

NATIONAL DISCUSSION AND DEBATE SERIES: HEALTH CARE

Lesson Six: Student Debate

The Resolution: Health care is a fundamental right; the government has an obligation to secure this right for all Americans.

Time: 1 class period for research; 1 class period for debate

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Understand opposing views of the health care debate
2. Explain and defend their views about health care

Materials:

- [Miller Center of Public Affairs: Health Care Resources](http://millercenter.org/public/debates/healthcare)
<http://millercenter.org/public/debates/healthcare>
- Resource guide and suggested links
- [PBS Online NewsHour Health Beat: In-Depth Coverage of the Uninsured](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/health/uninsured/index.html)
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/health/uninsured/index.html
- Internet Access
- [IDEA – International Debate Education Association](http://www.idebate.org/)
<http://www.idebate.org/>
- Student Debate Guide

Procedure:

There are many options for classroom debate – use the IDEA link for additional debate formats and suggestions.

1. Divide the students into two groups. One group will be in favor of the resolution and one group will be against the resolution. Students may choose which side they would like to debate, or the teacher may assign debate roles. Alternatively, large classes may be divided into smaller groups to debate the following resolutions:
 - Health care is a fundamental right.
 - The government has an obligation to secure health care for all Americans.
 - America should have a single-payer universal health insurance system.
2. Distribute the student debate guide and review the procedure and rules of debate. All group members should participate in research for the debate using the

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

resource guide, Miller Center materials, and PBS Online NewsHour materials. Instruct students to anticipate possible critiques of their perspective so that they will more completely explain and defend their views during the debate. Students should support their statements with facts and research whenever possible. Students may use visual aids and graphs to strengthen their argument.

3. The teacher may declare a formal timed debate or an informal roundtable discussion depending on time and teacher preference.
4. After the debate, give students time to share points they found especially persuasive, arguments they found to be particularly strong, areas they still have questions about, insights they had during the debate, and ideas or proposals for actions they can take to promote community health and health care reform.

Alternative:

Role-Playing Debate: Assign students to debate the resolution from a variety of perspectives, such as a pharmaceutical lobbyist, a physician, a hospital CEO, a free clinic worker, an undocumented worker, a minimum wage worker, an elderly person, a veteran, a student with a pre-existing condition, a business executive, a family with several children, a Democratic senator, a Republican senator, a World Health Organization spokesperson, a person with a chronic condition, or a small business owner. Give students time to research the resolution from their assigned perspective.

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