

Lesson 4: Drugs in Sport Debate

Lesson Plans

This lesson introduces a controversial topic through a structured debate. Extra information on the topic and how to run the debate is found opposite on page 13.

Lesson	Format
<p>Lesson 4 - Drugs in Sport Debate A structured practice debate on a controversial topic</p>	<p>Starter: 5 minutes What performance enhancing drugs do the students know about in sport? What are the other ways athletes and sportspeople improve their performance? There are many ways of enhancing performance – some are legal and some are not and this raises practical and ethical issues.</p> <p>Activity: 35 minutes 1) Split students into as many groups as characters you want to cover. 2) Give them their character cards – one per group, and give them a few minutes to read them over. 3) Get one student in each group to read out their first section to the rest of the class. What are the class's initial thoughts? Is there one position they identify with or reject? 4) Take it in turn to read out their fact. Does it change the way they think? 5) Read the issue. Any different feelings? 6) Each team asks their question: to the character of their choice.</p> <p>Plenary: 10 minutes Vote as to which position they agree with most if there is one? Why? Which arguments were the most persuasive?</p> <p>Suggested Homework: Get students to find examples of adverts that use scientific claims, include some old ones if they can, and bring them to the next lesson.</p>
<p>Learning objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practise discussing and debating issues and expressing an opinion Understand more of the science and ethics around performance enhancement in sport. 	
<p>Other learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider social, ethical and factual issues in an integrated way Think about different points of view Learn to back up their opinions with fact 	
<p>Curriculum points covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSW Using data to draw conclusions Societal aspects of scientific evidence Developing an argument 	
<p>Substantive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the use of drugs to enhance performance in sport and to consider the ethical implications of their use. 	
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drugs in Sport character cards 	

Suggested adaptations

Support

Help to structure discussion further by giving the 'prompt sentences' on the opposite page to pupils you think would need them or write them on the board so pupils can see them the whole time, and follow the sentence structure.

Extension:

Read out all of the card initially. Allow to debate more freely.

Structured debate: Should ALL drugs be banned in sport?

Characters

For banning

- Helen Ayres – Sports historian
- Edgar Fortescue – Retired sportsman
- Reg Curtis – Dad
- Alina Dent – Sister

Against banning

- Chrissie Batchelor – Archer with asthma
- George Clarkson – Sports journalist
- Hiba Halifi – Ethiopian sports coach
- Ross Gently – Sports counsellor

If you have enough students to make 8 groups, then you can use all eight positions, or use fewer, as you wish. The game can work with as few as four students – taking the ‘essential’ positions, this gives two for and two against.

Facilitation tips

Ensure pupils know there is no right or wrong answer. Be observant of ones who want to speak and are not getting a chance. Encourage students to give a reason for their opinions.

For groups who may need extra support you can put the following prompt sentences upon the board:-

“I think ALL drugs should/shouldn’t be banned because.....”

“I think is the most important point to think about.”



Background notes

Doping in sport usually means the use of performance-enhancing drugs, but it can also mean techniques like ‘blood-doping’ (explained below). The main ethical issues around drug-use in sport are:-

Possible harms to the athlete: Some drugs, like steroids, can cause serious harm. But it’s worth noting that with other drugs the risks to the athlete may be fairly minimal – and often many other things athletes do (punishing training regime, psychological stress, etc) are also potentially harmful.

Unfairness: This is both between individual athletes, and between countries (when thinking about the Olympics and other international competitions). For example we know that for decades East Germany had a state policy of doping their athletes, which was reflected in them winning Olympic medals and world records. Also, issues of unfairness exist independent of drugs, for example, access to training facilities, top equipment, sports scientists.

Doping in sport is regulated by the World Anti-Doping Agency, which was set up in 1999. They draw up a list of prohibited drugs and other technologies and regulate drugs testing, etc. Those other technologies are only biomedical ones (blood doping, gene doping). They don’t regulate things like what equipment sportspeople might use, although this can make a considerable difference.

More information about common performance-enhancing drugs can be found at debate.imascientist.org.uk/drugsinsports

Guidance note

Just to warn you, the character Alina Dent talks about her brother who died young of a heart attack from using steroids. She also points out that impotence is one of the side effects of steroid use. Her character may upset students who have been in a similar situation. You can miss out any character, as long as you also miss out one from the other side, so the two sides are still matched.