



## Controversial Topics

**Age:** Secondary

**Level:** A1+-A2

**Global Knowledge or Global Attitudes and Action:**

Global Attitudes and Action

**Standard for Learning Outcome:** Student is encouraged to discover their own bias.

**Learning Outcome:** S.D2.S3.LO1 Identify own viewpoint with regards to a controversial topic

**Standard for Global Skill:** Student acquires the skills to be a creative citizen.

**Global Skill:** S.D3.S3.LO2 Demonstrate independent thinking

**Sustainable Development Goals:** 4: Quality Education, 3: Good Health and Well-Being

### Part 1 (15 mins)

- A.** Ask students to look at the photo and answer the questions in pairs. Monitor and provide the names of fruits and vegetables as needed. Then elicit their answers. Discuss what kinds of foods they can get easily at their school. Many schools do not have a variety of fruits and vegetables and have unhealthy choices.
- B.** Ask students if they know what *vegetarian* means. Can they name any vegetarian foods or dishes? If needed, explain that a vegetarian doesn't eat meat or fish, while a vegan doesn't eat any animal products, including milk, eggs, and honey. Elicit or explain different reasons people choose to be vegetarians (e.g. for health reasons, to lose weight, to protect animals; for environmental reasons, for religious reasons). Tell students that they are going to look at the topic of whether schools should only have vegetarian food in schools. If the cafeteria in the school does not offer hot meals, you may want to explain that some school cafeterias provide hot meals.

Explain that students will evaluate statements about vegetarian meals at school. Display this statement: *Schools should have vegetarian food only.* Explain that they will be reading arguments for and against this idea. Before students start, you might want to ask who agrees and disagrees with the statement.

Give students a few minutes to read the arguments and write them in the correct columns. If needed, remind them that *for* means agree and *against* means disagree. Help with any vocabulary that is unfamiliar. Check answers as a class.

#### Answer Key:

- FOR:** Not eating meat creates more food for the world.  
Eating a lot of meat is bad for our health.  
Vegetables are important for our health.  
We shouldn't kill animals for food.
- AGAINST:** Vegetarian food doesn't have all the proteins students need.  
Students should choose the food they want—not schools!  
Some students don't like vegetables.  
School cafeteria workers don't know how to cook vegetarian food.  
Some vegetarian foods—like French fries—are unhealthy!

- C.** Divide the class into pairs. Ask students to talk about which statements in activity B they agree or disagree with. Monitor, helping with sentence structure and vocabulary where necessary. Ask pairs to share some of the arguments and reasons they discussed. You can also ask if any arguments or reasons made them change their minds.

### Part 2 (20 mins)

- A.** Tell students that they are now going to read some more proposals for school students. Have them read the list of proposals. Check comprehension of *volunteer* (to do work you don't get paid for), *community* (the neighborhood or local area), *uniforms* (clothes that students wear at school to look the same), and *social media* (online platforms like TikTok™, Instagram™, and Snapchat™). Have students circle FOR or AGAINST individually. Then elicit their opinions with a show of hands.
- B.** Divide the class into pairs. Have them look at their answers from A and choose one that they agree or disagree on. Have them complete the sentence with at least two reasons why they are for or against this idea. Monitor and help with vocabulary and sentence structure as needed.



Secondary | Teacher's Notes

**Answer Key: Possible answers**

- 1. For:** students help other people; gives them confidence; creates a relationship between school and community; can help with a job in the future  
**Against:** can stop them from doing schoolwork; they may not enjoy it
- 2. For:** it stops students buying fast food at lunchtime; it's better for their health  
**Against:** some students may want to eat fast food; it's cheap and tasty; it's bad for the restaurant business
- 3. For:** girls often do better at school without boys; separating boys and girls helps all students focus more  
**Against:** It's good for boys and girls to be together and be friends; girls and boys get the same education
- 4. For:** it keeps their non-school clothes clean; everyone looks the same; there is no bullying because of clothes; it's more practical  
**Against:** students can't express themselves through their clothes; i parents may have to pay for uniforms
- 5. For:** students will focus more on schoolwork; students will make fewer negative comments at school  
**Against:** students can share ideas quickly and easily

**C.** Have the pairs from B find and join another pair who chose the same idea in activity B. Give them a few minutes to share the reasons for their opinions. Then elicit ideas from the class.

**Part 3 (15 mins)**

**A.** Tell students to look at the photo and ask if they recognize any of the foods. Ask if they eat food like this on the way to or from school? Explain that they are going to read an article about a new idea from Mexico. Give students a few minutes to read the article and circle the correct option to complete the sentences. Then elicit the answers.

**Answer Key: 1. against 2. for**

- B.** Tell students to reread the article and decide whether they are for or against with the new idea. Ask them to underline the ideas they agree with and circle the ideas they disagree with. Elicit their opinions.
- C.** Divide the class into pairs. Have students say what they think about the new idea. Allow them to use the ideas from the article in activity A, and encourage them to think of other ideas as well. Then elicit ideas from the class.

**Extension**

- A.** Tell students that they are going to read about some parents' ideas for a local school. Give students a few minutes to read through the email. Check that they understand all the vocabulary. Have them check the ideas they agree with and write an X next to the ones they don't agree with.
- B.** Divide the class into pairs. Have them to compare their opinions. Encourage them to give reasons for their choices. Elicit some of their opinions and the reasons.
- C.** Have students choose five ideas from A that they think are very important and make a poster. You can have them do this task individually, in pairs, or in groups. If time is limited, you may want to have the complete this task for homework. Encourage your students to add other words and illustrations to their posters. When students have completed their posters, display them on the walls of the classroom. Have students walk around the room and view the posters.