



What They Say About Hunting

TEACHER'S GUIDE

An educational video
program for grades 7—12



National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.

What They Say About Hunting

INTRODUCTION

Hunting continues to be a controversial and emotional topic in American society. The inflamed rhetoric that often defines discussions about hunting makes it difficult to differentiate between fact and opinion. The purpose of the *What They Say About Hunting* program is to see beyond opinion and rhetoric and arrive at some fundamental facts about hunting in America.

WE TOOK YOUR SUGGESTIONS

The video features a dramatized high school debate moderated by an official from The Council for Wildlife Conservation and Education. The classroom debate format was actually recommended by high school students and educators from across the nation by means of a contest wherein contributions were graded according to creativity and originality. Many excellent entries were received and cash prizes were awarded to the very best. As a result, *What They Say About Hunting* was actually produced in cooperation with students and educators alike.

AUTHORITATIVE CONTENT

Commentary and position statements from groups as diverse as National Wildlife Federation, the Fund for Animals, Wildlife Management Institute, the National Shooting Sports Foundation and the Humane Society of the United States are included in the presentation.

**“It was nice to see a
balanced look at
the hunting issue.”**
— Educator
Carmel, NY



CONTENT OVERVIEW

The debate features discussions of the following questions:

- Is hunting endangering the future of wildlife in America?
- Is hunting a true contest between hunter and game?
- Are hunters responsible sportsmen?
- Is hunting still a valid activity in our modern society?

What They Say About Hunting seeks to find basic truths within these questions, yet the program does not draw conclusions for students. Rather, it offers, as clearly and concisely as possible, information from both sides of the issue to assist students in drawing their own informed conclusions.

We hope you will find the program a valuable addition to your biology, environmental science and current events curriculum.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

What They Say About Hunting has been designed and tested with the cooperation of educators and conservation professionals. It is hoped the video will provide strong background information on the hunting issue while also serving as a springboard for further discussion. The Activity Masters included in this package are meant to encourage further thought and debate.

CONDUCT YOUR OWN CLASSROOM HUNTING DEBATE

This package includes a *What They Say About Hunting* booklet with position statements from many important organizations on both sides of the hunting issue. Additional copies are available from the National Shooting Sports Foundation or may be downloaded at www.nssf.org/safety.

Following the procedure outlined in the video itself, have your class divide into those who oppose hunting and those who support it. Neutral or undecided students can form their own group. Distribute copies of the *What They Say About Hunting* booklet to each group. Give each group up to a week to study the material and form arguments in support of their position.



As educator, serve as moderator for your own classroom debate about hunting. Pattern the discussion points after those in the video. You or your students can also create your own discussion points related to the hunting issue.

Following the debate, neutral or undecided students can be asked if the debate swayed them for or against hunting and if they would now like to join one group or the other.

WHAT DO “THEY” SAY ABOUT HUNTING

Listed below are several organizations which make statements concerning hunting in the *What They Say About Hunting* program.

The Humane Society of the United States

The National Wildlife Federation

Wildlife Management Institute

The Fund For Animals

National Shooting Sports Foundation

Of the five organizations listed on Activity Master 2, The Fund for Animals and The Humane Society of the United States have official positions against hunting.

The remaining three organizations all support regulated hunting, although the degree of their support varies.

FACT vs. OPINION

Because this program has been designed to present an overview of both sides of a controversial issue, it is difficult to prepare a test to measure how much a student may have “learned” from the program. This activity master, therefore, has been prepared to measure the student’s ability to differentiate between fact and opinion as presented in a debate format.

Before showing this program, it will be helpful to explain to the students that the program will contain both fact and opinion and that they should view the program with an eye toward differentiating between the two.

For example, when one spokesperson in the program argues that there is not a true contest between hunter and game and that game has little

FACT vs. OPINION

chance to escape, students should recognize this as an opinion because many people believe that the opposite is true.

When a conservation professional states that there were 500,000 deer in the United States in 1900 but that there are more than 20 million today—and this statement is substantiated by other spokesmen—students should recognize this as fact.

This activity master will hopefully help the students differentiate between factual statements and statements which cannot be proven correct or incorrect. In the future, then, this lesson may assist students in evaluating information that they receive from sources such as periodicals, newspapers, radio and television.

ANSWERS

1. **Opinion.** Although many people believe that there is not a true sport involved in hunting, many others believe that hunting is extremely challenging due to the game's natural instinct, speed, etc.
2. **Opinion.** Surveys have shown that 3 out of 10 of all those who live in urban areas think hunters are not good sportsmen. However, the vast majority of landowners and game wardens who have regular contact with hunters believe that most hunters are good sportsmen.
3. **Fact.** Conservation history books and wildlife management professionals agree that habitat destruction and commercial exploitation had reduced the number of white-tailed deer to about 500,000 in 1900. Today, population estimates by the various state wildlife agencies set the population at more than 20 million.
4. **Opinion.** Sportsmen pay millions of dollars each year for the protection of many species of wildlife—both hunted and non-hunted—but there are those who believe that hunters would lose their interest in wildlife conservation if hunting were banned.

FACT vs. OPINION

5. **Fact.** Statistics provided by state wildlife agencies indicate that the average hunter might hunt for three years or more before he is successful.
6. **Fact.** Hunters pay more than \$1 billion for conservation each year through their purchase of hunting licenses and permits and through the payment of a special 11 percent excise tax on arms and ammunition.
7. **Opinion.** A recent study of junior and senior high school students indicated that roughly 50 percent thought that hunting was cruel and roughly 50 percent thought that it was not.
8. **Opinion.** While it is fact that hunters were the first to call for new laws to protect wildlife nearly 100 years ago, there are no guarantees they would be again.
9. **Fact.** Conservation historians and wildlife management professionals agree that regulated hunting in this country poses no threat to any wildlife species.
10. **Fact.** All states now have hunter education programs, and roughly half of these programs are mandatory; first-time hunters must enroll in, and successfully complete, a hunter education course in order to be eligible to purchase a hunting license.

THE "UN-ENDANGERED SPECIES"

These species have been rescued from near extinction by wildlife management programs administered by state and federal conservation agencies.

Wild Turkey

Then: 650,000

Now: 5,400,000



Pronghorn Antelope

Then: 12,000

Now: 1,000,000



White-tailed Deer

Then: 500,000

Now: 20,000,000



Rocky Mountain Elk

Then: 40,000

Now: 1,000,000



Wood Duck

Then: Very Rare

Now: 5,500,000



Trumpeter Swan

Then: Only 73

Now: 25,000

