**Debating Games 4.1**

***FOR OR AGAINST?***

According to how much space you have in the classroom and how easy it is for students to move about in it quickly and safely, create an opinion gauge or measure, which will show their response to statements that you read out, for example:

* Nominate different areas of the classroom and label them ‘For’, ‘Against’ and ‘Undecided’.
* Make the longest wall of the room a ‘temperature gauge’ from ‘very hot’ (i.e. I agree with this completely) to ‘very cold’ (I completely disagree) with ‘lukewarm’ (i.e. I’m not really sure) at the half way point.

Read out a series of propositions, one at a time. Students must decide how far they agree or disagree with the statement, then move to the place in the room that best represents this, e.g. on a countdown to 10.

Once in place, the teacher or any student can question any other student as to why they are standing there; in other words they must provide an argument explaining why they are for, against or undecided on the issue. It will be helpful for the teacher and/or confident students to model this on a practice-run.

Once you have a heard a selection of responses, say the same statement again and give students a 6 second chance to change their mind about what they believe, and move to an appropriate spot. You could question a couple of students to ask why they’ve moved – encourage them to repeat the argument that made them think twice.

In a seated version of the game, provide students with a set of ‘traffic lights’ they can hold up (eyes closed so they aren’t influenced by classmates) or use ‘thumbs up/down/sideways’.

**Suggested Propositions (lighthearted and serious)**

* Parents should not lie to their children by telling them that Santa Claus exists.
* Students who live more than a mile away from school should be provided with a free bicycle.
* Teachers should wear a school uniform.
* New medicines should be tested on animals first to make sure they are safe for humans.
* The legal age for buying cigarettes and alcohol should be lowered to 16, the same as the legal age for getting married.
* Health care should be paid for from the National Lottery.
* Everyone in society should earn the same amount, regardless of what job they do.

***QUESTION TIME***

Give the class a list of influential or controversial people who will be the panel on Question Time, for example:

* a scientist who tests cosmetics on animals
* the Queen
* Katie Price
* the chairperson of a leading Animal Rights group
* a surgeon who is trialling human transplant surgery using chimpanzee hearts and kidneys

In groups of 4, students select one person to interview and devise a list of 5 questions to ask them: the questions they think will be the most challenging and probing for that character.

Choose students to take on the roles of the characters.

Announce a proposed Bill of Parliament relevant to the topic, for example: ‘the Bill before Parliament would make it illegal to carry out any experiments on animals that might result in their suffering or death’.

Hot seat the characters to discover their views on the topic. Students should ask questions in role as members of the studio audience, taking part in a live broadcast.