

# Debating dolphin captivity

## Activity for schools

### Duration:

approx. 50 minutes

### Age group:

approx. 8 – 12 but can be adapted for other age groups.

### Objectives:

- To introduce the topic of whales and dolphins in captivity
- To encourage pupils to consider the ethics of keeping cetaceans in captivity
- To introduce debating skills
- To explain WDCS's point of view

### Vocabulary that may be needed:

Cetacean, bottlenose dolphin, orca, dolphinarium, drive hunt, confinement, captive, welfare, monotonous, transportation, skin lesions, grieving, chlorinated, signature whistles, dorsal fin.

There is a 'Dictionary' available on [www.wdcs.org/kidzone](http://www.wdcs.org/kidzone) within the Info Box.

### Equipment:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Fake/pretend food item
- Grapes/raisins or similar
- A3 sheets (minimum 2)
- Marker pens x 2
- 'FOR' & 'AGAINST' argument sheet to help the debate
- A stopwatch
- Origami dolphin instructions

### Safety:

- Check food allergies/dietary restrictions
- Usual classroom risks

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## Suggested plan and timeframe

- 1.**  
Introduction  
(5 mins)  
State that in today's lesson we will be discussing and finding out more about what happens when whales and dolphins are kept in captivity. Before going any further, ask the students if any of them have, or are interested in, going to see whales or dolphins perform at a show. Ask for a show of hands and keep a note of the numbers. Explain that the lesson is going to be split up into:
  - a debate,
  - a PowerPoint presentation,
  - a captivity demonstration
  - and then a short conclusion.
- 2.**  
Preparation for debate  
(15 mins)  
Split the class into 2 groups, ideally of equal numbers. One group will be arguing **FOR** captivity and the other **AGAINST** it. Each group should have an appointed student chairperson who will write down all the ideas that the groups come up with, to form the basis of the debate. There are crib sheets available for the adult in charge of the class to use, to prompt ideas for each groups argument, if necessary.
- 3.**  
Debate  
(10-12 mins)  
One person from each team is given strictly **1** minute to put as many, well-constructed arguments across in support of their stance on the captivity debate. This will be timed using an interval timer that will beep after **1** minute. After representatives from both teams have spoken, a general debate will begin between the groups. This should be chaired by an adult to ensure that both teams are given a fair amount of time to speak.
- 4.**  
PowerPoint  
(8 mins)  
This presentation puts across WDCS's view on whale and dolphin captivity, and gives ways in which people can help by supporting our work.
- 5.**  
Role play  
(10 mins)  
A role playing activity that aims to highlight some of the main issues that cetaceans face in captivity. See separate role play activity sheet.
- 6.**  
Conclusion/  
summary  
(10 mins)  
Ask for a show of hands to see if opinions have changed and, if time, perhaps discuss this outcome.