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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2014 Volume IV: Eloquence

Energizing the Debate: The Pros and Cons of Renewable Sources of Energy

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The core of this unit is the art of persuasion and its use to promote social and environmental change. In particular, this unit focuses on speaking about climate change in Delaware. I used the steps involved in argumentative writing that are outlined in *Teaching to Exceed the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards*, as a framework. The steps include identifying issues and stances on issues, conducting rhetorical analysis of nonfiction and informational texts, and analyzing rhetorical appeals: logos, pathos, and ethos. The second part of the unit is a formal classroom debate on three issues facing Delaware residents due to climate change. Through this unit the students will learn the skills to argue a point in a respectful, but powerful way using evidence to support their ideas. I hope the students will see the rebuttals of their classmates as collaboration and not an attack. As we work to solve this environmental problem, I want the students to be open-minded enough to consider the arguments of their peers. I hope to foster respectful interactions to create a culture where a diversity of ideas are valued, even if everyone isn't always in agreement.

(Developed for Social Studies, grade 6; recommended for Social Studies, Science, and English Language Arts, grades 5-8)

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