

Teacher's Guide

Debate in the Classroom: The Pebble Mine Pundits

Enduring Understandings

Alaska's economy, history and culture continue to be heavily impacted by resource development projects. Large scale development projects affect people who still draw their livelihood from the renewable resources supported by the land and water, i.e. subsistence users and sport and commercial fishermen. Development projects stir controversy from a wide range of interested parties: environmentalists, economists, political leaders, subsistence users, sport and commercial fishermen, sport and commercial hunters.

Estimated Time:

Four to five class periods

Materials needed:

Fact Finding Guide for Various Pundits

Moderator Guide

Debate Rubric

Web Sites

KTUU Reports on Pebble Mine Overview of the mine.

Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Mining, Land and Water Brief overview of Pebble and other mining projects in Alaska.

Pebble Mine in the news This link takes you to a list of stories about Pebble.

Renewable Resources Coalition This link takes you to an article by the Renewable Resources Coalition.

Alaska Journal of Commerce This link takes you to an article about the Pebble Mine in the Alaska Journal of Commerce.

Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. This link will take you to Northern Dynasty's website.

Truth About Pebble This link will take you to a pro-Pebble website.

Alaska Journal of Commerce This link takes you to an article about the Pebble Mine in the Alaska Journal of Commerce.

Alaska Mining History A basic introduction to Alaska mining history can be found at this site.

Alaska's Mining Industry Background This pro-mining site provides a brief analysis of some of the major mining projects in Alaska today, as well as a brief history of the Pebble Mine.

Anchorage Daily News Here are some of the most recent news stories about Pebble Mine in the Anchorage Daily News.

Pebble Debate Essay This essay seeks to frame the Pebble controversy in a larger historical context by comparing Pebble to the Guggenheim Corporation's plans for Alaska in the early 1900s.

Lesson Plan:

Introduction: Beginning in the late 1800s, mining began to have an important impact on Alaska history. Some of these projects have generated controversy between subsistence users, environmentalists, fishermen, loggers, and the tourism industry. One such project today is the proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region. Pebble is located less than 20 miles from the town of Iliamna between Lake Clark and Lake Iliamna. Northern Dynasty Mines, the Canadian company that hopes to develop the mine, says the area could hold 26 million ounces of gold, estimated to be worth more than \$10 billion dollars at today's prices. It may also hold an estimated 8.7 billion pounds of copper, and 420 million pounds of molybdenum. If developed, Pebble would be the largest pit mine in the world.

This mine has both supporters and opponents. Opponents fear chemicals will reach streams, and negatively impact the sport fishing, commercial fishing, and hunting industry. Some opponents also attack the mining proposal on economic grounds. Mine supporters promise nearly 2,000 jobs will be created for Alaskans by the project. The Pebble Mine highlights many important themes in Alaska: 1) Large scale development projects affect people who still draw their livelihood from the renewable resources supported by the land and water, i.e. subsistence users and sport and commercial fishermen. Development projects stir controversy from a wide range of interested parties: environmentalists, economists, political leaders, subsistence users, sport and commercial fishermen, sport and commercial hunters. 2) Alaska's economy, history and culture continue to be heavily impacted by resource development projects. 3) Powerful outside corporations continue to wield extraordinary power on Alaska's economy, history and livelihood.

Inform students that they will research and debate the pros and cons of the Pebble Mine from a variety of perspectives. Each student is expected to research the position of a specific pundit in the debate on whether the Pebble Mine should be developed. These affected pundits include the following: Subsistence user from one of the villages that would be impacted by the mine, Mining CEO, Alaska Governor, Sport Fishing Lodge Owner, Commercial Fisherman, and Economist. Students will research the views of one of these pundits and participate in a debate centering on the topic of whether Alaska should permit the Pebble Mine development. Each group will also have a moderator. Students should read the KTUU reports on the Pebble Mine for an overview of the proposed mine. It is also a good idea to review the debate rubric with the students to identify exactly what you will be looking for in the debate, and how the students will be evaluated.

Create groups of seven, and assign each member of the group one of the following roles: Subsistence User, Mining CEO, Alaska Governor, Sports Fishing Lodge Owner, Commercial Fisherman, Economist, Moderator. Hand out the Fact Finding sheets to each of the students, and the moderator guide to the moderator. Allow students to research information that will help them prepare for the debate. The Fact Finding sheet should help students focus on information that will help them understand the peculiar position of the pundit they will role play in the debate.

Explain to the students that today they will use the information collected in yesterday's assignment to prepare a position paper for the Pebble Mine debate, which will be held during the next class session. This position paper should be one page, and include specific, well-developed arguments as to why their pundit

either supports or opposes the Pebble Mine development. Students should also anticipate the conflicting arguments of the other principal characters in the debate, and form rebuttals to these arguments. Conclude by reviewing the rubric that you the teacher will use to assess student performance in this debate.

Gather the first selected group in front of the class. It is a good idea to have the participants seated at a long table in front of the class with their names and titles positioned in front of them. The moderator will inform each pundit on the distinguished panel that he or she will have 60 seconds for an opening statement before the questioning begins. (You may adjust the allotted times to suit your peculiar style, or the nature of your class). Allow for opening statements. The moderator then moves to one of the participants, and asks a question. The participant has 60 seconds to respond. The moderator allows for a 30-second rebuttal from any of the other participants. When this cycle of question and rebuttal has been completed with all of the participants, the moderator can ask some of the at-large questions he or she prepared, and/or ask for closing statements from each of the participants, not to exceed 60 seconds. Repeat with other groups as time permits.

Alaska Standards:

History: B-2 D-2, 3, 5, 6

AK History: AH. CPD 5

Assessment:

See Debate Rubric