



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

WITH GIFTS, IS IT THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS?



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... With gifts, is it the thought that counts?

Giving gifts are a great way to show the people around you that you care.

Whether you give presents while celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, birthdays or any other festival, it's a great way to share the love! But what if the gift isn't exactly what you wanted? You could say it doesn't matter because they still took the time and effort to buy you a gift, or does buying you something that you'll never use show that they don't actually know you that well? You decide!

So in this debate, you can either argue that with gifts, it is the thought that counts or that it isn't.

Brain Gym Question

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

What was the most expensive gift ever given according to historical records?

- a. The Taj Mahal
- b. A Golden Statue
- c. A Diamond Necklace
- d. The Eiffel Tower

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

In 2022, the average American planned to spend \$932 on holiday gifts, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation. This figure highlights the significant role of spending significant money being important in gift-giving traditions, with total holiday retail sales projected to reach \$942.6 billion. [Article.](#)



FOR: With gifts, it is the thought that counts

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

Gifts show that you care

You might be thinking that gifts show that you care. When someone gives you a gift, it's because they care about you and want to make you happy. Even if the gift isn't perfect, it's their way of showing they were thinking of you!

It is about the time and effort

You could say that it's about the time and effort. Sometimes people spend a lot of time making or choosing a gift, even if it's something small so the effort and thoughtfulness behind it are what make the gift special, not how much it costs or what it is.

Can you think of another reason why with gifts, it is the thought that counts? 

It is better to be thoughtful than to choose poorly

A poorly chosen gift, even with good intentions, might send the wrong message. Studies suggest that 25% of recipients feel a mismatch between the giver's intentions and the gift itself, leading to feelings of being misunderstood or undervalued. A thoughtful gift must align with the recipient's desires to truly be meaningful.

Expensive gifts don't show connection, putting in the effort does

Focusing on the thought and effort behind the gift, to show someone that you care is more important as it emphasises personal connection rather than consumerism. For example taking a long time to find a gift means more than money spent.

Personalised gifts are kept longer than generic ones

Additionally, a Vistaprint study found that 55% of consumers are likely to keep personalised or thoughtful gifts longer than generic ones, with 40% claiming they would keep such gifts indefinitely. This highlights how thought and effort significantly enhance the lasting emotional impact of a gift. [Article](#).



AGAINST: It isn't the thought that counts

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that when giving gifts, it is not just the thought that counts.


Some gifts show how well you know someone



You might be thinking that some gifts show how well you know someone. A great gift can show how much you understand and appreciate someone's tastes. If the gift fits their personality or needs perfectly, it shows you really "get" them, which makes the gift extra special.

A gift that isn't liked or used has the thought behind it forgotten

Or you could argue that a gift that isn't liked or used can have the thought behind it quickly forgotten. If the gift someone buys for you is not something you like or something you can use, it quickly becomes forgotten about in a drawer, therefore meaning the thought behind it is forgotten too.

Can you think of another reason why it is not the thought that counts when it comes to giving gifts? 

High quality gifts show more thought than taking the time to buy it



Some believe that a high-quality or luxurious gift shows effort and thought because it demonstrates that the giver invested time and resources into selecting something exceptional. 42% of recipients associate luxury gifts with deeper thought and care. So buying a luxury gift or one that is what they wanted shows the thought more than the act of spending time buying one.

People often regift or return if it is not something practical



A survey by Finder found that 31% of people asked have re-gifted or returned presents they were given during holidays because they weren't useful or relevant. This highlights how so many people would rather give away the gift if it is not useful, rather than keep it due to the thought given. [Article](#).

FactSheet: With gifts, is it the thought that counts?



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

It is the thought that counts

Effort and thought are more important:

74% of people in a survey said they value the thoughtfulness behind a gift more than its price tag, emphasising the emotional connection to a gift and its giver over financial value. A handmade or one with a lot of effort means more even if it isn't practical, what they wanted or expensive. [Source.](#)

Emotional gifts are valued by recipients:

Additionally, a Vistaprint study found that 55% of consumers are likely to keep personalised or thoughtful gifts longer than generic ones, with 40% claiming they would keep such gifts indefinitely. This highlights how thought and effort significantly enhance the lasting emotional impact of a gift. [Source.](#)

Homemade gifts are particularly valued:

A survey found that 53% of Americans appreciate handmade gifts because they reflect effort and care, regardless of monetary value. People would rather keep gifts that show the care and consideration of the people they love who gifted it to them. [Source.](#)

It isn't the thought that counts

Practical gifts are preferred over thoughtful ones:

While thoughtfulness is appreciated, many people prioritise gifts they can use or need in their daily lives. For instance, surveys show that 60% of recipients prefer practical gifts, such as appliances, gadgets, or tools, over sentimental ones. A useful gift not only serves a purpose but also demonstrates the giver's attention to the recipient's needs. [Source.](#)

People often re-gift or return if the gift isn't useful:

A thoughtful but impractical or irrelevant gift can lead to feelings of disappointment or frustration. For example, 31% of people admit to returning or re-gifting presents because they weren't useful or didn't suit their preferences, showing that thought alone isn't enough to ensure satisfaction. [Source.](#)

In some cultures, the price/quality of the gift shows the effort:

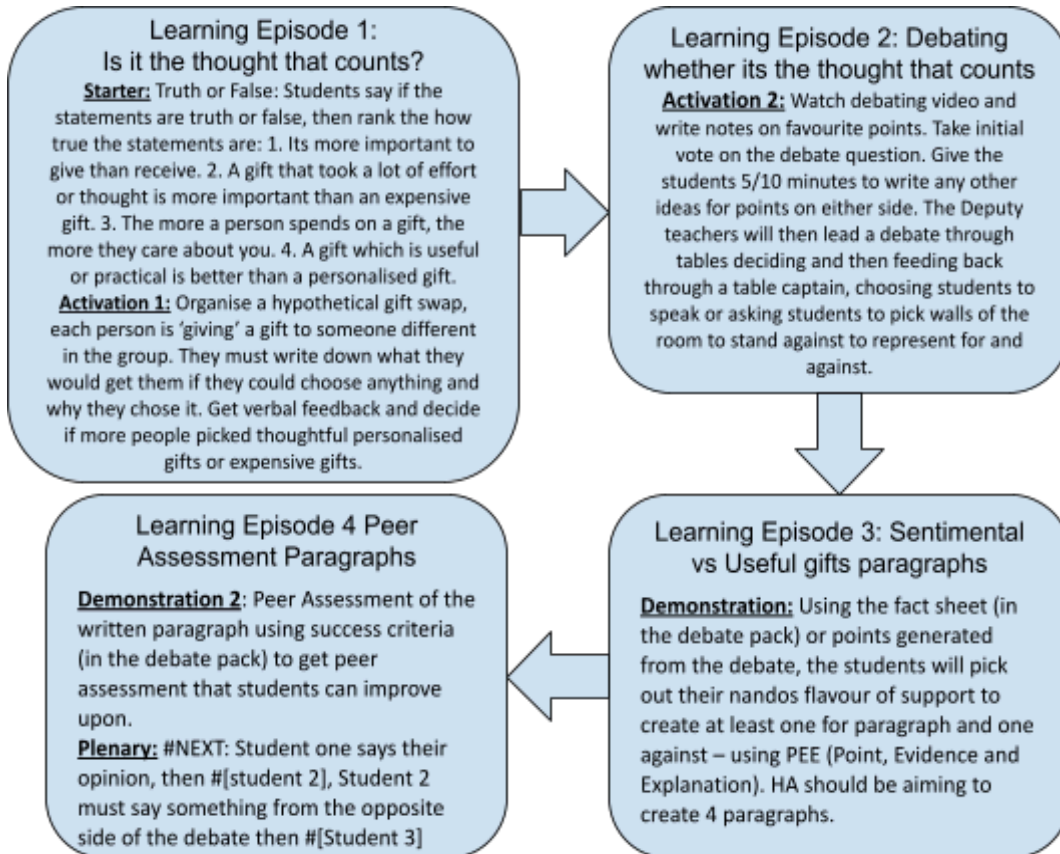
In many cultures, the cost or quality of a gift reflects the giver's respect and effort. For example, research indicates that nearly 45% of respondents associate higher-priced gifts with greater generosity or importance of the occasion, especially in professional or formal relationships. Thought alone may not meet societal standards in these contexts. [Source.](#)



'Debate your Perfect Point' Lesson Plan

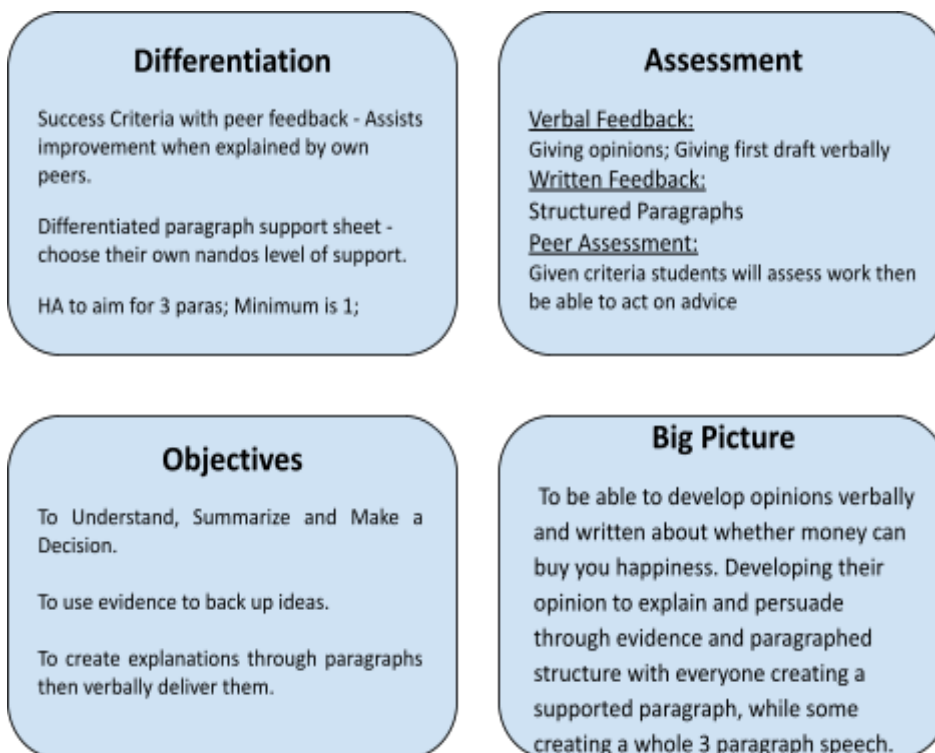
Structure of the Lesson

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...

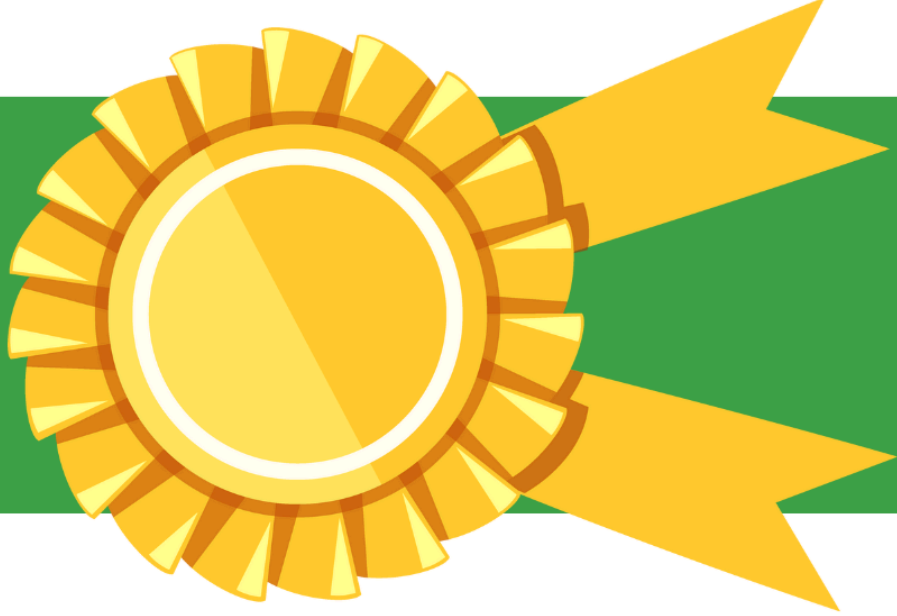
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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...

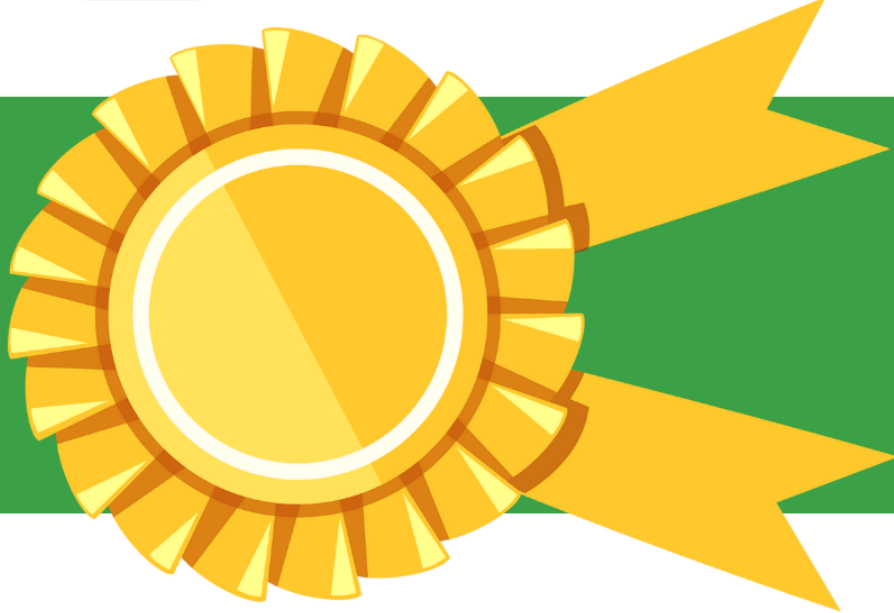
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

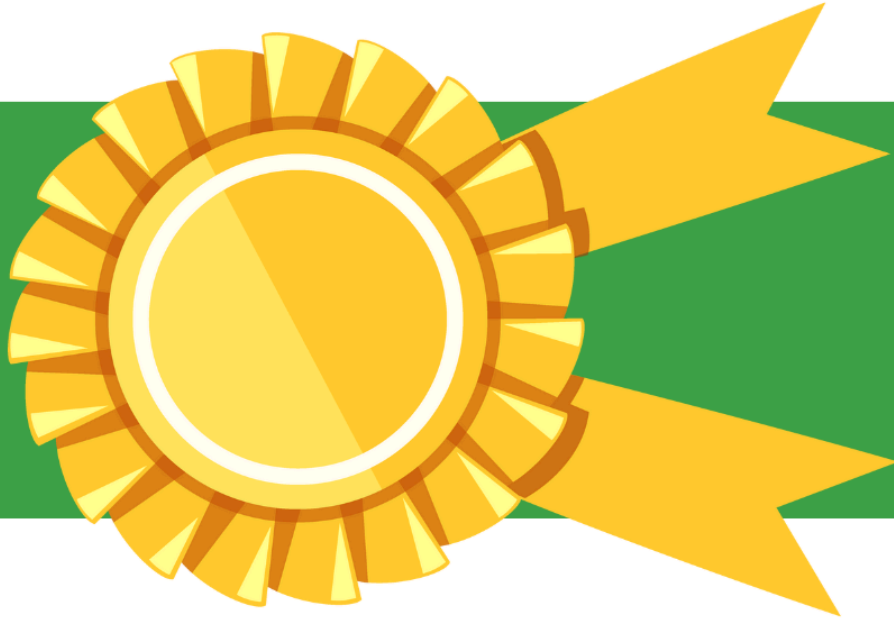
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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