



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

SHOULD ALL CITIZENS BE REQUIRED TO VOLUNTEER IN THEIR COMMUNITY?



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 all citizens be required to volunteer in their community? Volunteering is when people give up their time for free to help others, this could be working at a local charity, helping neighbours, or participating in local community events. All citizens helping out your community could benefit everyone ensuring everyone has everything they need and feel supported. But forcing people to volunteer takes away the freedom to choose how they spend their time. What do you think?

So in this debate, you can either argue that all citizens should be required to volunteer in their community or that they shouldn't.

Brain Gym Question

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

Which country has the highest rate of volunteering in the world?

- a. The United States
- b. New Zealand
- c. Canada
- d. Norway

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

In the UK, around 16.3 million people volunteered through a group, club, or organisation in 2022, reflecting the significant role volunteering plays in community life and civic engagement. Additionally, about 62% of adults reported volunteering informally at least once a year, showcasing the widespread willingness to contribute to local causes and support others. [Article.](#)



FOR: Citizens should be required to volunteer in communities

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

It builds a stronger community

You might be thinking that it builds stronger communities. When everyone helps out, the whole community benefits - parks are cleaner, schools are better supported, and people who need help get it faster - these things together make neighbourhoods safer and more pleasant places to live.

It would develop important skills

You could say that it would develop important skills. Volunteering teaches valuable skills, like teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving so if everyone volunteers, these skills can be spread across society, helping people in future jobs and in personal life.

Can you think of another reason why citizens should be required to volunteer? 

Volunteering can provide improved public services

Requiring citizens to volunteer can supplement underfunded or overstretched public services, such as community centres or programmes for the elderly. This ensures that essential programmes receive additional support, benefiting society as a whole.

It encourages social cohesion

By asking people to volunteer, it can bridge societal divides by bringing people from diverse backgrounds together. Shared efforts can bring understanding, reduce prejudice, and create more inclusive communities, which benefit every member of that society.

Volunteering makes you happier and gives you purpose

Studies suggest that the act of helping others can trigger the release of dopamine, promoting feelings of happiness and purpose. This aligns with the findings that volunteering can enhance self-confidence and provide a sense of accomplishment.

[Article](#).



AGAINST: Citizens should not be required to volunteer




Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that citizens should not be required to volunteer in their community.

Volunteering should be a choice not forced on people

You might be thinking that volunteering should be a choice, not something forced on people. Everyone has different commitments or responsibilities, like work, school or looking after family, and mandatory volunteering could add too much pressure on top of that

Not every volunteering task is a good fit for everyone

Or you could argue that not every volunteering task is a good fit for everyone. Since people have different strengths and weaknesses, without proper planning to match individuals with the right roles, some may feel uncomfortable or struggle in certain tasks. Forcing everyone to volunteer could lead to poor results, as they might not be motivated or suited for the job.

Can you think of another reason why citizens should be required to volunteer in their community? 

'Unmotivated volunteers' might overwhelm organisations

Requiring citizens to volunteer could overwhelm organisations with unmotivated or mismatched volunteers. Trying to organise this influx of 'forced' volunteers would create administrative challenges, which would then divert resources from their core missions to improve society but instead manage and train people who may not be genuinely invested in the cause.



It doesn't necessarily help young people get work

The Institute of Education discusses how volunteering can be a useful tool for individuals and for society as active citizens in the community, there is no automatic conversion into paid work for young people and the least efficient form of volunteering is when they are forced to complete it. [Article.](#)



FactSheet: Should all citizens be required to volunteer in their community?



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

Citizens should be required to volunteer

Improved Community Impact:

Volunteering helps address societal challenges like poverty, education gaps, and environmental issues. Over 63 million Americans volunteered in 2022, contributing approximately \$203 billion worth of labour to their communities. [Source.](#)

It would help areas of the community that are underfunded:

Nearly 70% of all working hours in migrant and refugee community organisations are performed by volunteers – the equivalent of five extra full-time staff per organisation per year. What is more, the number of volunteers supporting community work is likely to increase in a future marked by public spending cuts. [Source.](#)

Benefits for the public health:

Volunteers report better physical health than non-volunteers, and lower rates of depression and anxiety, especially for people 65 and older. Volunteering reduces stress and increases positive, relaxed feelings by releasing dopamine. By spending time in service to others, volunteers report feeling a sense of meaning and appreciation, both given and received, which can have a stress-reducing effect. [Source.](#)

Citizens should not be required to volunteer

It undermines those who are motivated volunteers:

A study highlighted by the *State of the World's Volunteerism Report 2022* found that forcing participation can create individual resistance. Required volunteering accounts for only about 6.5% of global volunteering, while informal volunteering is more common at 14.3%. [Source.](#)

It creates administrative burdens on non-profit organisations:

Trump's government expressed a willingness to allow some US states to impose volunteering as a condition to receive some benefits. But the Council of Non-Profits said 'Requirements that individuals volunteer at non-profit organisations, a policy known as 'mandatory volunteerism,' impose increased costs, burdens, and liabilities on non-profits by an influx of forced individuals.' [Source.](#)

Inequality in access issues:

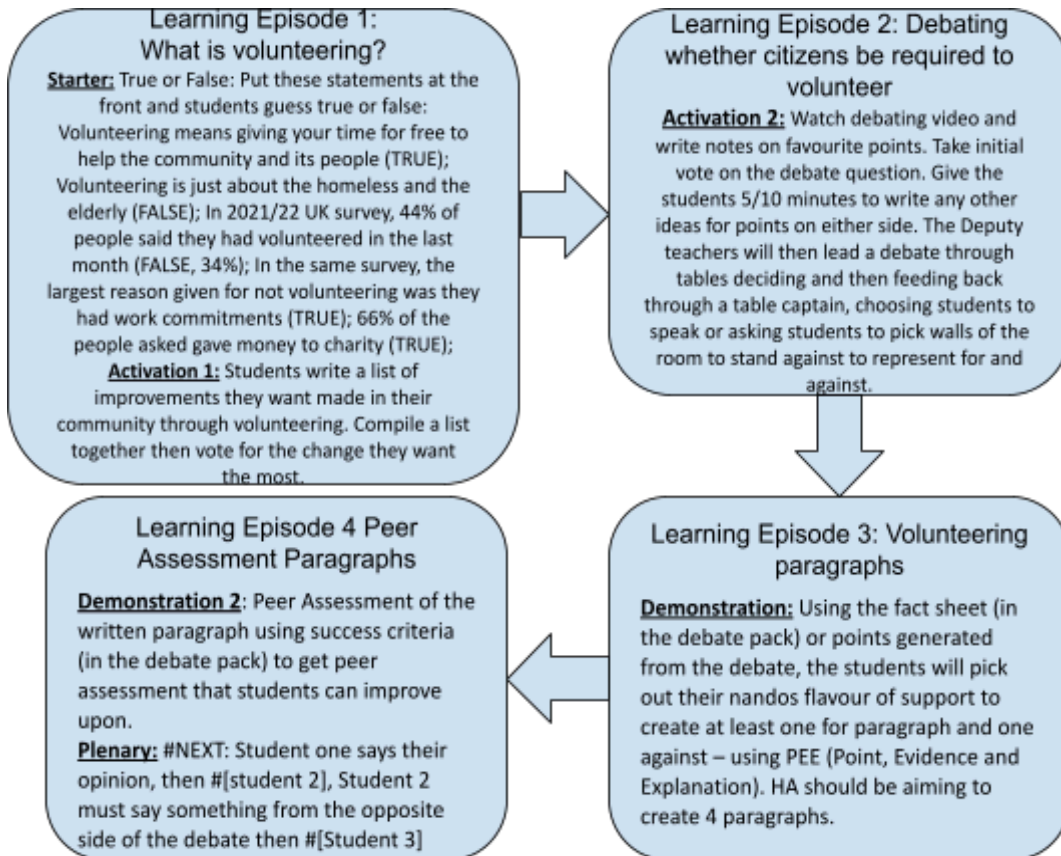
Mandated programs might disproportionately burden low-income individuals by adding commitments they cannot meet due to time constraints or other responsibilities. [Source.](#)



'Debate your Perfect Point' Lesson Plan

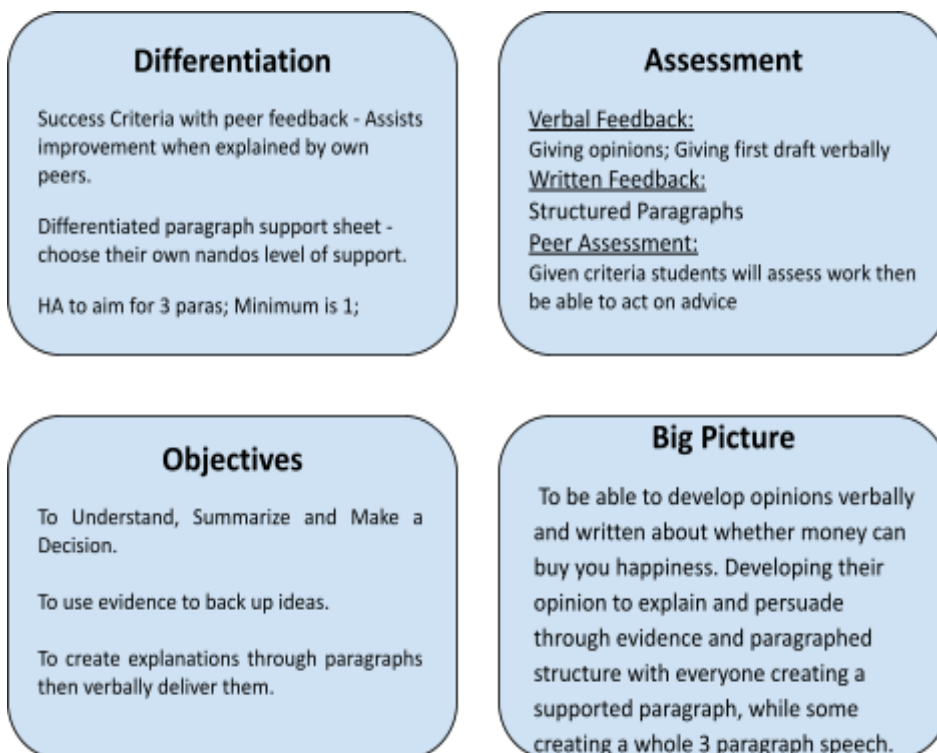
Structure of the Lesson

Here's a lesson plan for you - including learning episodes, inclusion of our resources and ways to differentiate to make sure everyone's needs are met in your class.



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



WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG.UK

DEBATER OF THE WEEK

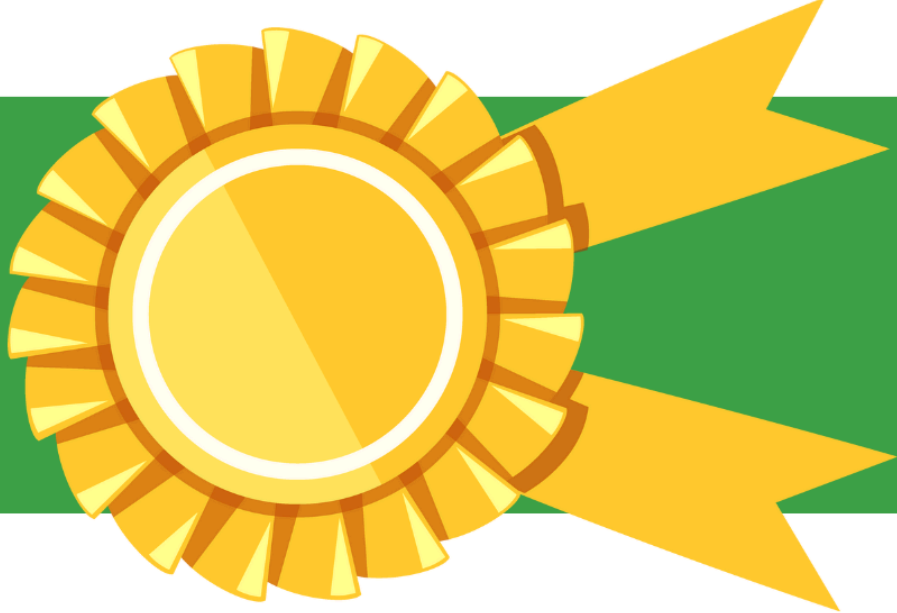
We are proud to present this certificate to...

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...

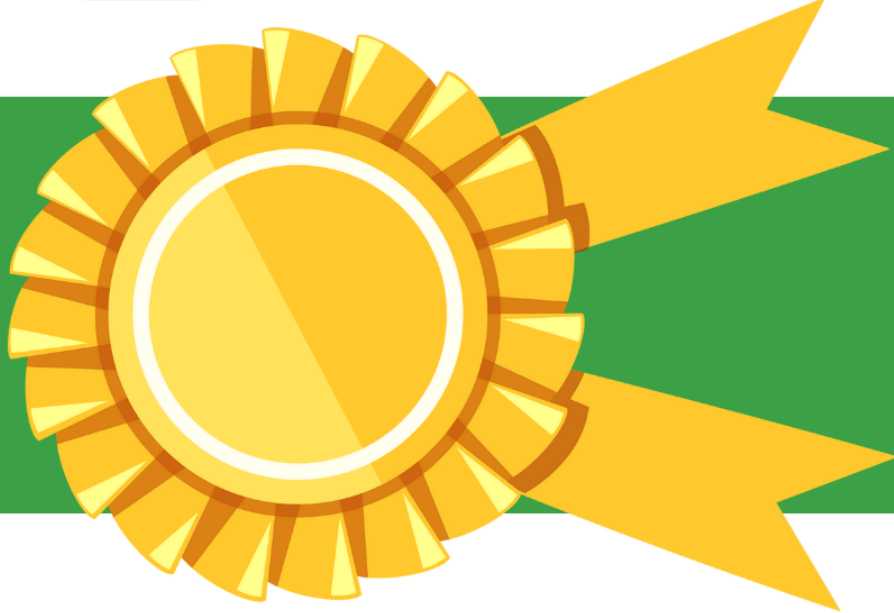
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

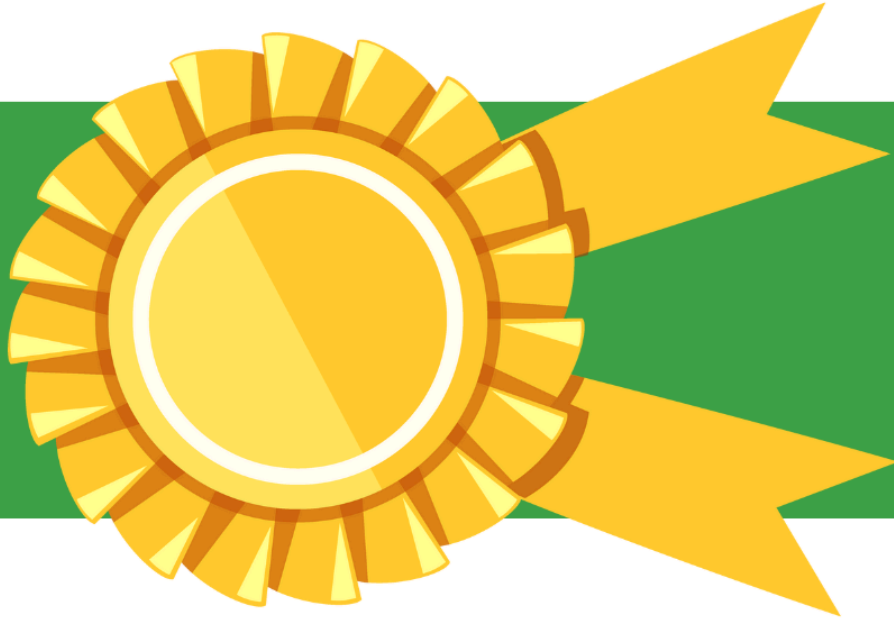
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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