



7.6 Four Step Refutation

This activity introduces basic refutation and argumentation skills. Students work as a group to practice four step refutation. The activity introduces students to a model for direct refutation.

Time Allotment

20-40 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- develop skills in direct refutation.
- develop skills in constructing arguments as a group.

Method

Divide students into groups of four. Give each group a short argument to refute (e.g. Police presence will make high schools safer, or Athletics make it harder for students to focus on class.)

Have the students work together to refute the argument using 4-step refutation.

Tell the groups to present their refutation to the class, with each student taking one step:

- The first student summarizes the argument in one sentence.
- The second student summarizes the counter-argument in one sentence.
- The third student offers evidence and/or analysis that supports the counter-argument.
- The fourth student explains why the counter-argument is superior to the argument and what the implications of the counter-argument are for the debate.

You can ask group members to clarify individual points, or have other groups cross-examine them.