

HIGHSCHOOL LESSON 1

LEARNING ACTIVITY 2: DEBATE

“SHOULD OUR CITY DECRIMINALIZE ALL DRUGS?”

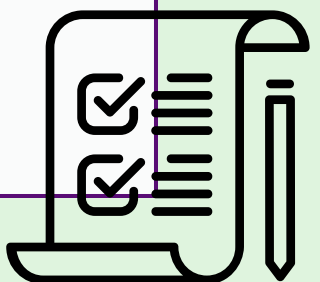


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KEY CONCEPTS

- **Legalization:** The substance becomes legal, often taxed and regulated (e.g., alcohol, cannabis).
- **Decriminalization:** Possession is still illegal, but not criminally punished (e.g., fines or referrals instead of arrest).
- **Drug Categories:**
 - **Legal & Regulated:** e.g., alcohol, tobacco, prescribed medications, nicotine.
 - **Illegal & Unregulated:** e.g., heroin, cocaine, LSD (in most places).
 - **Legal & Unregulated:** e.g., caffeine, some herbal supplements.
 - **Decriminalized** (in some countries): e.g., cannabis, psilocybin



DEBATE SCENARIO & PROPOSITION

The City of Brookdale is facing rising numbers of drug-related arrests, particularly for low-level possession of substances such as cannabis, ecstasy, and even harder drugs like heroin and methamphetamine.

A new proposal is on the table:

Decriminalize the possession of all drugs for personal use. This means that individuals caught with small amounts of drugs would not face arrest or jail time, but might be referred to counselling, education programs, or receive fines. The city would still treat drug trafficking and manufacturing as criminal offences.

Some community leaders want full legalization and regulation of some substances (like cannabis and psilocybin). Others believe decriminalization sends the wrong message or doesn't go far enough. The school board has asked high school students to join a mock policy forum to debate this issue and share their perspectives.

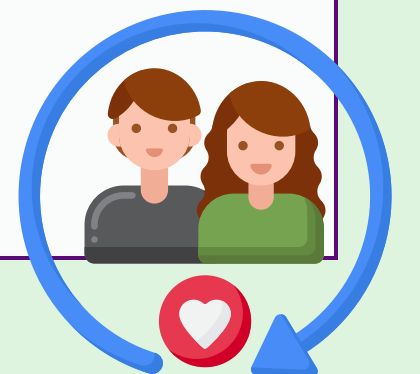
Debate Proposition:

“Brookdale should decriminalize the possession of all drugs for personal use.”



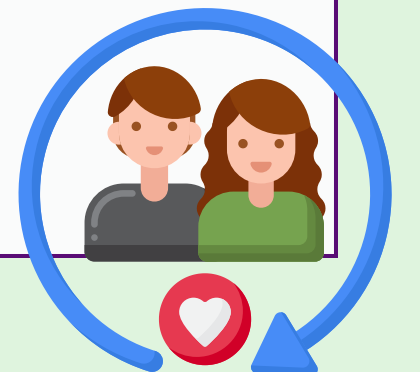
DEBATE ROLES

- **Pro Team:** Argues in favor of decriminalization
- **Con Team:** Argues against decriminalization
- **Panel:** Acts as City Council or Policy Review Board; asks questions and decides outcome (or helps the audience vote)
- **Audience:** Listens, takes notes, asks questions during Q&A, and votes on the most persuasive team



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

- CCSA (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction): Offers evidence-based research on drug use, decriminalization, and public health strategies.
- Canadian Drug Policy Coalition: Advocates for drug decriminalization, backed by evidence and policy reports.
- Health Canada – Substance Use: Overview of drug laws, public health policies, and harm reduction in Canada.
- Drug Policy Alliance: Provides clear breakdowns of legalization, decriminalization, regulation, and harm reduction.



DEBATE FORMAT

Segment	Time	Notes
Scenario Overview & Remind Roles	5 mins	Reintroduce topic and structure. Encourage respectful participation.
Opening Statements	2 mins/team	Each team presents a clear position statement.
Main Arguments	3-4 mins/team	Teams elaborate on points with evidence.
Rebuttals	2 mins/team	Respond directly to opposing points.
Audience/Panel Q&A	10 mins	Ask clarifying or challenging questions to both teams
Closing Statements	2 mins/team	Summarize strongest arguments; appeal to the panel/audience.
Panel Decision/Vote	5 mins	Panel announces decision or audience votes on persuasiveness.