

Let's Debate: The Pet Café

An extension of "Hanging out with hedgehogs"

Read **Hanging out with hedgehogs: is it 'kawaii' or cruel?'** (page 14, *What's Up* July 2016) to get a better handle on people's views about pet cafés. Pet cafes are popular with humans but animal activists wonder about the pets' quality of life. Have a debate in your class to help you think through this complex issue.

THE MOTION

That pet cafés should be banned because the cafés are not good for the café animals.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **SPLIT** your class into two large divisions: one for and one against the motion. You can either draw lots or sign up for the side you prefer on a first-come-first-served basis.
2. **SELECT** four debaters and a chairperson to represent your team. The rest of the team provides support for them.
3. **GATHER** information about the motion. Surf the internet for newspaper articles about this.
4. **BRAINSTORM** by conducting a **ROUND ROBIN** within your division. Agree on five good questions and write each on a separate sheet of paper. Then, form five groups within your division.

Round 1: Group A works on Question 1, Group B on Question 2, Group C works on Question 3 and so on. Each group writes down key points in response to its Round 1 question. At the end of five minutes, each group passes its Round 1 sheet to the group on its right to start Round 2.

Round 2: Group B gets Question 1, Group C gets Question 2, Group D gets Question 3 and so on.

By the fifth round, every group should have had a chance to respond to all five questions. You can add points or comment on earlier groups' points. Round Robins are a great way to get everyone's input, building on each others' points as you go along.

Sample questions (*You need only five questions for the Round Robin.*)

- In what ways are pet cafés not good for the pets in them?
 - In what ways are the pet cafés good for the pets in them?
 - Are the café pets better off by being in the cafés than being elsewhere?
 - Could the experience of being a café pet vary depending on the animal species?
 - Might the experience of being a café pet vary from one country to another?
 - What difference can the managers of pet cafés make to the pets' quality of life?
 - Would more rules about running pet cafés make a difference?
 - Any other questions that would be good for bringing out points related to the motion.
5. **DEVELOP** your team's debating points using the Round Robin's input. Prepare supporting data. Don't write full speeches – your debaters need the flexibility to be spontaneous and responsive to their opponents.
 6. **CONDUCT** the debate, with the two chairpersons in charge. As a class, set time limits. And, who should be on your panel of judges. The team for the motion starts and ends the debate. First speakers present their teams' respective positions. Last speakers wrap up. You may also wish to have a few minutes after the third speakers for the audience (or, floor) to speak. Whichever side wins, the whole class benefits from having participated in this exercise!