

Argument - debate

Genetic Testing and Screening

Method

This activity is based on the article Genetic Testing and Screening in the topic Medical Ethics. If students have studied the article they should have a good awareness of the claims both for and against screening. They could use this knowledge to debate the claim

“everyone should be offered screening for genes that increase their risk of heart disease”.

The debate could be organised in one of two ways that both allow students to focus on the structure of the argument. This technique could be used for any topic but it is important that students are well prepared and familiar with the grounds they might use.

Paper debate

In each pair of students one is assigned to support the claim and the other to oppose it. One student writes down their claim and grounds. They pass the paper to the second student who then writes their criticism of the grounds or assumptions and then writes down their new claim and grounds.

The paper can then go back to the first student for further rebuttal and counter-argument.

At the end students should be able to analyse the components of their debate in terms of the model. They also have a record for further discussion in class.

This type of debate has become popular in the media in recent years and teachers may be able to find a relevant example.

Spoken debate

The structure would be similar to that given above except that a third student would be involved, taking notes and analysing in terms of the model.