

## Lesson 4

### One debate – different perspectives

#### The students reflect on the debate

This matrix sums up the information a teacher needs to plan and deliver the lesson.

Competence training refers directly to EDC/HRE.

The learning objective indicates what students know and understand.

The student task(s), together with the method, form the core element of the learning process.

The materials checklist supports lesson preparation.

The time budget gives a rough guideline for the teacher's time management.

Competence training	Analysing and judging a shared experience.	
Learning objectives	Media construct our perception of reality. Rules secure equal opportunities to exercise rights of freedom.	
Student tasks	The students compare news stories on the debate. The students reflect on their debating experience.	
Materials and resources	News stories written by students. 📄 Materials for teachers 9.1	
Method	Presentations. Discussion.	
Time budget	1. Three news reports with discussion.	15 min
	2. Reflection: how did the rules affect the debate?	15 min
	3. Debriefing.	10 min

#### Information box

The students reflect on the lesson from two perspectives, that of contents and that of the framework of rules. The students may be more interested in one aspect than the other, and the focus can be shifted accordingly, giving more time to one topic.

The debriefing gives the students the opportunity for some general feedback on the unit.

The students have prepared inputs that allow everyone to make a contribution during the lesson. Therefore the teacher can, and should, give a large share of speaking time to the students. The student inputs may be expected to last for the whole lesson (see the key questions for the student inputs). The teacher chairs the lesson, and gives brief inputs to sum up and structure the discussions.

## Lesson description

### Clarifying the agenda for the lesson

The teacher presents the agenda of the lesson, and points out that it corresponds to the key questions of the students' homework. If the students agree and make no suggestions to focus on one point in particular, the teacher introduces the first phase of the lesson.

#### 1. Three news reports with discussion


The teacher announces that the three reporter teams will now present their news stories. The students have the task to listen and to compare, as the reporters' work for different types of newspapers. To compare the news stories, the students should be ready to take notes. The teacher clarifies the task by drawing a simple matrix on the board or flipchart:

News story	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
Language			
...			
...			
...			
Judgment			

The teacher refers to the papers only by number, leaving it to the students to introduce their paper. Language is a possible feature by which to compare the stories, and the students are free to take note of what they notice. If they prefer one type of paper and news story, they should give reasons.

The teacher makes sure that the students have no more questions on their task and then gives the floor to the three press reporter teams. The press reporter teams read their stories in turn, without any discussion or comment between the stories.

Then the students give feedback. The teacher listens, and encourages the students to explain what criteria they used for comparing and judging the stories.

The teacher sums up the discussion by pointing out one key aspect: the three teams of press reporters attended the same debate, and yet the images they created for their reading audiences differ considerably. This shows that media transmit reality for all those who were not present at the event. But by transmitting reality, they construct it – selecting and highlighting some elements, omitting or paying less attention to others. The teacher can refer to selected details of the news stories or student inputs to support this point (see  materials for teachers 9.1).

#### 2. Reflection: how did the rules affect the debate?

The teacher again asks for student inputs. The teacher listens, and so do the students. Some comments may be expected to be quite critical (the time limit is “undemocratic”, it does not allow free expression), and some students may support the rules.

During the discussion, the teacher can ask the critics among the students to consider what would happen if the time limit was lifted. They will realise that the debate would need longer, and the time budget of the lesson sets an absolute time limit, and therefore the rules have taken reality into account and distributed the available time fairly, admittedly in very small slices. The speakers should comment on how they coped with the time limit: did they manage to focus on key points?

### **3. Debriefing**

Here the students give some general feedback.

The teacher should not attempt to justify his/her work in the face of criticism, nor to argue critical remarks away. As the students have had a very large share of activity and responsibility, both success and failure are theirs as much as the teacher's. The teacher should point this out if the students are not aware of it.

If the students enjoyed the debate, the teacher might suggest an extension in the form of a debating club. Here, some of the issues suggested by the students could be debated. Debating clubs are very common in English-speaking countries around the world, and also among teachers of English as a foreign language. The Internet offers a rich variety of excellent material for teachers and students interested in debating.