

Voting

Start and end your discussion with a vote to give the lesson a clear focal point. Recording the group's feelings before and after the discussion helps to gauge how much, if at all, students' opinions have changed.

A public vote where everyone can see the voting process is fun and inclusive, but an anonymous vote will encourage 'honest' voting where opinion is less likely to be influenced by peer pressure. Simple voting methods include 'hands up' or a secret ballot, but here are some different techniques for you to try...



Human barometer

Capture a range of opinions using the human barometer.

- Label one side of the room 'for' and the opposite side 'against'.
- Ask your students to stand between the markers at the point where their opinion lies (see diagram above).
- Repeat after the discussion to see if opinions have changed.
- Use a digital camera to compare the results before and after the discussion.
- Use sticky notes or coloured card on a wall or a whiteboard to mark opinions if moving people around the room is not practical.

Agree/disagree cards

A quick and easy way to see if students agree or disagree is to use voting cards. Cards can be themed to the discussion by using images or text. 'Traffic light' coloured cards work well, where red represents 'against', green 'for' and amber 'not sure'. To encourage 'honest' voting, cards can be made so that only the teacher/facilitator can see the image.

Prop voting

Voting can be themed to the discussion by using props.
Your options are limited only by your imagination. For example...



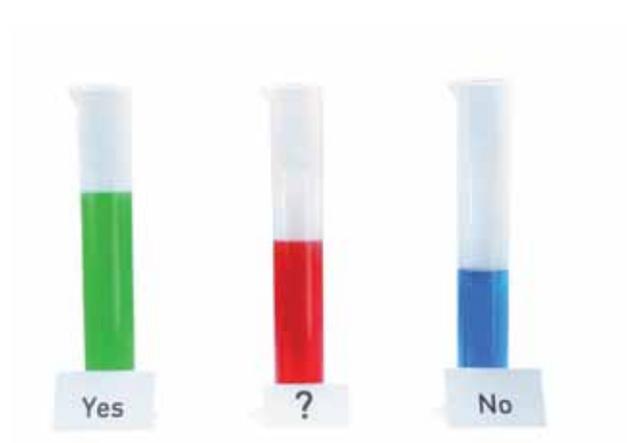
Weigh up the argument

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Using a set of pan or spring balance scales, ask your students to place weights or counters on either side of the scales (labelled 'for' and 'against') to give a good visual indicator of where their opinions lie.

Take your pick

Following a discussion about an issue such as organic v. non-organic food, students can place their vote by choosing between an organic or non-organic piece of food. Then see how much of each sample has been taken.



Filling up

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Coloured liquid is poured into measuring cylinders to give a visual overview of the outcome of the vote. A similar result can also be achieved by placing counters into labelled, see-through bowls.