

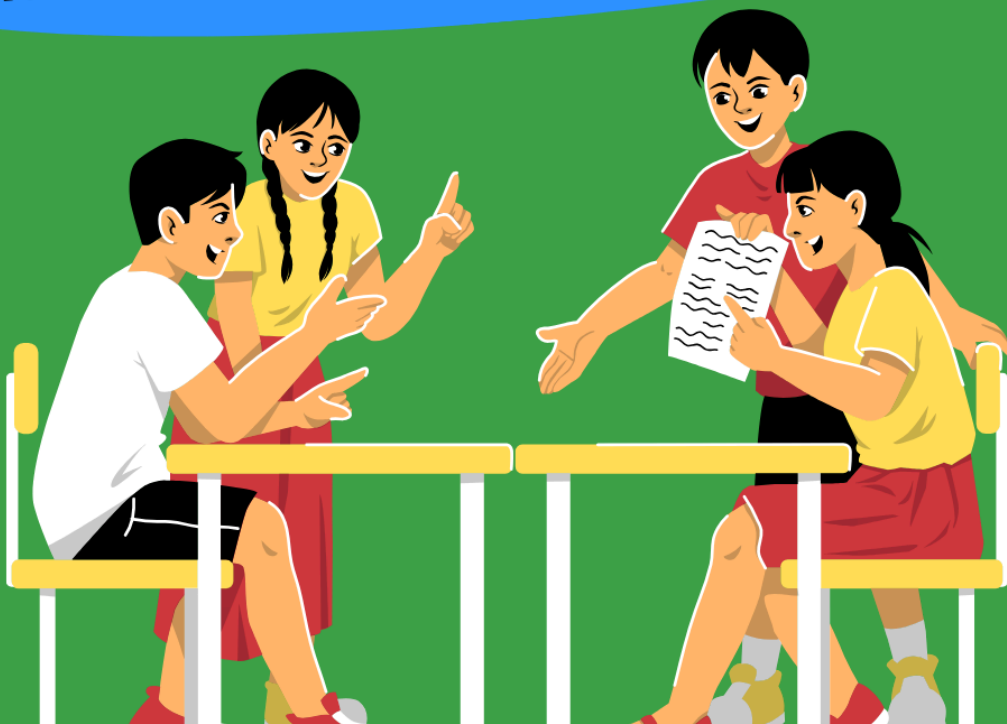


Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

SHOULD THE US HAVE STRICTER GUN CONTROL?



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. Check out the Certificates at the end too.

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 the US have stricter gun control?

With over 400 million guns in the United States, there are more firearms than people! But the reasons why are deep into the nation's history with the Second Amendment to their Constitution protecting the right to keep and bear a gun. Whether they want to own one to protect their families or to keep up a tradition passed down through generations, their rights are protected to do so. However, with so many guns, there are growing safety concerns as accidents and serious gun violence affect many communities. So should more safety measures, known as gun control, be put in place or does this go against the rights of responsible gun owners? You decide!

So in this debate you can either argue that the United States should have stricter gun control or that it shouldn't.

Brain Gym Question

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

As of 2023, which state in the United States has the highest gun ownership rate?

- a. Texas
- b. Alaska
- c. Wyoming
- d. Montana

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

In the U.S., gun ownership is not just about self-defence but also about a deep historical and cultural significance. Approximately 32% of Americans personally own a gun, and nearly half of all households have at least one firearm. The Second Amendment, which protects the right to bear arms, is central to many Americans' belief in personal freedom and protection. [Article.](#)



AGAINST: The US shouldn't have stricter gun control

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

Stricter control goes against individual rights



You might be thinking that stricter control would go against the protection of individual rights. The Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to keep and bear arms. Many argue that stricter gun control laws would infringe on this fundamental right, which is seen as essential for personal freedom and self-defence.

It could be hard to enforce

You could say that stricter control would be hard to enforce. Critics argue that stricter gun control laws would primarily affect law-abiding citizens, while criminals, who are already willing to break the law, would still find ways to obtain guns illegally. This could leave responsible gun owners at a disadvantage without significantly reducing crime.

Can you think of another reason why the US shouldn't have stricter gun control? 

The US people have the right to defend themselves



Guns allow people to protect themselves and their families from large animals or violent criminals, especially in rural areas where police might take longer to respond to and assist in emergencies.

Lowering guns doesn't solve violence

Some argue that the problem isn't the number of guns but the need to address issues that lead to people wanting to own guns, like people being desperate due to poverty and therefore turning to crime, which often lead to violence.

Gun ownership rates in the USA



The U.S. has the highest gun ownership rate in the world—about 120 guns for every 100 people - so trying to change the mind of so many gun users would be hard. Some argue that most of these guns are owned responsibly by law-abiding citizens and therefore would adversely affect them. [Article](#).



FOR: The US should have stricter gun control



Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that the United States should have stricter gun control.

It would bring them in line with other countries

You might be thinking that more gun control would bring them in line with other safer countries. Many countries with stricter gun control laws have much lower rates of gun violence and by adopting similar measures, the U.S. could potentially achieve safer communities and fewer gun-related tragedies.

It could reduce guns and therefore increase safety

Or you could argue that gun control would restrict the number of guns and increase public safety. Stricter gun control laws would reduce the number of illegal firearms in circulation through measures like universal background checks, which can prevent criminals and those with a history of violence from easily obtaining guns.

Can you think of another reason why the US should have stricter gun control? 

Mental Health Screening



Stricter gun control laws would include screening for mental health issues, ensuring that guns don't end up in the hands of those who pose a risk to themselves or others due to severe mental health conditions or conditions that would inhibit their ability to act safely.

Other countries had tragedies and changed their gun control



After a mass shooting in 1996, Australia introduced stricter gun laws, including a gun buyback program. Since then, the country has not had a single mass shooting highlighting that increasing gun control laws would have an impact on the ability of those who want to hurt others. Similar happened in the UK in 1996 following a mass shooting there also. [Article.](#)

FactSheet: Should the US have stricter gun control?



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

The US shouldn't have stricter gun control

Most gun owners use them for safety:

A survey by the Pew Research Center found that 60% of gun owners in the U.S. say they own a gun for self-defence, highlighting its importance for personal safety. [Source.](#)

Gun Laws don't Stop Criminals:

Critics argue that criminals don't follow laws, so stricter gun control wouldn't stop them from getting firearms illegally. Only law-abiding citizens would be affected by tighter regulations. [Source.](#)

More Guns, Less Crime Theory:

Some believe that more legally owned guns lead to less crime. Research by John Lott suggests that areas with higher rates of legal gun ownership experience lower levels of violent crime. [Source.](#)

The US should have stricter gun control

Amount of Lives at Risk:

In 2022 alone, there were over 600 mass shootings in the U.S. showing the impacts of having the current amount of guns. Stricter laws could help prevent these tragic events and amount of lives lost. [Source.](#)

Successful gun laws in other countries:

Many countries with strict gun control laws have significantly lower gun-related deaths than the U.S. For example, Japan has fewer than 10 gun-related deaths per year [Source.](#)

Public Support for Gun Control:

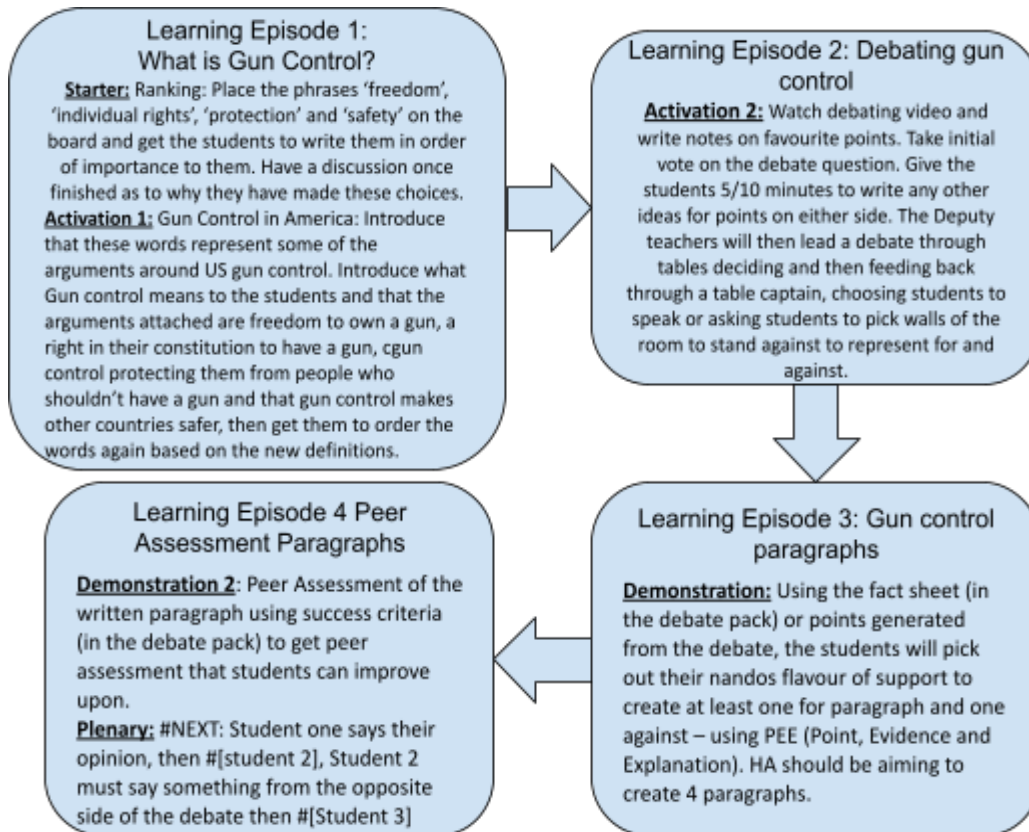
A majority of Americans support some form of gun control. For example, 89% of U.S. adults favor background checks for all gun buyers. [Source.](#)



'Debate your Perfect Point' Lesson Plan

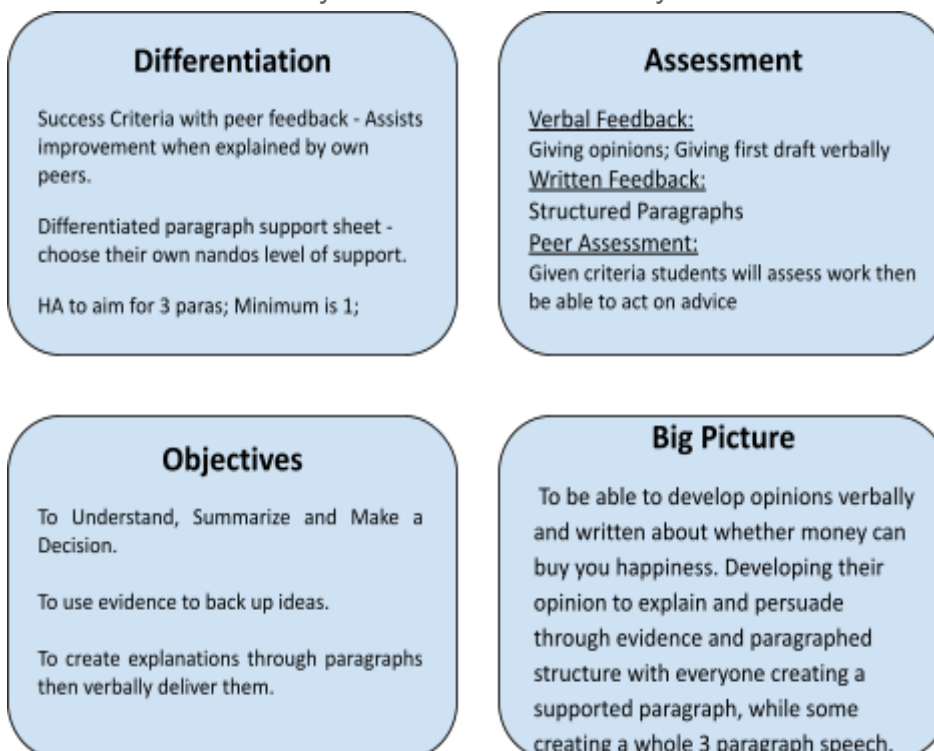
Structure of the Lesson

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...

DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

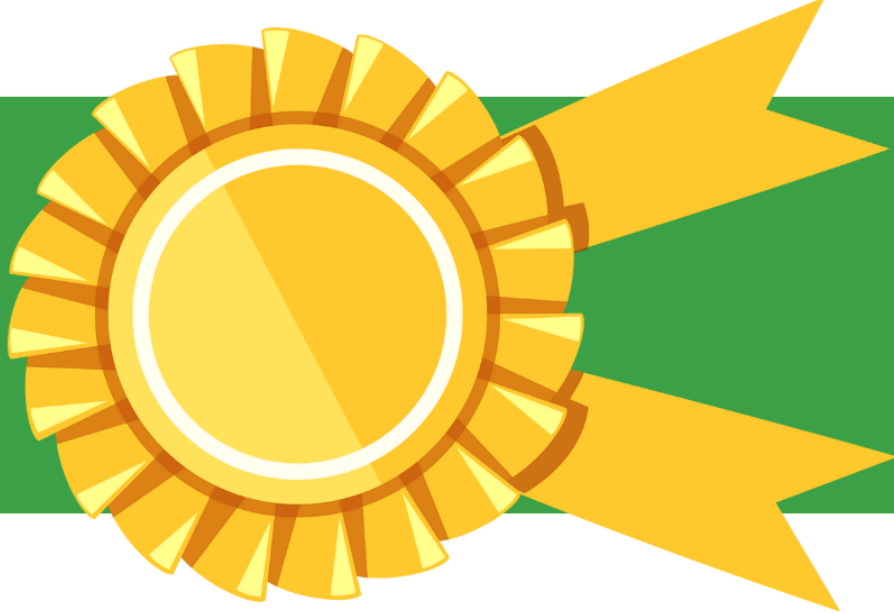
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

Share a snap or video @SSCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



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CLASS MEETING LEADER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

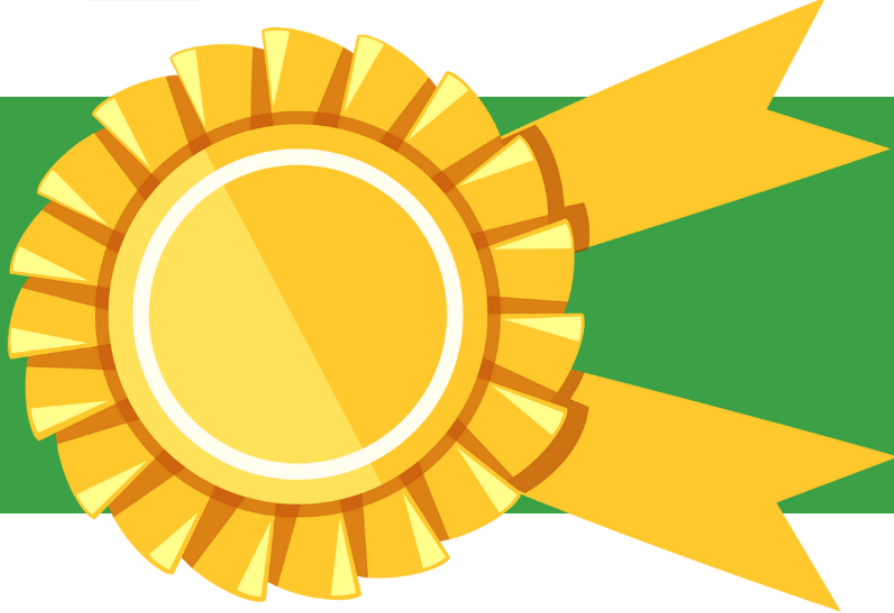
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

Share a snap or video @SSCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



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BEST IDEA OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

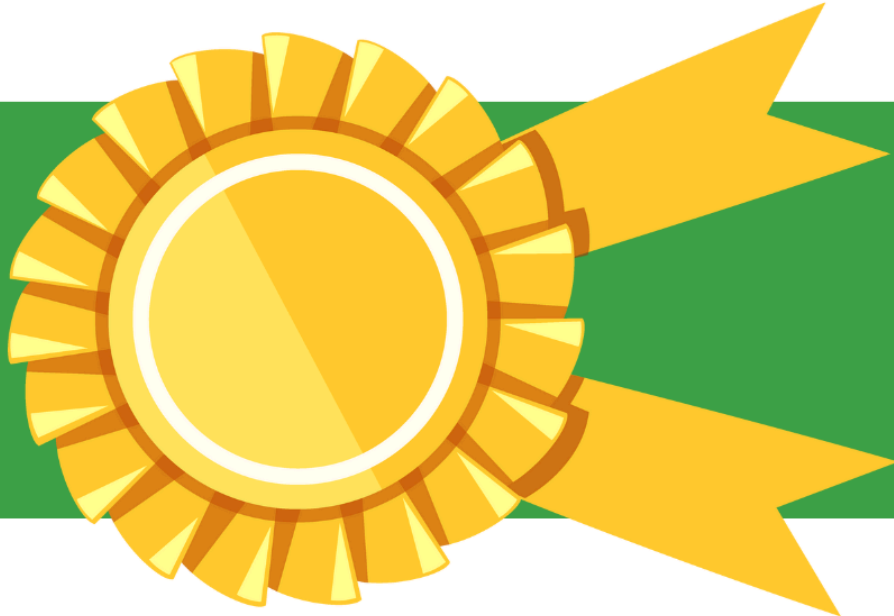
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

Share a snap or video @SSCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



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