

Tug of War

Who is this for?

Grade 3+

Why use it?

To understand a problem's complexities and points of view

Apply research findings

Deepen understanding of key concepts

Test strength of arguments and evidence

Reason fairly from multiple viewpoints

Develop shared understanding

Bloom's Level

Adapted From:
Making Thinking Visible
Ritchhart, Church, and Morrison (2011).

What is it?

This routine supports students to fully develop their understanding of two predominant points of view in a text or inquiry. By placing the two precious things at stake at either end of a rope and assembling the best arguments and evidence to support both, they prepare themselves to engage as citizens in ways that respect the complexity of interests and perspectives in the issue at hand.

Materials - draw tug of war rope on whiteboard/chart paper, sticky notes

Set-Up - Individual, pairs, small groups or as a whole class

How does it work?

1. Ask students to
 - ✳ clearly define an issue or problem,
 - ✳ identify two opposing sides or contrasting points of view.
2. On a whiteboard or large chart paper, draw a line to represent a **tug-of-war** rope.
Ask students to label the two ends of the rope.
3. Invite students to generate arguments or **tugs** for either side of the rope and record these on sticky notes. (They can do this individually, in pairs, small groups, or as a class).
4. Invite students to place the **tugs** on the line, placing
 - ✳ the more powerful arguments near the ends
 - ✳ the less powerful arguments closer to the center

Debate will ensue, and consensus is the goal!
5. Pose questions to clarify and extend reasoning throughout this process.

Note:

You can also divide the class into small groups—each group collaborates to complete a tug-of-war, then share and synthesize.

Closing

- ✳ Record new questions which have emerged and can guide next steps in inquiry.
- ✳ Engage students in “*I used to think, now I think*” reflection.
- ✳ Challenge students to create 1-minute Elevator Speeches explaining the complexities of the issue to someone else.

Name: _____

Tug of War

What is the situation? _____

Side 1

Place a mark on the rope where your opinion lies - explain



Side 2

Compromise between
