



Animals in Research Debate

Teacher:

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Purpose:

To discuss the use of animals in scientific research. To create an awareness of the scientific research community. This activity is recommended for grades 7-12.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

1. research information on the use of animals in scientific research.
2. thoughtfully discuss and/or debate the topic of using animals for scientific research.
3. write an essay stating their opinions based on factual information.
4. tabulate results of a pre/post survey on using animals for research.
5. design a poster advocating their group's points.

Materials:

TV/VCR

Planet of the Apes video

Various resource materials representing both sides of the animal rights issue

Suggestions for the teacher:

This topic inevitably comes up each year in my classroom because I use preserved animals for dissection. Teachers must decide if this lesson and the issues raised are appropriate for their classroom. This lesson may take 2-3 class periods.

Preparation:

The teacher should provide the students with a pre/post survey. Sample questions might include:

1. Animals should be used for scientific research. (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, not sure)
2. It is not right to kill animals for any reason. (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, not sure)
3. Stray animals can be used for research. (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, not sure)

The teacher should provide resource material stating pros and cons of using animal research to supplement student resources. (See resource list below.)

Procedure:

1. Students take teacher-developed pre/post survey.
2. Students will need advance notice to be able to research pros and cons of animal research. Depending upon the resources of the school, this can be done as a library assignment during one class period.
3. After students have completed their research, they should be able to write an essay stating their opinions.

4. For the debate, students should work cooperatively in teams of four or five to prepare a poster stating their groups' points and conclusions.
5. The classroom should be arranged with each group of students being placed in a semi-circle with the teacher in front. The teacher is only a facilitator.
6. When debating, students should remember that everyone must participate, so each person should have an opportunity to speak. Also, students should be courteous and respectful to each other.
7. After the debate, the teacher will show a clip from the "Planet of the Apes" movie showing a scene where the roles are reversed. In the movie, humans are used for experimental purposes and apes are the dominant species. A discussion should follow between the teacher and the students. Do the apes in this movie follow protocols similar to those followed by real scientists? Have the students' opinions changed?
8. Pre/post survey.

Questions to Ask (if not brought out in discussion):

- What about.....?
 - Space exploration, life on other planets
 - Using humans for research; informed consent
 - Dissections
- Is research necessary?
- How do you protect the rights of individuals and not constrict research? Is there a line?
- Checks and balances?

Resources:

American Physiological Society—Guiding Principles for Research Involving Animals and Human Beings

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory animals (7th ed.), Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1996

Americans for Medical Progress Educational Foundation

United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Welfare Information Center

PETA (other pro-animal rights groups)

Environmental Protection Agency, Research and Development Annual Review

Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, National Research Council