

The lesson takes place in the 11th grade (16- and 17-year-old learners). In the last few lessons, the topic of raw materials and their utilisation has already played a role. Now the focus is on the topic of oil sands and their extraction in Canada. By means of a role discussion, which the teacher is carrying out for the first time in this form (→ preliminary consideration), different perspectives are to be considered. In the previous week, the learners had time to prepare for this and to develop well-founded arguments.

➔ The bell rings and the students slowly make their way to their seats. The teacher, who is already in the room, begins the lesson with a brief welcome. She then introduces the topic that the learners have been working on since the previous week with the following words: *'We can't demonise oil sands extraction per se because we need the raw materials.'* She sends the students into their familiar small groups. While they push their tables together and move chairs, one pupil looks for his group and shouts across the room: *'Where are my eco-mates?'* He laughs, the statement was

apparently not meant seriously. The teacher overhears this.

The work in the small groups begins, the arguments are worked out according to the role. It seems that the learners are actively involved. After around 30 minutes, the teacher gives a signal, the group work ends and the learners return to their original places. One pupil seems nervous and keeps looking at her paper. We recognise that she is reading through her arguments.

The learners who have already been chosen to represent their group and role take their places in front of the class. The discussion begins and the moderator introduces it. We observe that some of the learners are confidently representing themselves and their role. Insecurities are also noticeable, not everyone feels comfortable in their situation. Arguments are backed up with facts, but the more impulsively they enter the discussion, the less data is provided. It is no longer possible to judge how and whether the boundaries between the opinion of the role and one's own opinion are blurred.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Athabasca_River_Loefields_Parkway_%282987364327%29.jpg

→ TASK IN THE LESSON

Oil sands mining in the Athabasca region of Canada has been a central issue in the debate on the use of natural resources for decades. In this discussion, you take on the roles of various interest groups involved in the discussion about oil sands mining in the Athabasca region. Each group has its own goals, perspectives and challenges. Empathise with your role and prepare your arguments well for the debate. The aim of the simulation game is to find a joint solution that fulfils economic, environmental and social requirements.



ROLE 1 – INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY (REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CREE FIRST NATION)

Name: Elijah / Elli Swift
Job: Eldest of the Cree community

Background: You're a respected elder of the Cree First Nation and advocate for the protection of indigenous rights and territories. Your community has lived in the Athabasca region for generations and is heavily dependent on the natural resources there.

Goals:

- protection of culturally and spiritually significant areas
- participation in all decisions affecting the land of indigenous peoples
- fair compensation and participation in the economic benefits of oil sand extraction

→ The other roles



→ ARGUMENTS IN ROLE DISCUSSION A

Mayor John McAllister:

For me, first of all it's important that I try to harmonise all parties here somehow. But that also means that I have to make compromises when it comes to the environment and companies. Because, in order to protect the citizens of my city, I also must intervene with companies when it comes to the environment. But the environment also has to accept that not everything is possible to protect the well-being of the people, because we are dependent on the companies.



→ ARGUMENTS IN ROLE DISCUSSION B

Indigenous Elijah Swift:

I claim that certain profits have to be invested into the environment. For example, 20 % of profits must be used directly into environmental protection measures.

CEO of EnergyCorp Sarah Hudson:

Already 10% goes directly to environmental improvement and we as Energy Corp or I could change the percentages to benefit the indigenous population.

Activist in an environmental organisation Anton Richter:

But you also have to ask yourself whether 20 % would be enough at all, because the whole world is also losing out because of environmental destruction. [...] Roughly speaking, this also has an effect on the whole world.



FEEDBACK TEACHER → AFTER DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

The subsequent reflection via a → survey was difficult, as the learners recognised the global problem from their sometimes very limited experiences but saw little scope for action themselves to make their own contributions towards improvement. They often said that you have to have enough money to be able to afford environmental protection, or it was pointed out that the parents already had a photovoltaic system that cost a lot of money and that the advice on the use of alternative energy sources would not be good. Overall, they are concerned, but it is far too far away in terms of space and experience.



FEEDBACK LEARNER AFTER DISCUSSION

I thought the discussion was good, but it was very difficult because there were so many different roles. There were so many different opinions, and you hardly got a chance to speak. I didn't even use 50% of my arguments. That made it really difficult. I think it's better when only two big parties discuss with each other.