

Activity 4: Mock Debate

(Adapted from [The Great Mini Debate](#))

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Learn about why different planning and policy issues may matter differently for various groups

AUDIENCE

- Age: Young adult learners (including High School students) or adult learners
- Political knowledge: No prior knowledge necessary
- Language: Beginner-intermediate English

MATERIALS

- Civics Toolbox Fact Sheets (topics are: healthy cities, housing, parks, urban design, public spaces, resilience, social planning, sustainability and transportation).

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1

Form groups of three people. Select one of the fact sheets at random. In your group, review and discuss the fact sheet you chose. Identify some of the key points in the fact sheet.



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➔ Step 2

Assign one person to play the role of an “interested resident,” one to play the role of a “not interested resident,” and one person to take notes of the conversation using the Mock Debate Worksheet. The “interested resident” will make arguments as to why their fact sheet topic is an important part of our city, and should be supported by City government and residents alike. The “not interested resident” will make arguments as to why the fact sheet topic isn’t an important part of our city and should not be supported by City government. For example, if the group chooses the “parks” fact sheet, arguments by the interested resident might include the importance of green space for people’s health and well being. Arguments by the non interested resident might include the high cost of maintaining parks.

➔ Step 3

After 10-15 minutes, all participants will come back to form one large group. Taking turns, each of the individuals that took notes of the conversation will provide a summary of key points from both the “interested” and “not interested” perspectives.

DISCUSSION: TALK ABOUT IT

Why might someone’s interest level in a project be different to that of their neighbour or friend? How might factors such as identity, income, or where you live influence someone’s interest level in a project?