



**Smart School Councils**

# DEBATE PACK

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

**SHOULD SOCIAL MEDIA NO LONGER  
ALLOW ANONYMOUS POSTING?**



[WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG.UK](http://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 to the Big Debate Club! My name is Becky and today we are debating the question... Should social media no longer allow anonymous posting?



63% of the world's population are social media users - whether it is to share your opinions on X, your photos on Instagram or your videos on Tiktok. But some users use social media to post anonymously - some using fake names or some platforms like whisper or reddit allow you to post with the name 'anonymous'. Should any user be able to post whatever they want without consequence or is that important for free speech?  
You decide!

So in this debate you can either argue that social media should no longer allow anonymous posting or that it shouldn't.

## Brain Gym Question

Before we get started, I have a question for you...

According to The Times in 2017, how many people have been arrested and charged with offences connected to online abuse?

- a. Nearly 1000
- b. Nearly 2000
- c. Nearly 3000
- d. Nearly 4000

Which of the 4 potential answers will you choose? Pause the video, turn to your partner, and tell them your answer.

According to the NSPCC, online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, using technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones or game consoles. Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online, including:

- bullying or cyberbullying
- emotional abuse (including emotional blackmail)
- harassment, stalking or other threatening behaviour
- pressure or coercion to send sexual images
- sexual abuse
- sexual exploitation.





## AGAINST: Social Media shouldn't stop anonymous posting

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


### It helps protect identities

You might be thinking that anonymous posting can help protect identities. If a user hails from a country which stops free use of the internet or is hateful towards people with certain identities - some users can protest their country's stances and inform the world safely through anonymous posts.



### Anonymity can mean more open conversations

You could say that anonymous posting allows for the most open conversations. Some users might feel more comfortable sharing their honest opinions, personal stories, or seeking support for sensitive issues when they can remain anonymous. This can lead to more open and genuine interactions.

Can you think of another reason why social media shouldn't stop anonymous posting? 

### Improving Mental Health

It could prevent those from seeking help who need it. Having to show who you are could block those who need to seek help and become a potential barrier to being honest with their issues.



### It can reduce bias

It could reduce bias and prejudice. When identity markers like race, gender, and social status are hidden, the focus can shift more toward the content of the message rather than the identity of the speaker.

### Talking about sensitive issues

According to a survey, 40% of British teens feel more comfortable seeking support for sensitive issues, such as mental health, on anonymous forums compared to identifiable social media platforms. [Article](#)





## FOR: Social Media should stop anonymous posting

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that school should not start later.


### Anonymous posting allows for actions without consequence

You might be thinking that anonymous posting allows for actions without consequence. Anonymous posting shouldn't be allowed as users can post hateful or hurtful posts without any fear of punishment or consequence which can cause issues for others.



### Stopping it protects against misinformation

Or you could argue that it could help protect against misinformation. Anonymity can facilitate the spread of false information, rumors, and propaganda. When users are identifiable, they may be more cautious about sharing unverified or misleading information.

Can you think of another reason why social media should stop anonymous posting? 

### Laws could help more if there is less anonymous posts

Or you could argue that it would help empower internet law. In some places, there are increasing pressures and regulations aimed at reducing online harm. Removing anonymous posting could help social media companies comply with these laws and demonstrate their commitment to user safety.



### Does anonymity increase bullying?

A 2022 survey by the Cyberbullying Research Center found that 63% of teens who had experienced cyberbullying said the abuse came from anonymous or pseudonymous accounts, making it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable.

[Article.](#)



# FactSheet: Should school social media allow anonymous posting?



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

## No It shouldn't

### More anonymity means more cyberbullying:

Statista (2021): Found that platforms with high levels of anonymity, like ASKfm and Yik Yak, had higher rates of cyberbullying, with 70% of users witnessing bullying on these platforms.

Source: [Source](#).

### Most online hate speech originates from anonymous accounts:

European Commission (2020): Reported that 55% of online hate speech originated from anonymous or pseudonymous accounts, indicating that anonymity contributes to a lack of responsibility for harmful behaviour.

Source: [Source](#).

### Anonymous accounts are more likely to spread misinformation:

Stanford University (2020): A study found that anonymous accounts were 35% more likely to spread misinformation compared to identifiable accounts, highlighting a link between anonymity and the dissemination of false information.

Source: [Source](#).

## Yes it should

### Impact on LGBTQ+ Youth:

GLAAD (2017): Found that 56% of LGBTQ+ youth used anonymous platforms to explore their identity safely before publicly coming out, indicating that anonymity provides a safe space for self-expression.

Source: [Source](#).

### Whistleblowers can stop issues without fear:

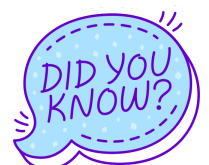
International Whistleblower Association (2020): Noted that 43% of whistleblowers prefer to remain anonymous due to fear of retaliation, highlighting the importance of anonymous platforms in exposing misconduct without risking personal safety.

Source: [Source](#).

### Increased Transportation Costs:

Pew Research Center (2020): 64% of internet users have experienced or witnessed behaviour online that would make someone reluctant to post publicly so anonymity encourages more honest participation in discussions.

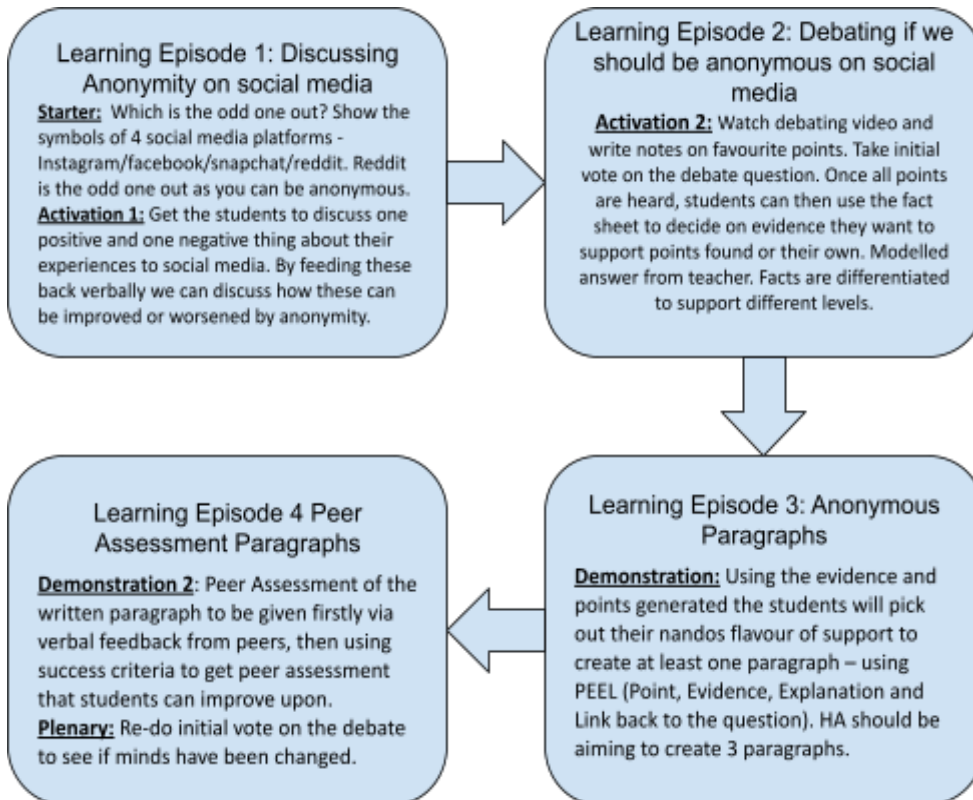
Source: [Source](#)



# 'Perfect Paragraphs' Lesson Plan

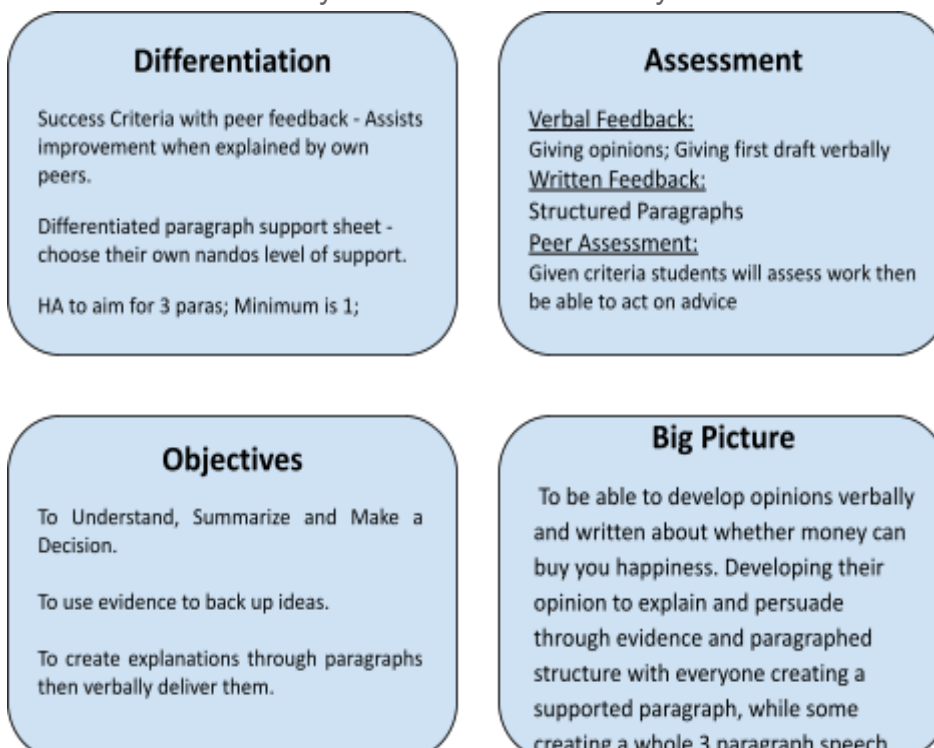
## Structure of the Lesson

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**

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