible. Do not let your own opinions show, but you may pose questions to help students articulate their thoughts.
4. You may want to use some of the following techniques to keep the debate on track. To show respect for viewpoints different than their own, have students paraphrase the opinions offered by others before they speak. To stay focused on content, not personalities, assign students a position that they must defend, even if it does not mesh with their personal values.

Note: Use your discretion in choosing statements that you feel students have enough information on to form an opinion and that fit best with your curriculum guidelines.

Statements:

1. Because we live in one of the richest countries in the world, we should welcome all those from other nations who wish to live here.
2. Without reducing rapid population growth, it will be impossible to solve the world’s global challenges.
3. Arable land in this country should not be used for housing, businesses or other non-agricultural uses.
4. In a real crunch, jobs are more important than environmental quality.

Concepts:

Dialogue and debate on ethical issues related to population and the environment are helpful in clarifying personal opinions.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:
◆ Articulate their thoughts on statements that deal with ethical issues about population and the environment.

Subjects:

Social Studies, Science, Language Arts, Family & Consumer Sciences, Geography, History

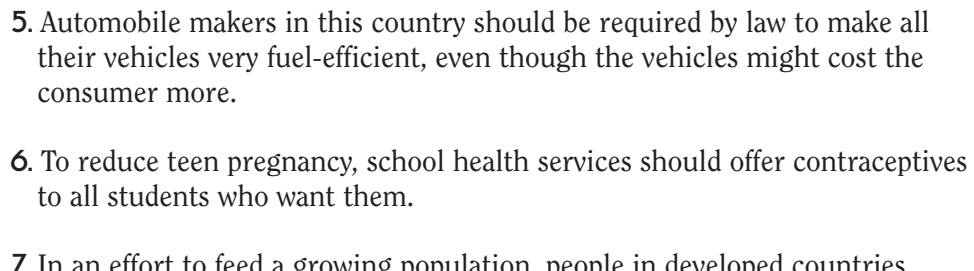
Skills:

Values clarification, communication, discussion

Method:

Students articulate their thoughts about the ethical issues related to population and the environment, and consider the opinions of their classmates.

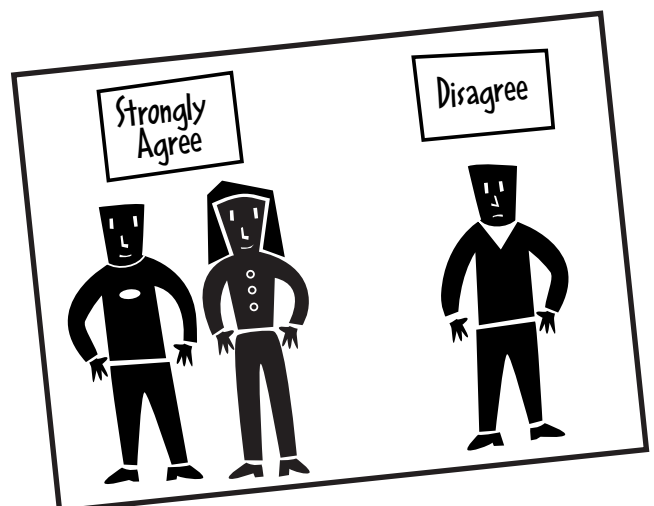


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5. Automobile makers in this country should be required by law to make all their vehicles very fuel-efficient, even though the vehicles might cost the consumer more.
 6. To reduce teen pregnancy, school health services should offer contraceptives to all students who want them.
 7. In an effort to feed a growing population, people in developed countries should drastically reduce the amount of meat they consume.
 8. Clothing manufacturers should be able to use child labor overseas if it makes the clothes cheaper for consumers here.
 9. Any new construction or other project that may threaten the quality of our country's drinking water should be prohibited.
 10. Science and technology will certainly ensure that food production and energy supplies keep up with the demands of a growing population.
 11. Governments in countries with fast-growing populations should be able to limit the number of children that couples can have.
 12. People in this country should be required by law to separate their trash and recycle newspaper, glass and cans.
 13. Endangered species' habitats should not be developed for any reason.
 14. To lower our use of energy and levels of air pollution, we should spend more money on improving our public transportation systems than on our highways.

Follow-up Activities:

1. Students can record their locations for the statements and then research the arguments on both sides to decide if they would like to change their stand. Alternatively, the statements can be used as a pre- and post-evaluation to gauge how students' content knowledge has grown as a result of a unit on some of these issues.
2. Students can write and debate statements that relate to issues in their own community.

Adapted with permission from *The Environment to Come: A Global Summary*, Population Reference Bureau, Washington, DC, 1983.



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