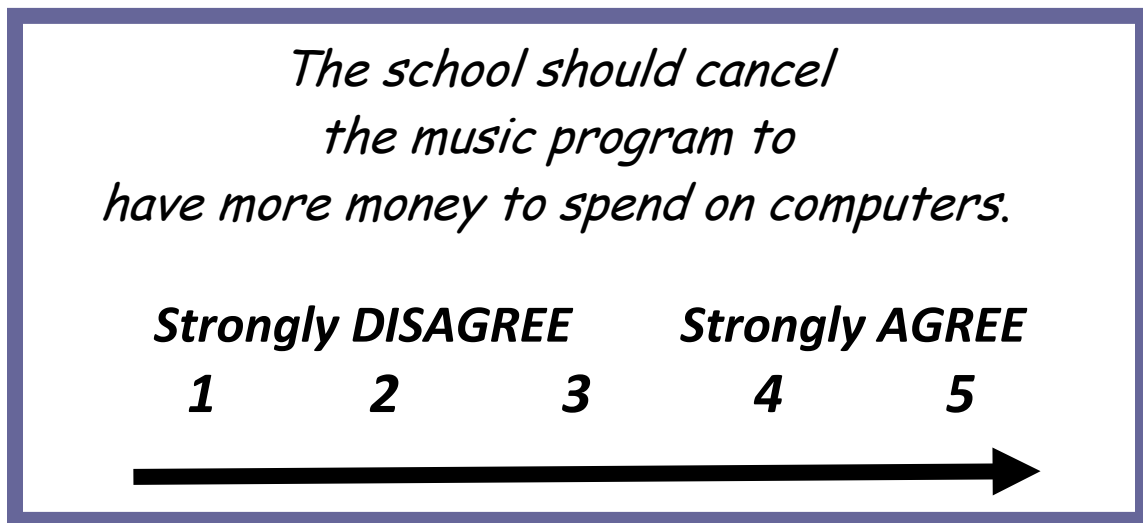


How to Take a Stand—Form an Opinion

1. Clear space in the classroom so that students may stand anywhere from one side to the other. Label one side of the classroom “strongly agree,” and label the other side, “strongly disagree.”



2. Post a sentence strip or card with a statement such as the ones listed below:
 - Children should not be able to eat sugary breakfast cereals.
 - Dogs should be kept on leashes
 - The school should offer more lunch choices
 - People should not be allowed to own guns.
 - If you get caught cheating on a test, you should fail the class.
 - If you misbehave in school, your parent should have to attend class with you.
 - Children should get paid for doing chores at home.
 - In order to reduce air pollution, people should ride buses rather than driving cars
 - People who own cats should keep them indoors.
3. After you read the statement, have students SILENTLY move their positions along a line in the classroom to show where they stand on the issue. Students may strongly agree/disagree and be at either side of the room, or may have more neutral or contradictory feelings about the statement. You may also have them list on a white board what number their position represents and bring that with them. They can jot their reasons why they hold that opinion on their white board before they move to their spot.
4. Supply students with language frames to state their position such as:
 - *I strongly agree/disagree with the statement because I think...*
 - *I agree/disagree somewhat with the statement because I feel... On the other hand I also know...*
 - *I want to convince you to agree/disagree with the statement because I think...*
 - *An important reason to consider my point of view is...*
5. Have students take turns orally explaining their position out loud to the class. After each student makes a statement, others may move to join or move away from that student based on their argument.
6. Continue this process until you think that as many of the arguments have been heard as possible. Chart these as the students share them on the white board for reference.
7. Use this activity as a pre-writing warm-up for any opinion/argument writing piece.

Adapted from *Write Time for Kids Nonfiction Reading and Writing Program Level 8*, Teacher Created Materials.