

Archives on the Arctic: Connecting to Global Issues with Primary Sources

Lesson Plan: Debating the Future of the Arctic

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Date: September 1, 2013

Description:

Students will form countries based on a country profile and agenda card each group will receive. Each agenda card details an Arctic policy and how the Arctic should be considered. Student groups establish a country profile complete with a flag, motto, description, etc., and RESEARCH facts to support their agenda as to how the Arctic will be used in the future. The following agendas will be debated: Natural Resources, Environment, Shipping Lanes, Inuit Peoples, Food, Man-made Islands, and Tourism. Each group will include a primary source as evidence in their research.

Grade Level(s):

Grade 10

Subject(s):

Global Studies

Duration:

One class period is needed for the actual debate. Additional time must be given to enable student groups to research and prepare for their debate. Either one or two class periods for preparation, or assign as homework.

Goal:

The primary goal is to engage in a classroom debate on the future of the Arctic after having researched sources on the www.loc.gov website. Cooperative learning, critical thinking, resource analysis, communication skills will be developed as part of the process.

Objectives:

Students will work in small groups representing their respective countries. Each "country" will be given a pre-assigned role as to how they want the Arctic used. I intend for this to be the first annual *Debating the Future of the Arctic* program in my classroom and that, each year, students use the latest research and evidence collected during time allowed. After the debate, the delegates will vote on how they believe the Arctic should be used and rank how they think the Arctic should be used based on the research presented during the debate.

Standards:

- This lesson meets the following OR State standards:
 - HS.19. Evaluate how differing points of view, self-interest, and global distribution of natural resources play a role in conflict over territory.
 - HS.20. Analyze the impact of physical and human systems of resource development, use, and management and evaluate the issues of sustainability.
 - HS.60 Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon, identifying characteristics, influences, causes, and short-and long-term effects.
 - HS.62. Propose, compare, and judge multiple responses, alternatives, or solutions to issues or problems; then reach an informed, defensible, supported conclusion.
 - HS.63. Engage informed and respectful deliberation and discussion of issues, events, and ideas.
- This lesson meets the following National Council for the Social Studies standards:
 - III. People, Places, and Environments

- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- IX. Global Connections
- This lesson meets the following Common Core Literacy standards:
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1](#) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
 - [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2](#) Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Background Information:

This lesson will be the culminating activity for a unit of study on the Arctic. Prior to *Debating the Future of the Arctic*, students will have explored readings, had small group and whole class discussions, viewed PowerPoint presentations, and had ample background information about the Arctic via teacher lectures. Also see the supplementary materials, including the lesson called “Advertising the Arctic” and PowerPoint presentation for a quick motivating lesson that explores the “concept” of the far north for use at the start of a unit on the circumpolar north. There also supplementary materials that include Venn Diagrams on the two poles, etc.

Primary Source Documents/Resources:

- Internet sites such as <http://www.loc.gov/index.html> to collect primary sources such as a map of the Arctic.

Materials:

- Role Country/Agenda cards. One card for each student group. See Pages 4-6.
- Research materials so students may construct their argument as to how the Arctic should be used. The groups must incorporate primary sources from the Library of Congress website into their discussion.
- Creative supplies: poster paper, markers, glue, etc. to construct flag, symbol, motto, poster
- Excellent Debate rubric retrieved August 18, 2013 at <http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/classdebate.pdf>.

Procedures:

1. GROUP: Students will be placed in small groups of three to five students, depending on class size.
2. FORM COUNTRIES: Each student group will be assigned a country with a specific agenda as to how the Arctic should be used (see country/agenda cards that detail information about their country and how their agenda for the Future of the Arctic).
3. CREATIVE COUNTRY COMPONENTS: The newly formed countries will be given time to create a name for their country, a map, a symbol, a flag, profile, and a national motto. This is the creative aspect of the assignment. Encourage students to have fun making up information about their country. Take the time to create a flag, symbol, motto, and profile that is informational and fun! (Some students may opt to sew their flag...invite students to use their specific skills to the fullest).
4. RESEARCH: According to the country profile, each student group (country) has an agenda as to how the Arctic should be used. Each country must research facts supporting their argument as to why the other delegations should vote for their agenda. Encourage students to research at least 25 facts as to why their idea is the best for the Arctic or for their country. Not only do they need to assemble solid research, but they should create a poster containing a graph, five pictures, and a map detailing their proposal for the Arctic. Encourage primary resources from the Library of Congress Website at <http://www.loc.gov/index.html>. Student groups must include a primary resource. Give an example of a primary source—both visual and textual material.
5. DEBATE DAY SET-UP: The desks are placed in a circle with specific countries grouped together. Allow students time to hang their flags, motto, posters, and other materials pertinent to their argument. Some groups may use the power point projector to introduce their country and their agenda.
6. INTRODUCTION: On the day of the debate, the instructor, or a student judge calls *Debating the Future of the Arctic* to order. Each group introduces their country by providing their name, flag, motto, profile, and a brief introduction as to how they believe the Arctic should be used.

7. DEBATE: Once introductions are made, students may question and debate the other groups. Students must remain in their respective assigned role. They may challenge the other groups and share their own collected evidence as to how the Future of the Arctic should match their agenda.
8. VOTE: At the conclusion of the debate, student delegates to the meeting will vote as to how they believe the Arctic should be used. The moderator of the debate will tally the results.
9. RANK/WRITING: Students will rank in order how they believe the Arctic should be used and explain WHY? Each ranking must contain at least two researchable facts about the Arctic.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Students will rank how they believe the Arctic should be used. The writing will be evaluated using a writing rubric. Performance during the debate will be evaluated using a debate rubric.

An excellent debate rubric was retrieved on-line at <http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/classdebate.pdf>

Possible Extension:

Essay: Write a five paragraph essay as to how the Arctic should be used. Incorporate primary sources in order to make your argument.

Additional Notes:

There are many ways the instructor may choose to conduct a classroom debate. For me, it varies from class to class. Sometimes they classes need a bit of prodding to begin and it is more structured, and other times the students need little prodding and require time limits. It is always incredibly exciting how much the students enjoy this format, and often perform at a level that surpasses my expectations.

COUNTRY/AGENDA CARDS

As is repeated within each of the “cards” below, each group of students will receive one country/agenda card. Each group will make up the name of their country, the flag, motto, symbol, and profile. The profile will be a brief paragraph providing an overview about your nation.

Each group will RESEARCH facts that help support your argument as to how you believe the Arctic should be used, based on your agenda card. Each group must have a minimum of 25 facts that help support their views.

For the debate, supporting evidence must be visible in either poster or PowerPoint form. The supporting evidence must include a graph, five pictures, and a map of your proposal. The supporting evidence may include key points.

COUNTRY ‘A’ - NATURAL RESOURCES

You represent an industrialized country that is short on natural resources. Natural resources are the key to your nation’s future. The more natural resources you find, the more industry your country creates, and the more jobs and products you provide to the world.

You want to invest in resource extraction and believe the Arctic is a prime location and must be utilized now. You have as much right as any country to lay claim to what may lie beneath the North Pole. What good is saving the Arctic for future generations, when we have no idea what their energy or mineral needs might be...the future is now.

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COUNTRY ‘B’ - ENVIRONMENT

You represent a country committed to environmental causes. Your country believes the Arctic should be immediately closed to all mineral, oil and gas exploration, as well as shipping lanes. The Arctic and Antarctica represent the world’s least touched region and should remain so.

Numerous research studies confirm your countries belief that the Arctic should remain as it was...prior to human interaction. If indeed, the ice is melting, you believe research stations should be built on the ice and floating research stations where applicable. Research gleaned from the Arctic will be shared with all nations. The Arctic should be made into a world park committed to research. We should learn from how we treated the rest of the planet, and allow no one nation to own and exploit the Arctic.

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COUNTRY 'C' - SHIPPING LANES

You represent a country who owns a large segment of land around the Arctic Ocean. You are ecstatic about scientist predictions that the Arctic ice shelf is thawing at an unprecedented rate. Your country is constructing large ships to haul goods from Asia to Europe and the Americas quickly and efficiently.

The fabled North West Passage is finally almost a reality and you can't wait to cash in. People may not support your view, but everyone loves to buy "stuff" and now goods can be transported quicker and cheaper than ever. Why shouldn't you own the shipping lanes, you own the land around the Arctic Ocean? If other countries want to use those shipping lanes, they will pay a fee similar to what is paid to go through the Panama Canal.

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COUNTRY 'D' - FIRST NATIONS

You represent a First Nation of people who thrived and lived in the Arctic for centuries. The land supplies everything that is needed for survival. Your country of First People is asking the delegation to consider leaving the Arctic alone for your people to continue to live. The delegation must realize the unique history and way of life developed by living in the Arctic. This unique way of life must be protected as a lesson to the rest of the world about adapting to geography.

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COUNTRY 'E' - FOOD

You represent a poor country with a high percentage of people living in poverty without adequate nutrition. The waters of the Arctic are full of potential protein. Whales, seals, walruses, and other fish would provide a protein source currently unavailable in your country. You are asking the rich countries of the world to help secure this food source.

As people in your country starve, you implore the wealthier countries to help feed your people. What is more important...the life of a whale or the life of a child? The reduction of ice will finally open up prime fishing grounds rich with pollock, cod, and other fish to help feed your nation.

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COUNTRY 'F' - MAN-MADE ISLANDS

You represent a country build on a group of islands only a few feet above sea level. Due to increased tsunami threats and rising sea levels, you must move your people. Man-made islands are not new. The United Arab Emirates built some several years ago.

You want to construct man-made, dome-covered islands and move your people to the Arctic. You believe man-made living spaces are the wave of the future, and the Arctic is a perfect place to build the first man-made nation.

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COUNTRY 'E' - TOURISM

You represent a country with an exciting vision for the Arctic. Your country wants to make the Arctic the extreme playground for adventure tourists.

Think of all the possibilities: ice-breaking cruise ship packages, ice hotels and restaurants, adventure overnight trips enabling tourists to experience an evening in an igloo and go mushing with sled dogs. Extreme hunters will want the thrill of hunting caribou, and other plentiful creatures. Arctic adventures will appeal to the individual who has been there, done that, and doesn't care about the t-shirt! From overnight excursions to Arctic ski races, the wave of the future is adventure tourism and the Arctic represents the "last best place."

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