How to Teach a Storyworks Debate
Bring our debates to life in your classroom!

The timely and thought-provoking debates you’ll find in every issue of Storyworks are great for building a variety of important ELA skills, including speaking and listening, identifying main idea and supporting details, citing text evidence, and opinion writing. Use this lesson plan to teach any of our debates!

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan
For use with any Storyworks debate!

1. Preparing to Read
• Have students preview the text features. Ask:
  * What is the topic of the debate? (Prompt students to use the debate title and the heading on the chart as clues.)
  * What do you think are the two sides of the issue?

2. Reading the Debate
• Read the debate as a class or in small groups.
• Have students read the debate a second time. Prompt them to mark the types of support the author presents to back up each side, including:
  * Facts and statistics (F/S)
  * Quotes from experts (Q)
  * Stories or examples (EX)

3. Discussing
• As a class or in groups, have students discuss:
  * Which evidence is most effective in supporting each side?
  * Is one side stronger than the other? Why?
  * What is your opinion? What evidence do you find the most convincing?
  * For more-advanced students: Do you think the author has a preferred point of view on this issue? What is your evidence?

4. Writing
• Have students complete the chart in the magazine.
• Distribute the activity “Write an Opinion Essay.” The lower-level version guides students to write a three-paragraph essay on the debate topic. The higher-level version prompts them to bring in additional evidence and write six paragraphs, including a rebuttal of the other side. With either version, hand out our Opinion Writing Toolkit, which offers writing tips and transition words.

Common Core State Standards
R.1, R.2, R.6, R.8, W.1, W.4, W.10, SL.1