



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

Are you passionate about sharpening your critical thinking and speaking skills?

CAN MONEY BUY YOU HAPPINESS?



WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG.UK

How to Use this Debate Pack

Whether you have just a few minutes or a full lesson, this Debate Pack has got you covered. It's fully flexible to the time you have, and what you and your class need.

Got 5 minutes?

Play the debate video straight through and dive right into the debate. No need to pause at the prompts. It's a quick, engaging way to get your students thinking and talking.

Got 10-15 minutes?

Pause at the prompts in the video to explore additional ideas your class might have. Use the additional points or Power Facts if you'd like. This gives students a chance to contribute their own thoughts and deepen the discussion.

Want to extend to 30 minutes or a full lesson?

Check out the lesson plan and writing tasks below. There is also a full Fact Sheet with amazing further reading if your students want to go deeper on the topic.

Key

This is what each of the icons in the pack mean



This is what the presenter says on the video



This is a Power Fact to explain or prompt debate that's not in the video



This is an additional debate point you can use that's not in the video



Introduction and Brain Gym Question

Introduction

Welcome back to the Big Debate Club! My name is Becky and today we are asking the question: Can Money Buy Happiness? So let's get started!



The Beatles once sang, "I don't care too much for money, for money can't buy me love," and money can't buy you happiness either—or can it? It certainly makes things easier and can resolve some issues, but the things that bring true happiness are priceless, aren't they?

You decide! In this debate, you can either argue that money can buy happiness or that it can't.

Brain Gym Question

Before we get started, I have a question for you: What is the world's most valuable currency?

- a. The US Dollar
- b. The Kuwaiti Dinar
- c. United Arab Emirates Dirham
- d. The Japanese Yen

Which of the 4 potential answers will you choose? Pause the video, turn to your partner, and tell them your answer. You can either argue that money can buy happiness or that it can't.

The Kuwaiti Dinar is the world's most valuable currency. This means that if you exchanged it for another type of money, like the US Dollar, you would get more dollars in return.



Kuwait, a small country in the Middle East, is rich because it has a lot of oil, which it sells to other countries. It makes its currency very strong.





FOR: Money can buy you happiness

We're going to share reasons for both sides of the debate, then it's up to you to think of the rest!

Money can fulfil all your needs

You could argue that money means you can fulfil all your needs. You gain happiness from having everything you need—the assurance of not having worries about having your needs met can bring contentment.



Money can provide more life satisfaction

Or maybe you could say that more money can provide more life satisfaction. The University of Pennsylvania's Professor Killingsworth did a study of the day-to-day feelings of 34,000 people and found that the higher the income a person had, the more happiness and satisfaction with life they experienced—suggesting money does buy happiness.

Can you think of another reason why money can buy you happiness? 

Freedom and Flexibility

You could argue that money brings freedom and flexibility. Money provides the freedom to make choices without being constrained by financial limitations.



Power and Status

You could say money can provide power. Having a lot of money can mean you have status or power without even spending it—through special treatment or making friends in high places.

The Happiness Plateau

A study by Princeton University found that having more money can make people happier, but only up to a certain point. In the US, this point is about \$75k per year. Beyond that, having more money doesn't really make you much happier. This is the 'happiness plateau'. [Read More.](#)



AGAINST: Money cannot buy you happiness

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that money cannot buy happiness.


Money cannot bring you emotional support

You might be thinking that money cannot bring you emotional support. Money cannot buy a support system of family or friends—for those hard times in life, real friendship or family support doesn't come from money.



What kind of happiness does money create?

You could ask, what kind of happiness does money create? A study carried out at San Francisco State University found that more psychological, experience-based things such as travelling, forging new relationships, or helping others have a greater ability to make you happy, and these aren't necessarily gained through money.

Can you think of another reason why money cannot buy you happiness? 

Social and emotional costs

You can argue that the pursuit of money can have social and emotional costs. Trying too hard to get rich can lead to stress and loneliness.



Temporary Security

You could say that money doesn't give permanent security. If you don't manage your money well, you could lose it, so it doesn't necessarily keep you happy for a long time.

Does spending actually make you happy?

Research from the University of Illinois shows that people who care a lot about buying stuff (like clothes, gadgets, or cars) tend to be less happy. They often feel more anxious and less satisfied with life. [Read more](#)



FactSheet: Can Money Buy Happiness?



Here's six key facts - three on each side - if you'd like to go a little deeper.

Money Can Buy Happiness

Happiness Plateau

A study by Princeton University found that having more money can make people happier, but only up to a certain point. In the U.S., this point is about \$75,000 a year. Beyond that, having more money doesn't really make you much happier. This idea is called the "happiness plateau." [Source](#).

Quality of Life in Wealthy Countries

Countries that are richer usually have better schools, hospitals, and overall living conditions. These things can make life better and people happier. [Source](#)

Global Happiness Index

The World Happiness Report shows that countries with more money often have happier people. But it's not just about money - things like good health, strong friendships, and freedom also matter. [Source](#)

Money Cannot Buy Happiness

Materialism and Well-being

Research from the University of Illinois shows that people who care a lot about buying stuff (like clothes, gadgets, or cars) tend to be less happy. They often feel more anxious and less satisfied with life. Source: Diener, E., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). "Very Happy People." *Psychological Science*, 13(1), 81-84

Spending on Others

A study found that people feel happier when they spend money on others, like buying gifts or donating to charity, rather than spending it on themselves. Source: Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2008). "Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness." *Science*, 319(5870), 1687-1688.

The Impact of Debt on Happiness

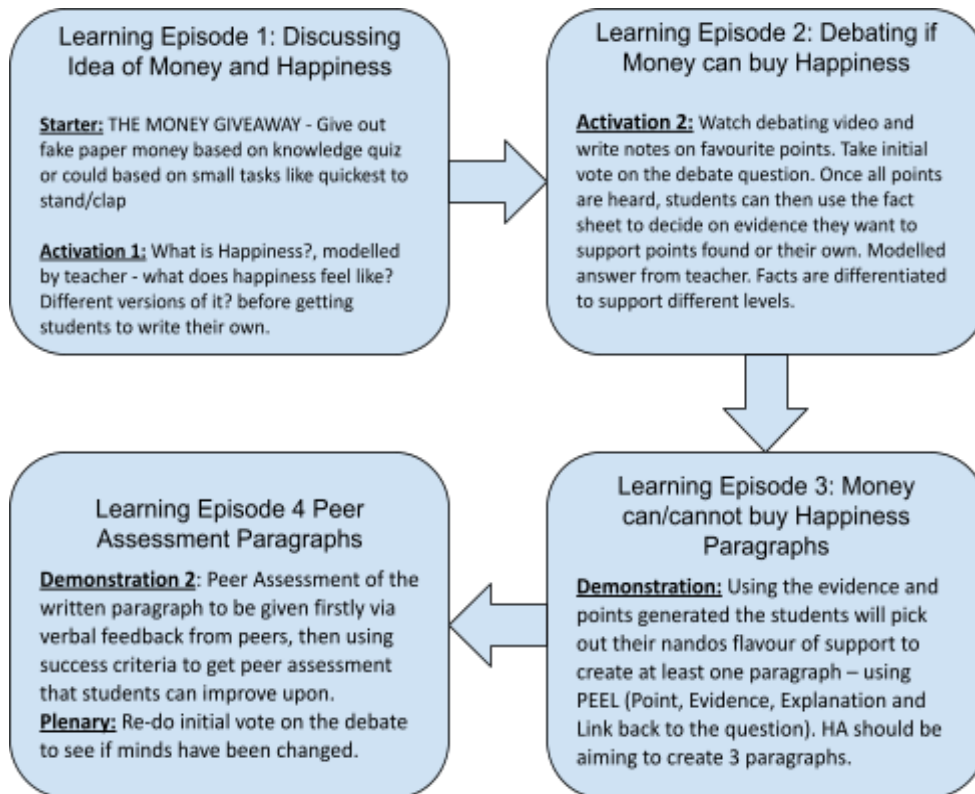
Research shows that owing a lot of money (debt) makes people feel stressed and unhappy. Debt can limit what you can do in life and cause a lot of worry. Source: Gathergood, J. (2012). "Debt and Depression: Causal Links and Social Norm Effects." *The Economic Journal*, 122(563), 1094-1114.



'Perfect Paragraphs' Lesson Plan

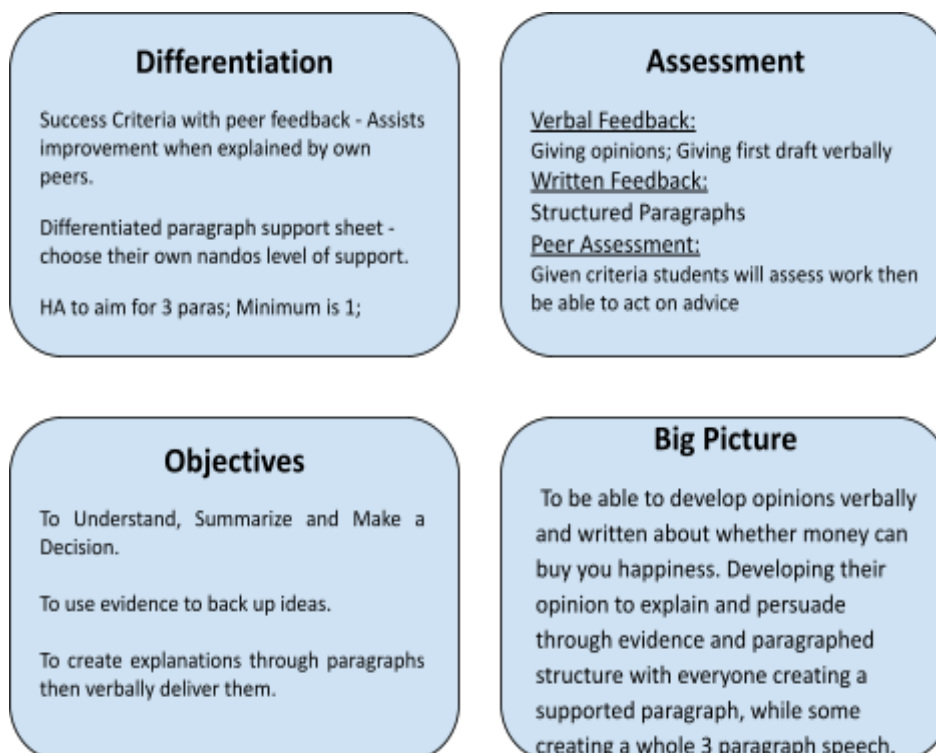
Structure of the Lesson

Here's a lesson plan for you, including four learning episodes. It gives you ways to differentiate to make sure everyone's needs are met in your class, and a way to assess learning.



What are we trying to achieve?

And how can we check every student can do this in your class?



Success Criteria: Paragraph/Speech Writing

Level 3

Make a single sentence point. Mention a fact and say what you think of it. Use full sentences. 1 paragraph written.

Level 4

Make a simple and short sentence for your point. Make a simple descriptive comment about the fact chosen and the impact that it has. Some link to the question is established. 1-2 paragraphs written.

Level 5

A simple sentence point. An effective piece of evidence that supports the point. Explanation of how the evidence supports the point and proves it. Link made back to the original debate question and how it answers it. 2-3 Paragraphs written.

Level 6

Clear, short point. Evidence is written in their own words. Explanation of how the evidence is relevant and proves the point. Explanation of why this evidence is important. Link back to the original debate question and whether this is the strongest point out of all points written. 3 Paragraphs written.

Writing Paragraph Support

POINT

Set out the point you are making in one sentence and which side of the debate it comes from.. Make sure to use the question words to phrase your viewpoint as it shows your understanding of the question.

EVIDENCE

Demonstrate the view you are making with a specific piece of evidence – an example, fact or idea.

EXPLANATION

Explain how the evidence you just used proves the point you made at the start of the paragraph.

LINK

Relate how your point answers the question and the debate. Prove it? Disprove it?

Sentence Starters

POINT

LEMON & HERB: One reason why I (agree/disagree) with this debate is because...

MEDIUM: One point I have for this debate is...

HOT: You could say that...

EVIDENCE

LEMON & HERB: One way I can prove my point is through this example...

MEDIUM: I can show this works through the fact that...

HOT: I know this because...

EXPLANATION

LEMON & HERB: The evidence I have discussed above proves my point as...

MEDIUM: This example proves my point because...

HOT: Therefore, this proves my point as...

LINK

LEMON & HERB: All together, this answers the debate question asked by...

MEDIUM: This point answers the overall question because...

HOT: These ideas answer the debate as...



**Post your debate on
social media!**

SHARE YOUR VOICE

We shout out the best opinions each week

#BIGDEBATECUB

TWITTER @SSCCTY

INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS

