

Workshop 2: Killer Plagues**Reading 3 Project: The Black Death
Bioweapon Debate**

Should scientists keep deadly plagues in their labs?

Project: Is it a good idea for scientists to keep samples of deadly plagues? Have a debate to discuss this issue.

Procedure**1. Form teams.**

Set up two teams of four or five students each. One team will argue that keeping deadly plagues is a good idea. The other team will argue that it is a bad idea. Keep in mind that you don't have to agree with one position or the other. You just have to do your best to argue that it's correct.

2. Have a strategy session.

Each team should meet to come up with points to support its argument. Be sure to come up with reasons or examples that explain each point. The teams can use the Internet for research, if it's helpful. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Pro:** Keeping samples of deadly plagues is a **good** idea because scientists can use them to create new vaccines and cures.
- **Con:** Keeping plagues is a **bad** idea because the threat is too great. What if a scientist was accidentally infected by the sample?

3. Prepare.

Choose your best arguments. Decide who is going to present which point, and in what order. Arrange the room so that the presenters can easily be heard and seen. Other students in your class will be the judges.

4. Debate!

The team that is for keeping deadly plagues will present the first point. Then the team that is against keeping deadly plagues will present a point. Continue taking turns until all points have been presented. At the end, each team will have one minute to summarize its points, or argue against a point made by the other team. The judges will vote on which team won based on which made the best arguments.