



EduTrend Contents

P4C · REASONS AND ARGUMENTS · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Objection!

Strengthen your argument by answering the best objection to it

Ages 12–14

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 04

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 04 · AT A GLANCE

Objection!

Pairs each write a short argument on a question such as “Should homework be banned?” They swap. The partner writes the strongest objection they can, stating the other view at its best before disagreeing. The writer then replies. The class compares weak objections that attack a distorted view with strong ones, then enquires into why hearing the best opposing case matters.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- raise strong objections;
- state opposing views fairly;
- reply to objections;
- evaluate argument quality.

KEY WORDS

objection · reply · fair · strawman · counter-argument · charity

CURRICULUM LINKS

English: balanced argument.
Citizenship: debate. History: interpretations.

1

STIMULUS

Share something to think about

2

THINK

Quiet thinking time

3

QUESTION

Create and choose a question

4

ENQUIRE

Reason together

5

BUILD

Agree, disagree, add

6

REFLECT

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Argument and objection sheets
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people, and use the story or invented examples rather than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 04 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Pairs write and swap short arguments.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Why should we listen to the best version of the other side?"</i>
44–50 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Write the strongest objection to your own argument and reply to it.

ACTIVITY 04 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Attacking a distorted version of someone's view is called a strawman; stating it at its strongest is sometimes called being charitable.

Arguments that anticipate objections are usually more convincing.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Objections mean the argument failed." They help improve it.
- "Winning means making the other side look silly." That is a strawman.
- "Replies must defeat everything." They can concede some points.

Adapting the activity

Support

Give objection sentence starters.

Stretch

Write a reply to a reply.

WORKSHEET 1

Objection and reply

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Fill in.

Objection and reply

Stage	Writing
My argument	
Best objection	
My reply	

WORKSHEET 2

Thinking moves

Use these in the enquiry.

Thinking moves

Thinking move	My example
I agree with... because...	
I disagree with... because...	
An example is...	
A counter-example is...	
Building on what... said...	

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

**Can an objection make an argument better? Before the enquiry I thought...
Now I think... because...**

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Objection! is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Reasons and Arguments programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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