



Adult | Teacher's Notes

A Matter of Opinion

Age: Adult

Level: B1–B1+

Global Knowledge or Global Attitudes and Action:

Global Attitudes and Action

Standard for Learning Outcome: Student is exposed to contrary perspectives and views, with an opportunity to debate and accept differences. Student is not subsequently presented with the “right answer” or commonly-agreed consensus or conclusion.

Learning Outcome: A.D2.S4.LO1 Critically examine opinions on a controversial issue, including their own

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

Global Skill: A.D3.S4.LO1 Evaluate ideas, arguments and decisions critically

Sustainable Development Goals: 4: Quality Education, 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

Part 1 (15 min)

- A.** Draw attention to the images of energy sources and captions. Check that students understand what they are, giving examples as needed. Then preview the statements at the top of the columns. Explain to students that they should decide which statement best matches their opinion of each energy source. Point out that it's fine if they have mixed feelings (think there are pros and cons) about an energy source or don't think they know enough about it to form an opinion. Have students compare their answers in pairs.
- B.** Tell students that they are going to listen to people being interviewed about nuclear power. Give them a few minutes to read the statements and check comprehension of any unfamiliar terms. Point out that they should check if the person would agree with each statement, and that both speakers may agree with some statements. Have students listen to the first interview and check whether the man would agree with the statements. Then have them listen to the second interview and check whether the woman would agree with the statements. Play the audio for both interviews and allow students to check their answers.

Answer Key: 1. Woman 2. Man 3. Man 4. Man, Woman 5. Woman 6. Man 7. Man, Woman 8. Man

Audio script

Interviewer: Good morning. I'm interviewing people about their opinions on the plan to build a nuclear power plant near our city. Do you think that's a good idea?

Man: Well, I know a lot of people are against it. An accident in a nuclear plant can cause a large number of deaths and also damage the environment. But now the technology is really safe and there are very few accidents. The thing is, nuclear energy is a lot cleaner than fossil fuels because it doesn't produce greenhouse gases. The other advantage is that it's constant. There is always a regular supply. Wind energy and solar energy don't work if there's no wind or sun. People also say that nuclear plants are really expensive to build. May be that's true, but a nuclear plant is cheap to operate, so the energy is actually cheaper than fossil-fuel energy. I think there are probably more advantages than disadvantages.

Interviewer: Hi. I'm interviewing people about the plan to build a nuclear power plant near here. Do you have an opinion about it?

Woman: I definitely have an opinion. I'm completely against it. Accidents don't happen very often, but with just one accident, thousands of people could die. Our city would disappear because no one could live in the area. Nuclear power plants are also a problem for national security. Terrorists or certain groups could attack a nuclear plant and cause a disaster, or they could steal ingredients like uranium to make weapons like nuclear bombs. And there is no safe way to store nuclear waste forever. I don't want them to spend my tax money to build an extremely expensive nuclear power plant that will probably kill me!

- C.** Have students discuss the questions in pairs. Then elicit answers from the class.

Answer Key: Suggested answers

1. They generally disagree. The man is for nuclear power and the woman is against it.
2. The woman lists only negative points, but the man lists both positive and negative points.
3. The man has considered both positive and negative points about nuclear power.
4. Answers will vary



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Part 2 (15 min)

- A.** Tell students that they will read about how to analyze a controversial issue. Give students a few minutes to read the text. Check comprehension of any unfamiliar terms. Then have students discuss the questions in pairs. Ask volunteers to share their answers.
- B.** Divide the class into small groups. Explain that they are going to read two people's opinions that are on opposite sides of an issue. Tell students to discuss their ideas and make notes. Point out that this will help them apply the ideas from the text in Activity A.

Monitor the discussions and help with vocabulary as needed. Then elicit ideas from the class and write up their ideas. After discussing question 3, point out that looking for points of agreement can help people understand both sides of an issue, lead to a more polite discussion of an issue (rather than an argument), lead people to question their own points of view (and possibly change their opinion), and lead to outcomes that more people are happy with.

Answer Key: Possible answers

- 1.** The woman might think it's necessary to break a law that is out-of-date or not fair. It might also be necessary to break a law to draw attention to the fact that it's a bad law that should change. Examples of breaking past laws that the woman might agree with include: people helping enslaved people escape, workers going on strike for better working conditions, or not joining the army if you are against a war. Examples of breaking current laws that this person might agree with include: journalists publishing secret information, laws that limit immigration, or laws which discriminate against particular groups in society.
- 2.** The man might think it is never right to break a law because keeping order is important for any society. He may think that everybody in a city or country needs to follow the rules for it to be peaceful. Examples of reasons for his opinion include: It is unfair if some people break the laws. They may also think that people who break small laws will also break big laws. If people don't obey the laws, there will be chaos, or a confused mess.
- 3.** Answers will vary

Part 3 (20 min)

- A.** Tell students that they will choose a debate topic as a class and then work in groups to explore arguments for and against it. Preview the questions and explain any unfamiliar terms. Have students choose a debate topic (or choose one for them). Divide the class into two teams. Assign each team to argue for and against. Give each team some time to research and note down arguments for and against the issue and to choose speakers who will debate for the group.
- B.** Have each team present arguments for and against the issues. Give each team an equal amount of time to present their arguments. Tell the class to note down arguments on both sides of the issue. Then ask volunteers to write up the arguments for each side.
- C.** Discuss the questions as a class. For question 1, refer them to the arguments written up. Then have them brainstorm solutions for question 2. Ask students to explain the reasons why they think their solutions would work well.

Extension

- A.** Put students into pairs. Tell each pair to choose a controversial issue in their country that they are interested in. If helpful, brainstorm issues with the class and write them down. Encourage them to use a different issue from the one they discussed in Part 3. Tell students to research the history of the issue and arguments for and against. Then have them come up with a solution that both sides might agree with. Have students prepare a short presentation on their research. Remind students to include the bullet points from the worksheet.
- B.** Ask pairs to present their research to the class. Encourage discussion of whether the proposed solution would work well or not.