

NATIONAL DISCUSSION AND DEBATE SERIES: HEALTH CARE

Lesson Five: Dueling Proposals

Overview:

Students will discuss the liberal and conservative approaches to health care reform and compare the proposals of the 2008 presidential candidates.

Time: 45-55 minutes

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Understand the liberal and conservative approaches to health care reform.
2. Compare the proposals of the 2008 presidential candidates.

Materials:

- Internet Access
- [The Right to Health Care and the Role of Government in Health Policy](http://webstorage3.mcpa.virginia.edu/debates/whitepaper/deb_2008_0409_healthcare.pdf)
http://webstorage3.mcpa.virginia.edu/debates/whitepaper/deb_2008_0409_healthcare.pdf
- [“Separating the Forest From the Trees in the Health care Debate.”](http://www.kff.org/pullingittogether/022108_altman.cfm)
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Procedure:

1. Show the Kaiser Family Foundation video [“2008 health care buzzwords”](http://www.kff.org/pullingittogether/022108_altman.cfm) (18 seconds) (http://www.kff.org/pullingittogether/022108_altman.cfm). Divide students into groups and assign each group one buzzword (see below). Allow time for students to research the buzzword or concept and define its key principles. When all students are finished, a group representative will explain the buzzword to the class. Assign students to watch for buzzwords in the Miller Center debate.
 - Shared responsibility
 - Universal Health care Assistance
 - Health Savings Account
 - Full tax deductibility of all medical expenses
 - Socialized Medicine
2. Instruct half the students to read Section II – “U.S. Health care Caught Between Liberals and Conservatives” – of the Miller Center white paper: [The Right to Health Care and the Role of Government in Health Policy](http://webstorage3.mcpa.virginia.edu/debates/whitepaper/deb_2008_0409_healthcare.pdf), starting with the section “The 30-50 Year Liberal-Conservative Cycle.” Instruct the other half of the class to read the Kaiser Family Foundation article: [“Separating the Forest From the Trees in the Health care Debate.”](http://www.kff.org/pullingittogether/022108_altman.cfm) Call on students from each group to

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<http://millercenter.org/public/debates/healthcare>

list liberal views on health care and conservative views on health care. What are the similarities between liberals and conservatives? What are the differences?

3. Divide students into six small groups. Assign each group one of the topics below. Each group will read the assigned candidate's health care proposal. (See the Suggested Research Links for candidate Web sites). One group will research the positives of the proposal (i.e. what current problems with the health care system does this proposal address?) and the other group will research the potential drawbacks or pitfalls of the proposal. Then, each group will design a political commercial either supporting or denouncing their assigned candidate's plan. The group can either draw a storyboard of the commercial or act out a skit of the commercial.

Example: Barack Obama proposes that all employers be required to offer health insurance or contribute to a public health program. This proposal ensures that all workers will have access to health insurance, but it has the potential to overburden small businesses. A political commercial for the proposal might focus on a single mother explaining that she was never offered health insurance before, but with the new plan she can finally take her children to the doctor. A political commercial against the proposal might focus on a small business owner discussing the drawbacks of the new proposal.

Group One – Hillary Clinton - Positives

Group Two – Hillary Clinton – Potential Pitfalls

Group Three John McCain – Positives

Group Four – John McCain – Potential Pitfalls

Group Five – Barack Obama – Positives

Group Six – Barack Obama – Potential Pitfalls

4. After all groups have presented their commercials, ask students to compare the proposals. What are the similarities? What are the differences? Based on other lessons the students have completed, what topics do they think are missing from the proposals? What proposals do students think will be the most successful and why?

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