
Data Centers

Link:

<https://stosselintheclassroom.org/both-sides-data-centers/>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. What is a data center?
3. In the ABC News video, Elizabeth Schulze visited a resident who said a nearby data center emits a “low hum 24/7.” Should data centers be allowed to make noise that might bother nearby residents? Does doing so infringe on the rights of residents? Why/Why not?
4. According to the Stossel video, what are the two primary resources used by data centers?
5. Elizabeth Schulze interviewed a woman who claimed her average electricity bill has increased by 23% over the past year. According to the video, what caused that increase?
6. In the Stossel video, Paige Lambermont said: "If we slow down, other countries aren't going to. You're going to be getting the authoritarian Chinese version of AI, rather than the United States innovator's version of AI." Should we be concerned about China's advancements in AI? Why/Why not?
7. According to Elizabeth Schulze, most data centers in the U.S. are or will be in cities, towns, or suburbs. According to Andy Masley, why are data centers built in established areas?
8. Paige Lambermont argued that if the U.S. government hadn't limited the use of fossil fuels and nuclear energy, data centers' demand for electricity would be a non-issue. Should the government reduce regulations on energy? Why/Why not?
9. In the ABC News video, Tom Uttech said he was told that if he didn't agree to sell his land, it would be taken by eminent domain. What is eminent domain? Should eminent domain be used to acquire land for data centers? Why/Why not?
10. Paige Lambermont said that utilities are treated as a monopoly. What did she mean by that statement?

11. The ABC News video showed this to be a very contentious issue, with one woman being dragged out of a town meeting and a city mayor claiming he's received threats. Why is this issue so contentious? Do you think the strong feelings surrounding this issue are justified? Why/Why not?
12. The Stossel video showed how complicated it can be to connect new energy plants to the electric grid. Were you surprised to learn about those difficulties? Why/Why not?
13. Tom Uttech said people should care about what's happening in his town because "it's their backyard next." What did he mean by that statement?
14. Paige Lambermont said: "You can do new and interesting things if you're running your own thing and you're making your own rules." What did she mean by that statement? Do you agree with her statement? Why/Why not?
15. In the ABC News video, Alison Lindburg said that regulations of data centers need to happen faster, and that it's surprising her "smallish city" is leading the way on regulation. Should state governments regulate data centers? Should the federal government? Why/Why not?
16. In the Stossel video, John Stossel and Paige Lambermont argued that we could have plenty of energy for data centers if the government was less involved. If energy became a non-issue, would data centers still be a problem? Why/Why not?
17. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
18. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
19. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
20. What else would you like to learn about this topic?