



Comm Skills Virtual Learning

Public Speaking

Argumentation & Debate

May 13, 2020



Lesson: May 13, 2020

Objective/Learning Target: Students will evaluate group dynamics and presentations.

Bell Ringer/Let's Get Started

What factors affect how people work in groups? Name and explain at least 3.

Lesson/Activity

Develop your strategy

- Next level case writing strategy... Read how to analyze a motion in the [Proposition](#) overview document. Is the case that you wrote a winning strategy?

EXAMPLE:

November Motion Analysis

Prepared: This House would return cultural treasures to their countries of origin.

Lesson/Activity

motion Overview: For centuries, individuals living in the West didn't have to travel around the world to see cultural treasures, they could simply visit their own national museums. Countries that conquered or colonized other nations often took the art, relics, etc., home and displayed these works for their own citizens to see and enjoy. The Elgin Marbles (from the Parthenon in Athens, Greece) displayed in the British Museum in London since the early nineteenth-century are prime examples. The plundered nations had no real recourse to the transfer of their cultural treasures by their conquerors. However, in recent years questions are being asked about the true owners of these works and negotiation and litigation is ongoing. Books and films are dealing with the subject and increasing awareness for the general public; for example, the film *Woman in Gold* depicted the true story of a painting owned by a Jewish family, which was stolen by the Nazis during WWII. There is a growing movement to respect the idea that cultural treasures have greater meaning to the people whose ancestors created them or to the original owners than to the people who now possess them. On the other hand, issues of ownership, the technical difficulty of maintaining the works, the issue of returning precious works to areas prone to natural disasters and conflicts, the existence of new countries replacing older political entities, and a host of other issues all contribute to the debate over what to do with these treasures.

Lesson/Activity

Basic Terms or Concepts to Know:

- Culture
- Cultural treasures
- Nations of origin
- Imperialism
- Cultural diffusion/globalization
- Black market
- British Museum
- Elgin Marbles
- Repatriation of cultural property/art
- Restitution
- 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict
- UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects
- UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
- Source country
- Market country

Lesson/Activity

A few questions to consider in approaching the motion:

- *What principles are at stake? Does creation or acquisition mean more in terms of ownership?
- *Is it possible to “own” ancient treasures? What does “ownership” mean?
- *What is the purpose of art/architecture?
- *What body should adjudicate these conflicting claims?
- *Does it matter if the treasure was purchased as opposed to taken?
- *How is legal standing determined?
- *Does the ability to maintain or preserve the art enhance the claim to ownership?
- *What alternatives exist? (ex. “permanent loans”)
- *How do we best protect cultural treasures that belong to the world? (ex. the Buddhist sculptures in Afghanistan, destroyed by the Taliban)
- *What is the best way to both share and preserve these cultural treasures?

Lesson/Activity

Examples of Proposition Ideas to Explore:

1. Cultural treasures belong to the owner/creator or original purchaser. Unless the art was transferred through legal, documented channels it has been obtained illegally and must be returned.
2. Cultural treasures have unique meaning to the culture of origin.
3. The removal of cultural treasures is the ill-gotten gain of imperialism.
4. Artifacts viewed outside their context lack meaning and may contribute to otherization or cultural trivialization.
5. Voting for the proposition sets a precedent and discourages removal of cultural artifacts in the future.
6. The export of illegally obtained works need to be curbed/checked.
7. Dividing works between museums around the world dilutes their artistic and cultural impact and meaning – repatriation equals restoration.
8. Cultural treasures often have religious or spiritual significance to the culture of origin (ex. items removed from tombs). Returning those items shows cultural respect.

Lesson/Activity

Examples of Opposition Ideas to Explore:

1. The cultural treasures belong to the world, not to any one group, and should be held in institutions that can best preserve them.
2. In many cases there is no way to determine legal transfer as the artifacts are ancient.
3. Regions of origin might be prone to natural disaster and conflict thus endangering the artifacts.
4. Cultural treasures can be seen virtually around the world so their geographic placement should be determined by security and preservation interests.
5. Voting for the proposition would create a greater black market for cultural treasures by private investors.
6. Increasing globalization means that descendants of cultures are dispersed world wide – diluting the claim of a “geographic” home to the treasures. Modern cultures are hybrids of other cultures.
7. Cultural education is best increased by diverse collections in large populations centers with the resources for conservation.
8. Attempts to repatriate cultural treasures create a slippery slope; history doesn’t exist in neat packages – modern nations are built on fallen nations on the backs of multiple empires – where would the line be drawn for the works in question?

Lesson/Activity

Weighing Competing Claims: This is definitely a debate where the philosophic versus pragmatic considerations can be considered. It is also a debate which allows for both cross-culture and cross-time lines of reasoning to be made. As a result, debaters will have to be very careful to keep the debate “clean.” Philosophically, both sides will want to consider the role art (used here in the broadest sense) plays in culture. At the same time, both sides will need to consider the concept of “owning” art. Abstract notions of keeping art “whole” as opposed to divided up between institutions around the world might be argued and weighed against educational considerations. Overall, both sides will want to weigh how art can best be shared while also being preserved. Short-term vs. long-term impacts will yield more pragmatic results: What is the country of origin if it no longer exists – who inherits the mantle of “owner”? What if the country of origin lacks the ability to preserve the art from natural disasters or conflicts? Would the motion increase or decrease the purchase of art on the black market? What about art taken during war? This is a motion with a great deal of available material with rich possibilities for debate.

Practice

- **Edit your case as necessary.**

Additional Resources

[Defining Motions & Constructing Cases](#)

[World Schools Debate Textbook](#)