

7TH GRADE HISTORY – DEBATING THE CRUSADES

In World History, our seventh graders recently engaged in a lively debate on one of the most complex periods of the Middle Ages: the Crusades. The guiding question was both simple and profound: Were the Crusades healthy and necessary, or were they not? Students formed teams to argue each side, building their cases from research and historical understanding.

The debate didn't stop there. After one team won the first round, they had to flip sides and argue the opposite position. This challenged students to think critically, to empathize with perspectives they may not have initially agreed with, and to communicate their ideas clearly in front of their peers. Their teacher, Mr. Fernald, shared, *"It was also good for them to get up on their feet and articulate thoughts... instead of researching for a paper, they got to research for an individual who was going to present possibly some of their research."*

This activity highlights **C: Challenging Case Studies**, as students grappled with the historical and moral complexity of the Crusades, and **D: Defend and Discern**, as they built logical arguments while also discerning truth and perspective from history. The debate not only deepened their historical knowledge but also strengthened skills in reasoning, public speaking, and teamwork.

