

Discussion Webs

Description: A Discussion Web aids students in visualizing the important issue within a passage and helps them to identify opposing points of view. This organizational tool guides discussions by allowing students to identify conflicting ideas, to examine opposing viewpoints, to critically evaluate the arguments, and to draw conclusions.

Primary Focus: Comprehension

Targeted Reading Level: Elementary-College

Procedure:

1. Pass out a selected reading to the class. Select something controversial that exhibits clearly defined opposing viewpoints.
2. Ask the class to identify the main question of the text. When an agreement is reached, post the question to reference later.
3. Divide the class into small groups of 3 to 4 students. Provide each group with the Discussion Web graphical organizer.
4. Have each group write at least three reasons for answering the question “Yes” and three reasons for answering the question “No.”
5. On a simple “T-chart,” record the students’ yes and no answers. Use this list to create discussion. Ask the students to examine each reason objectively and fairly.
6. After discussing the individual reasons, encourage students to decide on a position on the general question.

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7. Have each student write his or her final conclusion on an index card. Collect the cards and tally the responses. Share the results with the class and make a list of the most common reasons (“pro” and “con”) for these decisions on a shared web form.