



# 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)
- Wind farm debate teacher notes

## Adult Support

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

## Follow up activities

- Google Earth windfarm location lesson
- Design your own wind turbine and build an anemometer lessons
- My Green City lessons
- Sustainable Shaun wind energy mission
- Write a balanced account of the windfarm issue, using the points raised in the debate.

## Duration

1 hr prep  
1hr debate

## Theme

Energy

## Subject focus

English, Science and Geography

## Age group

Year 5 and 6

## 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, and use some relevant supporting information.

**SHOULD** Most children should offer counter arguments to those offered by opposing stakeholders

**COULD** Some children could play 'expert witnesses' in the debate, and be subjected to close questioning by opponents. Others could take on the roles of chairperson and team leaders

## 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)	

Children to generate their own list, and decide who will take on which role. Alternatively, the teacher can decide who is going to take on which roles. Mixed ability groups are suggested.

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

Children in each group to research the topic of wind farms online, and find relevant information to support their argument. Together, they need to write a persuasive statement encouraging the chairman 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'. If required-

- Identify 2 confident HA pupils to act as chairs- they will need to write a balanced introduction, using points from both sides along with appropriate linking phrases, and to sum up the arguments at the close of debate.
- Identify 2 other children to act as representatives of the 'For' and 'Against' groups, who can collate ideas from the different stakeholders that support their cause into paragraphs, and also to select who will speak next from their team.

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## 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.

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## 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!

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## 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)

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
- Film the debate and watch it back, critically assessing arguments and suggesting improvements.
- Design a persuasive pro- or anti- windfarm advert to be featured in the local newspaper.
- Suggest alternate sites for wind farm if questioned

### Reflective notes

#### Curriculum links

##### Writing composition

- Composing and rehearsing sentences orally (including dialogue)
- Discussing and recording ideas

##### Spoken language

- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

##### Human and physical geography

- Describe and understand key aspects of human geography, including... land use, economic activity ... and the distribution of natural resources including energy

##### Science- living things and habitats

Recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things

