



**Smart School Councils**

# DEBATE PACK

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

**SHOULD STUDENTS GRADE THEIR TEACHERS?**



[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 your time and needs.

## How to find the debate video and send to teachers

1. Log in to the Smart School Councils platform using your school details.
2. Click on the blue Class Meeting tool button in the dashboard.
3. Click on 'Next Meeting' at the top of the page.
4. To get started, click on 'click here' to browse existing questions and options.
5. If the debate topic is part of this week's question, it will appear there. Otherwise, click 'Search All' and type in the debate topic you're looking for.

### Got five 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.

### 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.

### 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.

## What do 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 students grade their teachers?



As we approach the end of half term 1, I'm sure you've been graded or tested a few times by your teachers. They do this to make sure you are learning well and to correct any issues you have in understanding the content. In the same way, do you think it would be a good idea to grade your teachers to make sure they are teaching well and supporting you effectively?

Without good teaching, there wouldn't be good learning so shouldn't you be offering feedback? You decide!

So in this debate, you can either argue that students should grade their teachers or that they shouldn't.

## Brain Gym Question

Before we get started, I have a question for you. According to Statista in 2022, what percentage of 15-year-old school students felt like they belonged at school?

- a. 34%
- b. 44%
- c. 54%
- d. 64%

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

A 2020 survey by the **OECD** found that **74%** of students across participating countries reported that their teachers provided them with helpful feedback. This shows that feedback is already an important part of the student experience, but the question is: should it go both ways with students grading teachers too?





## FOR: Students should grade their teachers

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

### It can help improve the education system for all



You might be thinking that it could help improve the education system for all. If teachers are graded as great for example it puts the responsibility onto students to achieve and do well, and vice versa, if teachers are bad it puts the onus on schools to get better teachers/training.

### We review other public services

You could say that we review other public services. When we buy something from a shop or attend a GP appointment we are sent surveys to grade the service. Why should school be different?

Can you think of another reason why students should grade their teachers ? 

### Students can offer unique insights



Students spend the most time with their teachers, so they are in the best position to judge how engaging and helpful the lessons are. Their feedback could offer insights that professional evaluations might miss.

### Encourages better relationships

If students have a voice in grading their teachers, it could create a more open and trusting relationship. Teachers might better understand their students' needs, and students may feel more empowered and motivated in the classroom.

### Students believe they could make a difference

According to a survey by **EdWeek Research Center** in 2021, **85% of teachers** said they found student feedback helpful for improving their teaching methods. This highlights that teachers themselves see value in hearing from students directly. [Article](#).



## AGAINST: Students shouldn't grade their teachers


Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that students shouldn't grade their teachers.

### There might be a lack of maturity

You might be thinking that a lack of maturity may affect the students' feedback. Younger students might lack the maturity and understanding necessary to provide meaningful and constructive feedback on teaching practices.



### You can turn off your device

Or you could argue that teachers are already graded by professionals. Teachers are graded in order to become teachers, usually by their peers once a year and by Ofsted, these people are more qualified to do so having been students and educators. Can you think of another reason why students shouldn't grade their teachers? 

### Risk of unfair judgements

Students could base their grades on how much they like a teacher rather than how well they teach. This could lead to biased or unfair evaluations and teachers having to change their lessons so they become more liked as a teacher rather than how best to help their students learn, which hurts everyone in the long run.



### Student feedback concerns teachers

A 2019 study from **Harvard Graduate School of Education** found that **70% of teachers** believed that younger students might lack the maturity to provide reliable feedback on teaching methods. This raises concerns about the accuracy of student evaluations in shaping teacher performance. [Article.](#)



# FactSheet: Should students grade their teachers?



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

## Students should grade their teachers

### *Student Feedback Helps Identify Issues:*

When students give feedback, it highlights areas where teachers may need to improve, which helps make teaching more effective. [Source.](#)

### *It Encourages Accountability:*

If teachers know students will be grading them, they may work harder to ensure their lessons are engaging and clear. [Source.](#)

### *Feedback Culture:*

Just like in the workplace, feedback in schools can lead to positive changes to ensure everyone feels heard and learns well, making the classroom experience better for everyone and validating the opinions given. [Source.](#)

## Students shouldn't grade their teachers

### *Professional Evaluations Are More Effective:*

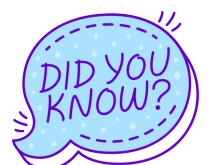
Trained educators and administrators already evaluate teachers regularly. They understand the best teaching practices and have success criteria to use across all teachers, making their evaluations more accurate. [Source.](#)

### *Students Might Lack Objectivity and therefore useful feedback:*

Personal feelings towards a teacher could influence how students grade, leading to unfair or emotional feedback instead of thoughtful ideas for positive change. [Source.](#)

### *Risk of Misuse:*

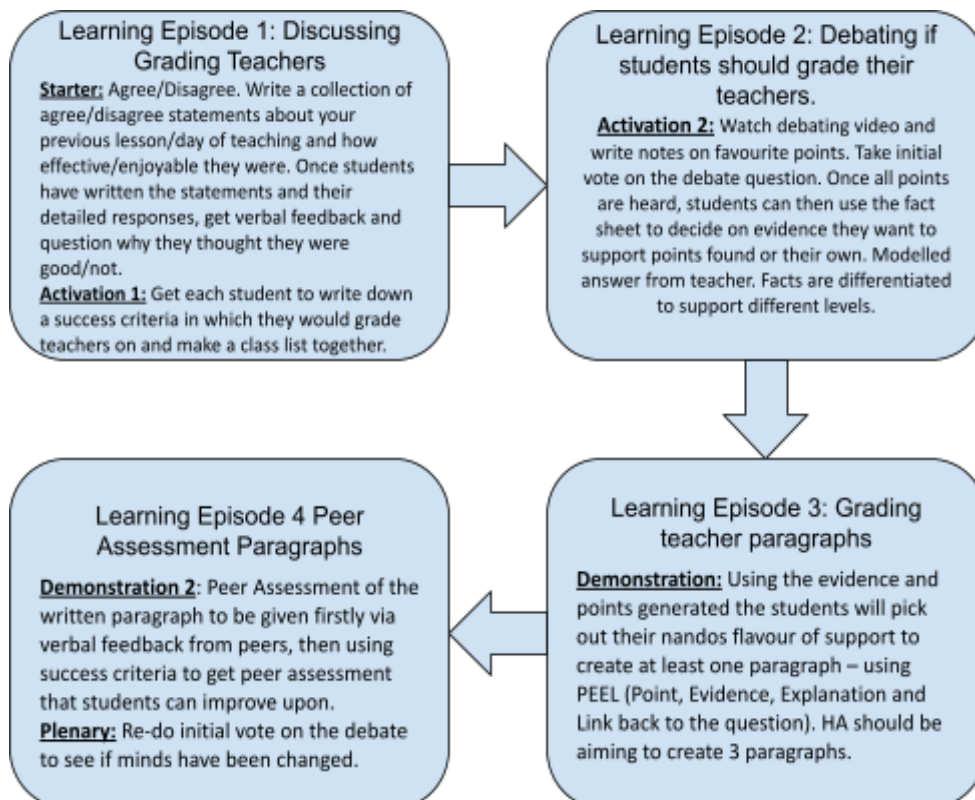
Grading teachers could be misused by students as a way to punish teachers they don't like even if those teachers are doing a good job. Considering how this is used by those in charge, this could cause problems for the teacher's career as well as the students' progress. [Source.](#)



# 'Perfect Paragraphs' Lesson Plan

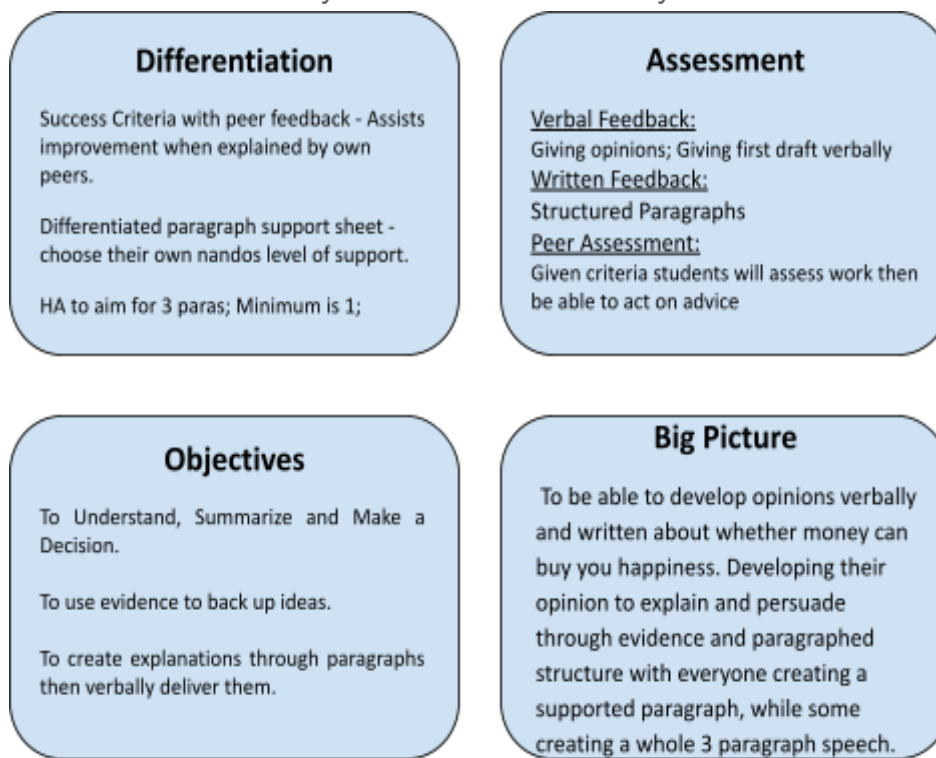
## Structure of the Lesson

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**

**#BIGDEBATECUB**

**TWITTER @SSCCTY**

**INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS**

