



Lesson plan: Wind Farm debate

Learning objective: To debate the value of wind farms

Resources required

- Best of Bristol virtual fieldtrip to Avonmouth wind farm
- Interactive whiteboard to show to class
- A3 paper for recording ideas
- Information sheets
- 'Official' letter, and willing conspirator!
- Sustainable Shaun energy Crisis game mission (optional)

Adult Support

Adults to circulate and offer support where needed.
Lower ability children with motor skills difficulties may need scribing...

Follow up activities

- Google Earth wind farm location lesson
- Design your own wind turbine
- My Green City lesson
- Sustainable Shaun Energy Crisis game

Duration

1 hr prep
1hr debate

Theme

Energy

Subject focus

English, Science and Geography

Age group

Year 3 and 4

Learning outcomes (differentiated)

- To think about the advantages and disadvantages of wind farm developments
- To work cooperatively with a team
- To write and perform in role, from the viewpoint of someone else
- To participate in a debate successfully

MUST All children must work cooperatively to debate the value of wind farms, in role.

SHOULD Most children should use relevant information to support their argument, and offer counter arguments to opponents'.

COULD Some children could play 'expert witnesses' in the debate, and be subjected to close questioning by opponents.

Keywords

ENERGY
RENEWABLE
WIND TURBINE
WIND FARM
PERSUASION
ARGUMENT
'NIMBYISM'
STAKEHOLDER

Starter

Arrange for an adult to arrive 'unannounced' with an official letter, and share with class. The letter will explain that the local council want to build a wind turbine in a nearby green space, and that the planning committee will hold a debate to determine whether or not it should go ahead.

Ask class what they think: why would a turbine in the local area be a good thing? Why might some people NOT be happy about this?

Discuss, then watch Best of Bristol fieldtrip about Avonmouth wind farm, which offers information about wind energy and introduces the concept that some people aren't happy with wind turbines being sited near their homes ('N.I.M.B.Y.ism', standing for 'not in my backyard').

In groups, ask class to list people who might be affected by this decision. Introduce the term 'stakeholder'. Explain that children will be participating in a debate today, and taking on the roles of different stakeholders.

Main activity part 1- preparation

The teacher can decide who is going to take on which group. Differentiation can come into play (ie trickier roles for more able learners), or pupils can work in mixed ability groups/pairs so that children can learn from each other. Possible stakeholder groups include...



NB

Stakeholders can have names, accents, back stories, costumes etc- this should create a lot of excitement and engagement.

Local council	Tourists	Nature campaigners
Pro-windfarm renewable energy campaigners	Hotel owners	Homeowners (NIMBY and non-NIMBY groups)
Energy company	Construction crew/engineers	
Landowner	Expert witnesses there for cross examination (HA)	

Teachers could select from this list, or children could choose categories.

Before debate begins, discuss features of persuasive writing/speaking- emotive adjectives, personal stories, hyperbole, imagery, and use of facts/statistics to support argument.

Each group gets an information sheet, and they need to select relevant information and statistics to support their case. Together, children can write a persuasive statement encouraging the chairman (maybe teacher in role) to listen to their point of view.

Differentiation- prompt more able to anticipate counter arguments. Consider selecting confident HA children from different stakeholder groups to act as 'expert witnesses'.

Adult support may be necessary to scribe for children with transcription difficulties, and also to encourage deeper thinking.

Plenary

Each group works together to present a statement of their views, so they have practised speaking before the class, and have arguments/information ready for questioning during the debate in the next session.

Main activity part 2- debate

If possible, bring older children/ other teachers/respected adults to act as the planning committee, who can act as a judging panel.

Set up the classroom like a debating chamber. Teacher to act as chairperson, introducing the context of the debate and then the different interest groups.

Explain the conventions of debate to children: ie each stakeholder responding in turn. Encourage participation from **every** child, if possible.

Some children may just state their arguments, but suggest that a more powerful debater **responds** to what the last speaker has said and offer a counter argument (differentiation).

If any children are acting as expert witnesses, the teacher will cross-examine.

Hold the debate, encourage drama, and enjoy the fun!

Plenary

Judging panel give their feedback, and announce decision. (Depending on the group, it may be a good idea to go for a balanced conclusion, e.g. 'The wind farm seems like a good idea, but so no group feels like they have 'lost'.)

Come together as a class, out of role, and discuss the issues.

Go outside, into school grounds. Can they see any wind farms? If so, what do they think about the location? If not, where could one go?

Introduce next steps for learning (see below for follow up activities).



Key questions (preparation)

- Do you think the proposed windfarm is a good or a bad thing, and why?
- How would it affect you?

NB

Stress that children need to think of the issues from their character's point of view, rather than their own.

Key questions (plenary part 2)

- What have you learned about windfarms today?
- Based on the discussions, do you think they are a good idea? Why/Why not?
- not?backyard?

Extension tasks

- Children can draft a persuasive letter to their local MP, campaigning for/against the development
- Children can research wind turbines using the internet, in order to improve their argument

Actions before next lesson

The children need to come up with a memorable team name!

Reflective notes

Curriculum links

English - Spoken Language:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

