The debate: Childhood vs Adulthood (Two to three 60 minute lessons)

In this series of lessons, pupils will stage a debate to discuss the merits of childhood and adulthood. They will research their topic by speaking to friends and family members, and work to structure their arguments carefully and use rhetorical devices in order to present them in the best way.

Who is it for?

This learning resource is for students studying Literacy, including Speaking and Listening, at Key Stage 2 (years 5 & 6).

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- Acquire a vocabulary and understanding of grammar for spoken language
- Use discussion in order to learn by elaborating on and explaining their own ideas, and listening to • others'
- Develop confidence in public speaking
- Adopt and maintain a role
- Improvise, devise and rehearse their presentation in order to share it with others •

You will need

Access to the production of 'Peter Pan' in the On Demand player.

Activities

1.

Divide the class into pairs. Ask everyone in the class to think about (but not discuss, yet) what they think is the best part of being a child. Ask everyone to individually write down what they think. Once they have done so, have each pair discuss their choices and try to explain why to their partner.

2.

Have every pair share their thoughts so you can collect them together onto the board.

3.

Ask each pair to again consider what they think the best thing would be about being a grown-up. Just as before, have them consider and write down their thoughts before discussing it with their partner. As before, collect these new thoughts together onto the board, so that you have two separate columns.

4.

Tell the children that you will be having a debate about whether or not it is better to be a child or an adult. Explain that a debate is a structured discussion between two sides representing different viewpoints. It is also a kind of contest, with the side presenting the most persuasive argument being declared the winner. In order to provide the most persuasive argument, explain to the class that it is best to research their topic, and gather as many viewpoints as possible.

5.

Set the class the challenge of gathering as many different perspectives on childhood and adult as they can. Ask them to go home and speak to family members and friends about whether they think it is better to be an adult or a child. Recommend that they speak to these people separately, in order to get different opinions. Encourage them to speak to a vairety of ages - grandparents, siblings, children and adults - but always people they know and trust. Have them record the questions they asked each person and the answers they were given in a workbook, so that they have a clear record.

6.

When they are back in class, ask them to review the results of their interviews and select the perspectives they found most interesting.

7.

Now, divide the class into two groups, and explain that they will be debating the following statement: "This house believes that it is better to stay a child forever". Explain that one side will be arguing FOR the motion, and the the others will be arguing AGAINST the motion.

8.

Have each group take about five minutes to identify around 5 key arguments they plan to make - and then split into smaller groups, or as individuals, taking one argument each. You may need to help them with this if you are working with a particularly large group.

9.

Give the class time to prepare their arguments. They should prepare a short speech, and be preapred to respond to questions from the other side - so suggest that they try to think through any challenges they might receive, and how they might respond to them. You can introduce the following concepts for them to include to help make their argument more persuasive:

- Repetition: syaing the same words or ideas more than once helps to emphasise them
- Alliteration: using similar words or sounds makes them more memorable (e.g "Face the fire at free -dom's front")
- Rhetorical questions: ask the audience a question to which you don't expect an answer encourages them to think more deeply about your point.
- Make eye contact with your audience.
- Speak slowly and clearly often when we're nervous we speak quickly or quietly.
- Finish by summarising your point, to make it absolutely clear to everyone.

10.

Stage the debate by having someone from each side take turns at presenting their viewpoint, and decide a winner.