# Primer: Creating Agree/Disagree T-Charts

This primer describes key steps and decision-points for creating agree/disagree T-charts at the beginning of an instructional unit.

T-Chart Purpose: Provide a thru-line across a unit, enabling you and your students to consider claims about a phenomenon as a class over time as you gather evidence from sense-making activities.

T-Chart Anatomy:
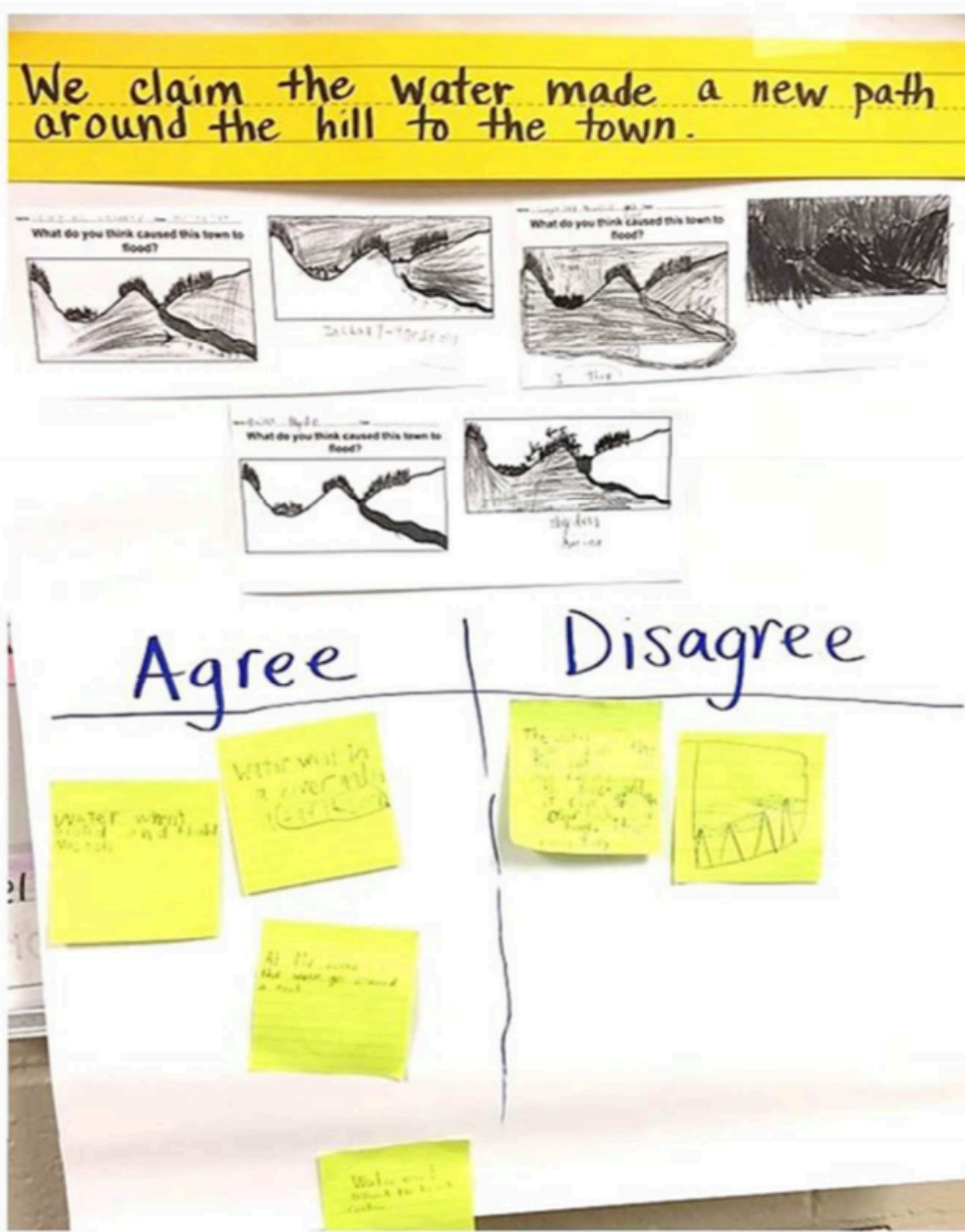
The "claim": A statement of how/why the phenomenon occurred, synthesized from students' initial ideas and written in student-friendly language.

Examples of initial models that show the claim, to help students visualize and see where the claim came from.

Agree/Disagree columns: This is where evidence and reasoning will go over time, with supporting evidence in "Agree" and refuting evidence in "Disagree." (You may consider introducing vocab through different column titles like "Supports" and "Refutes.")

Steps and Decisions:

1. After students have created initial models, look across your class set for patterns. Are there several main explanatory ideas that students are proposing? These might be good nominees for "claims."
   - ➢ Tip: Aim to select 2-4 ideas that are prevalent in your class, pursueable (through experiments, readings, etc.), and that connect to core ideas you're seeking to develop through the unit.
   - ➢ Decision-Point: Consider whether this is something you do on your own, or whether to have students participate by looking across models and identifying ideas that are the same.

2. Start the physical T-charts, one for each claim, and introduce them to students. Indicate that in looking across students' initial models, there are several main claims the class is considering (or ideas they have for how and why the phenomenon occurred). Today you're going to discuss these claims and introduce a tool that the class will use to keep track of things we learn and whether they agree or disagree with the claims.
   - ➢ Decision-Points: How and when you are going to define "claim" and "evidence" in your class. (Here makes sense for "claim," what about "evidence"? Where have they heard these words used before?)

3. Invite students to weigh in on the wording of the claims and the placement of their models as examples of particular claims.
   - ➢ Tip: Explicitly ask students if they want to revise the claims to make them more consistent with what they think.
   - ➢ Decision-Point: You may have already placed students' models on the charts, so they are weighing in on your placement, or you may want students to place their own models on the charts where they think they connect.

4. Introduce the "Agree" and "Disagree" columns (or whatever titles you give them). Describe how as you think about personal experiences, do experiments, and read books to figure out , you will come back to these charts to decide whether the things you're learning agree or disagree with the claims.

5. During the same lesson or a subsequent lesson, have students think about a situation they would likely have personal experiences with that connects to the phenomenon. (For example, in the case of the town that flooded, the teacher asked students to think about a time when their classroom flooded, or other experiences they've had with water moving from place to place.) Have several students share a personal experience with the class and think together about whether that experience agrees or disagrees with any of the claims. Add the experience to the appropriate column.
   - ➢ Tip: This can be a new kind of talk/thinking for students. Consider selecting an experience that has a clear connection to one of the claims, and inviting students to think about that claim specifically.