**7 Fun Tasks for Classroom Debates**

[**http://elt-connect.com/debates/**](http://elt-connect.com/debates/)

**Quick Fire**

Each student chooses a slip of paper with one topic, such as ‘*students should wear uniforms*‘ or *‘mobile phones should be banned in schools’.*Now, everyone stands; they have 2 minutes to give their opinion on that topic to a classmate, using the target language such as ‘*I somewhat agree with you*‘, ‘*I completely disagree’*, ‘*I think very differently*‘, depending on level and lesson objective.   
  
When the 2 minutes are up, students move on to a different classmate. Listen for mistakes, correct on the spot and monitor if they have taken your correction on board.

**The Panel**

Choose two students, i.e those interested in a particular topic or who have strong views in a certain area and ask them to take a seat at the top of the room. They each give their opinion on the topic but the key here is that the rest of the students in the class ask questions, challenge them on their views and present alternative viewpoints to them.   
  
This can create a very healthy discussion. Ensure students are using the lesson’s lexical items, such as ‘*Can you expand on your point of view in relation to…*.’ or ‘*Can you help us understand why you would state that…’*depending on level.

**Devil’s Advocates**

Divide your class into three groups:   
1) Agree 2) Disagree 3) Devil’s Advocates

Write a debate topic on the board and assign a point of view to groups 1 and 2. (They should put their own views to one side for this task). Group 3 are the Devil’s Advocates and so it’s their job to provoke discussion, encourage various points of views and ensure the debate continues. Give a speaker from each group 2 minutes to speak before rotating so that all students in each group are participating.

**Think Tank**

Prepare 5 topics before the lesson. Write the first on the board, such as *‘Homework should be banned’.*  
In pairs, students have 10 minutes to prepare their   
argument in writing.    
  
Monitor as they prepare their text, encouraging self- correction.  After ten minutes, each pair passes their text to the pair on their right who will also prepare their response in writing. Now, they should be ready to debate. Open the topic up to the class and listen to each of the arguments made.

**The Secret Jar**

Place an empty jar on your desk. Now, give each of your students one post-it/piece of paper. It’s probably better if they are all the same colour for anonymonity. Write the debate topic on the board, such as *‘Video games have a negative influence on teenagers’ behaviour’.*   
  
Give students a few minutes to write their opinion on the post-it before folding it and posting it in the jar. Now, give the jar a little shake and ask one student to take a post-it from the jar to read. This student now nominates another student to respond to this point. This usually sparks a strong discussion and students seem to be more courageous responding to an anonymous opinion than that of their classmate’s/friend’s.

**The Boxing Ring**

Choose two students to stand facing each other in the centre of the room. You assign a debate topic, such as ‘*Social media is destroying real social interactions’*.    
  
Students are given one minute each to put forward their point.   
After they both speak, the rest of the class stand behind the person they agree with. This could be very one-sided depending on the topic, however only one person should speak at a time. Change topic and rotate students as often as you see fit to include all the students in the class.

**Pick a Corner**

Put a poster in each corner of your room (Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Now, give your students the debate topic, such as *‘Bullying should be a criminal offence’.* Now, give students 10 seconds to move to the corner of the room that reflects their opinion.   
  
  
Hopefully you have a good spread of opinions so that you can now group two students who agree and two students who don’t agree together to debate in small groups. Afterwards, you can open this up to the whole class again. Once students have formulated their thoughts in their small groups, they will be more confident in front of the class.