

The Great Paper Debate: An art lesson for children aged 9-11

Teacher Guide



This English lesson has been created for use with children aged 9 – 11 but could be adapted to use with younger or older children. The PowerPoint presentation can be edited to suit the needs of your learners.

The Lesson's aims

- **To consider and evaluate different viewpoints, and articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions** – Children will use the statements provided to engage in a debate about the impact that paper production and use has on the environment.
- **To write in an engaging, informative way, appropriate to the audience for and purpose of the writing** – Children will use the facts they have learned from the lesson to write a short informative and persuasive article.

Background information

Sustainably managed forests

Children will be introduced to sustainably managed forests for paper production. Sustainably managed forests are crucial for paper production, providing a reliable and renewable source of wood fibre while ensuring ecological and social benefits.

Key facts about sustainably managed forests for paper production

Renewable resource

Paper production relies on a renewable resource, trees, which are replenished through sustainable forestry practices.

Biodiversity and ecosystem services

Well-managed forests preserve biodiversity and provide essential ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration and clean water.

Growing forests

European forests are growing, with new growth exceeding harvested wood, ensuring a sustainable supply of timber for paper production. Between 2005 and 2020, European forests grew by 58,390 square kilometres – that's an area bigger than Switzerland and amounts to over 1,500 football pitches every day!

Certification

Certification programmes like FSC® and PEFC ensure responsible sourcing, traceability, and adherence to sustainable forestry standards.

Circular economy

The paper life cycle is a well-functioning system which minimises waste, with high paper recycling rates. The European paper recycling rate is 79% and 83% of paper packaging is recycled.

Low carbon intensity

Paper production, especially when utilising renewable energy and recycled fibre, has a surprisingly low carbon intensity. The print and paper industry is one of the lowest industrial greenhouse gas emitters in Europe, accounting for just 0.8% of emissions in 2022.

Reduced water consumption

The paper industry is constantly working to reduce water consumption and implement water management practices. In 2022, around 90% of the water used in the European paper industry was returned to its source (having been reused within the mill before being suitably treated), with the remainder either evaporated, staying within the product, or bound up in solid waste.

Environmental benefits

Sustainable forest management helps to mitigate climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and preserving forest ecosystems.

Social and economic benefits

Well-managed forests support local livelihoods and contribute to the broader economy through the production of paper and paper-based products.

Sources

- FSC® [What Is Sustainable Forestry?](#)
- PEFC [What Is Sustainable Forest Management?](#)
- Two Sides [Myths & Facts Booklet](#)
- WWF [Why Forests Are So Important](#)
- Forest Europe [State of Europe's Forests 2020](#)
- Love Paper [The Paper Fact File](#)

Resources needed:

- The Great Paper Debate Presentation
- For and Against Paper Statement Cards
- Writing paper

The Lesson sequence

Use the PowerPoint presentation to guide children through the lesson. You can edit the slides to tailor the learning to your pupils. You'll find useful notes on each slide in the presentation which expand on ideas and suggest relevant explanations, questions and points for discussion.

Slide 2	Share the lesson's objectives with pupils.
Slide 3	Share the statement with pupils and ask whether they agree or disagree with it. Invite them to explain and justify their views.
Slide 4	Use this slide to ask pupils to share what they think they already know about paper; how it's produced, its life cycle and its properties and uses.
Slides 5-7	<p>Hand out the For and Against Paper Statement Cards to groups of pupils. You can decide how many pupils to have in each group and how many statements to give to each group. Tell the children that they need to use these statements to have a debate in their groups. Explain that they need to argue the point on their statement convincingly, whether they really believe it or not.</p> <p>Support them with how to listen carefully to others' points and make links. You might need to model this, demonstrating how some points relate to each other better than others.</p> <p>Decide how long to give pupils to debate the topic. After their debates, ask the pupils to reflect on the statement about paper from earlier. Invite pupils to share whether their views have changed and why.</p>
Slides 8-17	<p>Use these slides to provide pupils with accurate information about the paper industry and sustainably managed forests.</p> <p>You might invite them to make notes as you move through the slides, exploring facts about paper.</p>
Slide 18	Using the information they have now learned, invite pupils to revisit the statements on their tables from the debate and to work as a group to 'ditch' the myths. Tell them to keep the facts to help them with their piece of writing.
Slide 19	<p>Explain the writing task to the class and tell them to use the slide title as the title for their short informative and persuasive article.</p> <p>Read through the writing success criteria to make sure pupils are clear on the task and what to include.</p> <p>During the writing task and once pupils have completed their articles, share good examples of written work where the success criteria have been met and how pupils have written in an engaging style to interest and persuade the reader.</p>
Slide 20	<p>Revisit the lesson's objectives. Ask the pupils what they have learned about paper, what surprised them and whether their opinions about paper use have changed since the start of the lesson.</p> <p>End with a vote, using the prompt on this slide.</p>