



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

SHOULD SOME BOOKS BE BANNED FROM SCHOOLS?



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 some books be banned from schools?

Books are like windows to new worlds! They take us on adventures, broaden our horizons, and introduce us to different ideas and perspectives. Some people think that certain books shouldn't be in schools because they might have bad language or difficult or advanced topics but would banning these books stop us from learning about important issues and thinking for ourselves. You decide!

So in this debate, you can either argue that some books should be banned or that they shouldn't.

Brain Gym Question

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

Which famous children's book was banned in some schools for being too scary?

- a. *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White
- b. *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- c. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- d. *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown

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

In 2022, the American Library Association recorded over 1,200 challenges to certain books being in schools, marking the highest number recorded in decades. Many of the concerns raised about the books were due to their content related to race, sexuality, or religion. [Article](#).



FOR: Some books should be banned from schools


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

Some books should be banned to protect from harmful content

You might be thinking that banning some will protect students from harmful content. Some books contain violent, offensive, or inappropriate material that might not be suitable for young readers so this way we can protect them from upset or harm.

You must only have books that align with your values

You could say that some would argue you must only have books that align with your values. Every community has different values, and some parents or teachers might feel that certain books might not reflect the community's standards and this should be respected for each community and family unit.

Can you think of another reason why some books should be banned from school? 

Parents should be allowed to influence what their children read

If parents request for a book to be banned in schools, then they should be allowed to decide what book content their child is interacting with and these wishes should be respected by school.

Banning them at school does not stop them from reading them

Banning books at school can work in order to prevent age-inappropriate content from being read by young people but it doesn't mean that it can't be read at home or brought in from home to read at school, it just means it isn't freely available for everyone to read in the library

Parents trust librarians to pick the right material for their school

Studies suggest that 93% of parents believe their child is safe using the school library and 80% of parents trust the school librarians to pick age-appropriate content for their young people to read. Parents therefore broadly trust decisions made by the adults at school to pick the correct material. [Article](#).



AGAINST: Some books should not be banned from schools

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that some books should not be banned from schools.


Banning books limits students' access to different ideas



You might be thinking that banning books limits students' access to different ideas and perspectives. Schools are places for learning and discussion, and removing books restricts the opportunity to explore challenging topics and think critically in a safe space such as school.

Not banning books encourages open-mindedness

Or you could argue that not banning books encourages open-mindedness. Reading books with different viewpoints, even controversial ones, helps students develop empathy and understand the world better while banning books prevents this growth and discourages students from learning to respect diverse opinions.

Can you think of another reason why some books should not be banned from schools? 

Banned books can teach important lessons



Books with tough themes can teach students important lessons about history, empathy, and resilience. These books can be read when handled with proper guidance and put into context of the time period or situation by a trusted adult. Giving young people the space to ask these questions means they have learnt important lessons in a safe space rather than shying away from it.

Banned books are often important to learn from



1984 by George Orwell was once banned in some countries for its political themes and potentially dangerous ideology. However, it is now considered a key text for understanding censorship and totalitarianism. [Article](#).

FactSheet: Should some books be banned from schools?



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

Some books should be banned from schools

Increase to challenges made about certain books at schools:

In 2022, over 1,200 books were challenged in the U.S., marking the highest number of challenges in decades. Most challenges cited explicit content, LGBTQ+ themes, or racial issues. [Source.](#)

Parental concerns over books:

A survey by Gallup in 2021 found that 73% of parents agreed schools should ban books with explicit content inappropriate for minors. This shows that most parents agree that the most inappropriate content should not be available to young people. [Source.](#)

Keeping harmful ideology from schools:

Some books have been banned due to promoting dangerous or harmful ideologies. For example, Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* has been restricted in many schools for advocating hate and extremist views. Critics argue that allowing such books in schools could expose students to divisive and harmful ideologies without proper context. [Source.](#)

Some books should not be banned from schools

Historical censorship is no longer relevant and prevents learning from history:

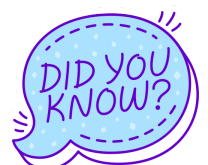
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee, often banned for its portrayal of racism, has been used in classrooms for decades to teach students about the history of segregation and prejudice in America. Without learning about the situations in history that are harder to look at, it could mean that students can prevent it happening in the future or help communities who still experience these issues. [Source.](#)

Diverse representation is important:

Books with LGBTQ+ themes, such as *And Tango Makes Three*, were among the top 10 most challenged books in 2020, despite offering critical representation for marginalised groups. If young people in these groups do not see themselves reflected in stories, they can struggle to feel they belong, explain to others how they feel and hurt their mental health. [Source.](#)

Reading diverse books increases educational outcomes:

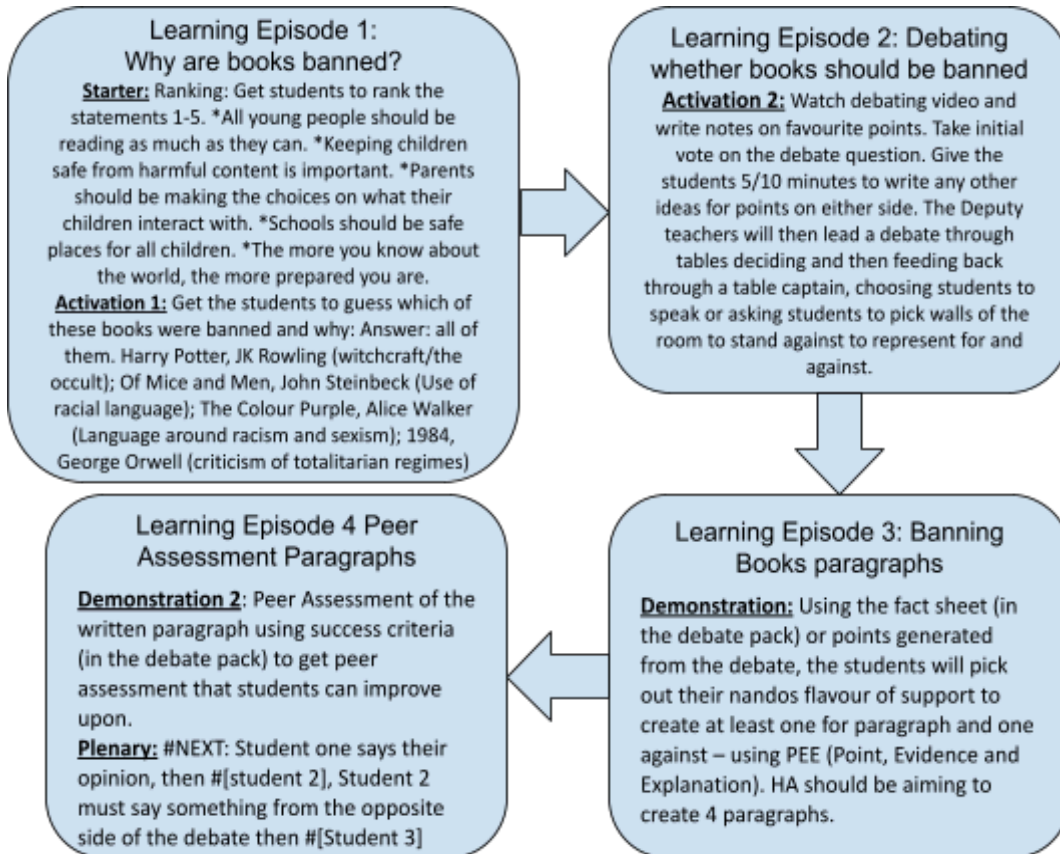
A 2021 study found that exposure to diverse literature increased empathy and cultural understanding in students by 25%. Not only does reading diverse books mean that students increase their reading ability but also increase their understanding of the world around them. [Source.](#)



'Debate your Perfect Point' Lesson Plan

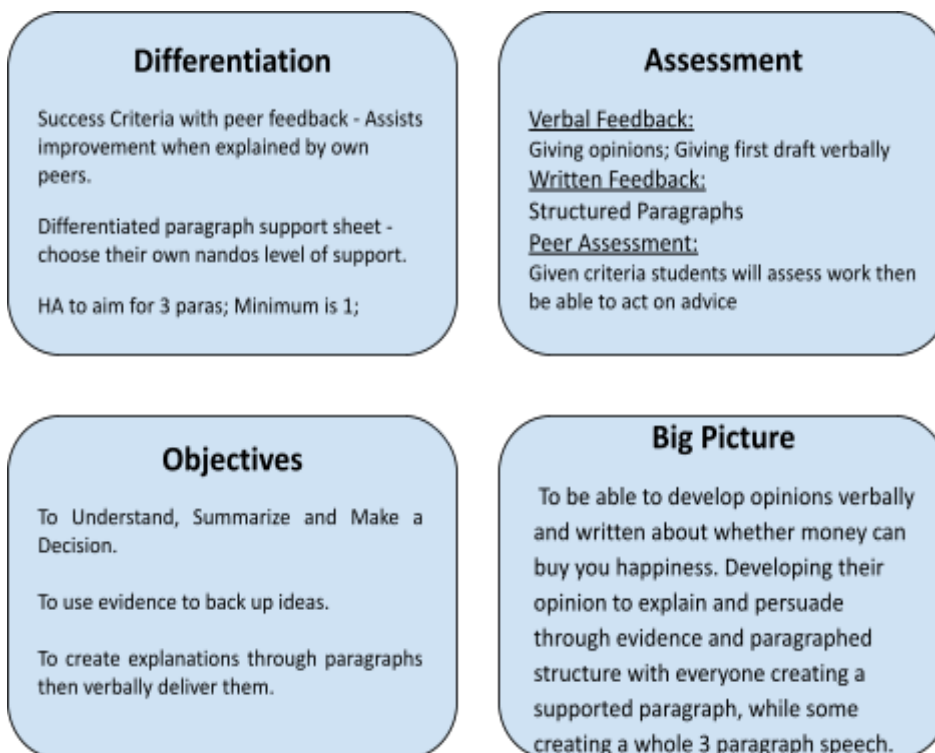
Structure of the Lesson

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



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DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

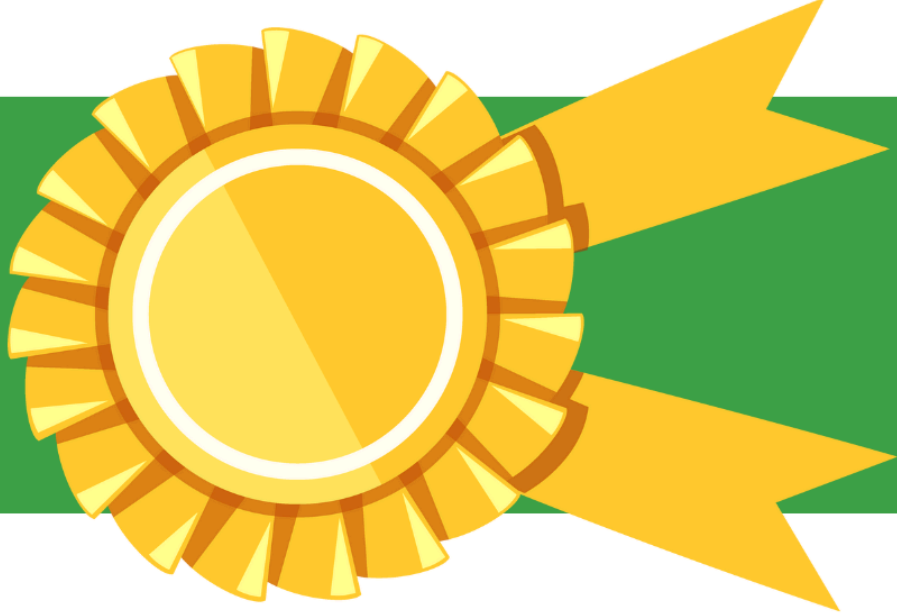
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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...

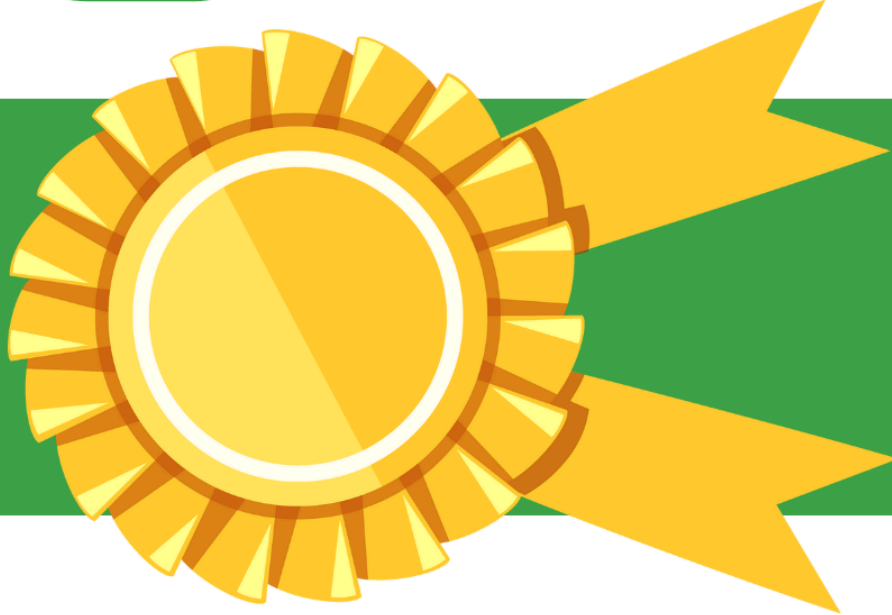
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

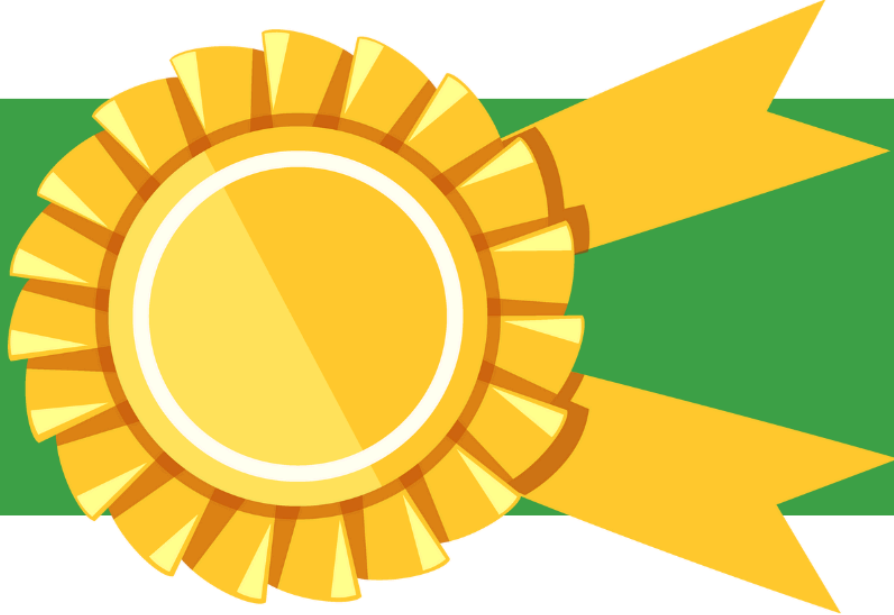
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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