



**Smart School Councils**

# DEBATE PACK

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

**SHOULD SCHOOLS TEACH BASIC SURVIVAL SKILLS?**



[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. 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 schools teach basic survival skills?

Imagine you're stuck in the middle of nowhere, your phone's dead, and there's no one around to help, what do you do? Well, that's where **survival skills** come in! These are special tricks and techniques that help people stay safe in tough situations, like finding food, water, and shelter, or even starting a fire without matches! Learning these skills should be a part of school because they're super important if something unexpected happens but shouldn't school spend its time on subjects you will definitely use like math and literacy? You decide.

So in this debate you can either argue that schools should teach basic survival skills or that they shouldn't.

## Brain Gym Question

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

What percentage of the Earth's surface is covered by wilderness, where survival skills might actually be needed?

- a. 5%
- b. 23%
- c. 35%
- d. 47%

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

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports that **60% of Americans have no emergency plan**, which highlights the need for basic survival education in order to properly plan especially natural disasters as these become more frequent due to climate change. [Article.](#)



# FOR: Schools should teach basic survival skills


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

## Help students stay safe in emergencies

You might be thinking that knowing survival skills can help students stay safe in emergencies. In situations like natural disasters or accidents, understanding how to build a shelter or find clean water could be life-saving so if students learn these skills early, they can protect themselves.

## Survival training can boost student's confidence and self-reliance

You could say that survival training can boost students' confidence and self-reliance. Knowing how to navigate tough situations makes them feel more prepared to face challenges in life, from everyday problems to bigger emergencies.

Can you think of another reason why schools should teach basic survival skills? 

## These skills complement other parts of the curriculum

Survival skills can integrate seamlessly into subjects like science (e.g., understanding ecosystems), physical education (e.g., navigation), and geography (e.g., map reading) therefore deepening and diversifying the learning they are already doing.

## Addresses the increasing real-world situation

With increasing climate-related disasters, survival training equips students with practical skills to handle situations like power outages, floods, or being stranded.

## These skills foster independence and resilience

A study by the University of Essex found that spending time in nature and engaging in practical outdoor activities can improve mental health and boost problem-solving skills by up to 25%. So spending time working on these skills can improve their wellbeing and ability to be resilient in tough situations. [Article](#).



## AGAINST: Schools shouldn't teach basic survival skills

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that schools shouldn't teach basic survival skills.


### Students may never find themselves in a survival situation



You might be thinking that many students may never find themselves in a survival situation. Schools are tight on time and have so many important things to teach, should they spend their time teaching students something they might ever have to use?

### Skills to deal with the modern world should be a bigger priority

Or you could argue that skills to deal with the modern world should be a bigger priority. In today's world, students might be better off learning modern skills like coding, financial literacy, or internet safety. These skills are more likely to help them in their daily lives and future jobs, while survival situations are not.

Can you think of another reason why schools shouldn't teach basic survival skills? 

### There is a lack of expertise amongst teachers



Many educators are not trained in survival skills, and additional training or hiring specialists would require funding and resources. So this type of teaching should fall to parents or community spaces where there may be more knowledgeable people which can help prepare a family or community plan for these situations.

### Few people will experience survival situations



A survey by the International Federation of Red Cross found that only **10-15% of students globally** are likely to encounter situations requiring advanced survival skills, suggesting that localised, rather than universal, programmes may be more effective. [Article](#).

# FactSheet: Should schools teach basic survival skills?



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

## Schools should teach basic survival skills

### ***Natural disasters are increasing and affecting so many people:***

In 2022, natural disasters affected over 300 million people worldwide, highlighting the need for preparedness and survival skills education. [Source.](#)

### ***These skills could help prevent lives lost:***

Studies show that 70% of preventable deaths in emergencies could be avoided if basic first aid was administered promptly, so if students learnt this as part of their survival skills it could save lives. [Source.](#)

### ***It can make schools more effective in emergencies:***

Schools that implement survival skills programmes see a 30% increase in student readiness for emergencies, according to research from disaster management experts. This shows it help increase safety in emergencies in schools if the students have the skills to adapt and act effectively in such situations should they happen during the school day. [Source.](#)

## Schools shouldn't teach basic survival skills

### ***The Curriculum is already overloaded:***

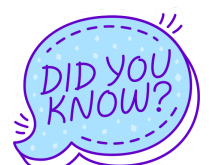
Surveys show that 60% of teachers feel their current curriculum is already overloaded, leaving little room for additional subjects like survival skills. If teachers are already struggling to teach everything they are already expected to teach, where would they have the time to teach this effectively? [Source.](#)

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

Introducing survival skills programmes could cost schools an estimated \$500 per student annually in the USA, making it a financial burden for some schools in some areas. Would the money not be better spent in other ways when budgets are already overspent? [Source.](#)

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

Research shows that over 50% of students forget survival skills within six months if not regularly practiced, making one-time training ineffective without ongoing reinforcement. So in countries like Japan where natural disasters are more regular, these skills make sense, but if these things don't happen in our areas as regularly, they will be quickly forgotten and then wasted. [Source.](#)



# 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**

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# DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

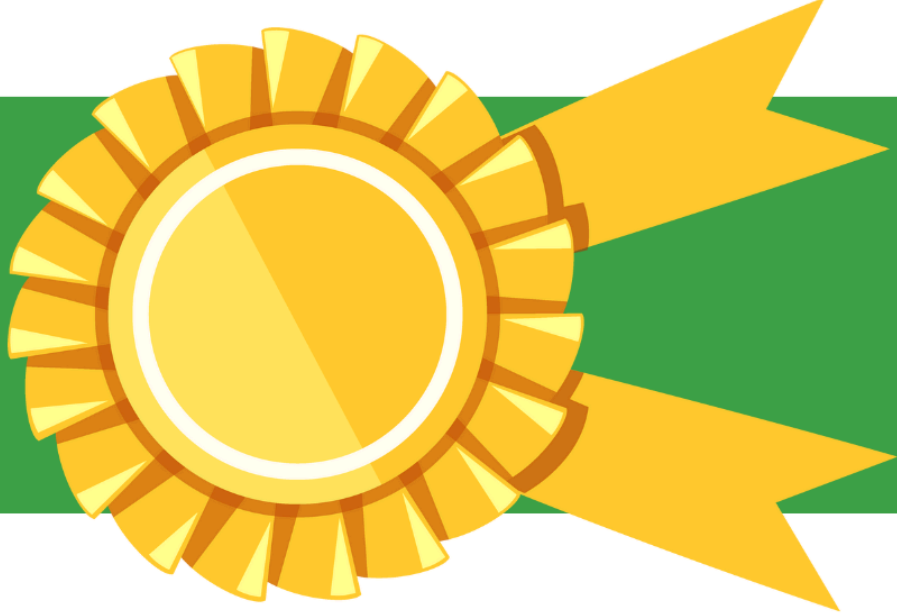
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

*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...

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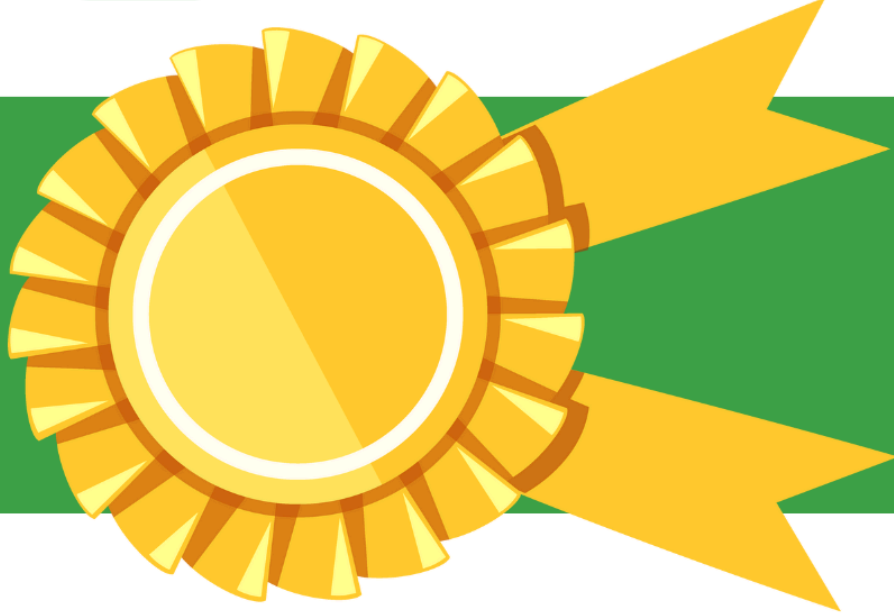
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

**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...

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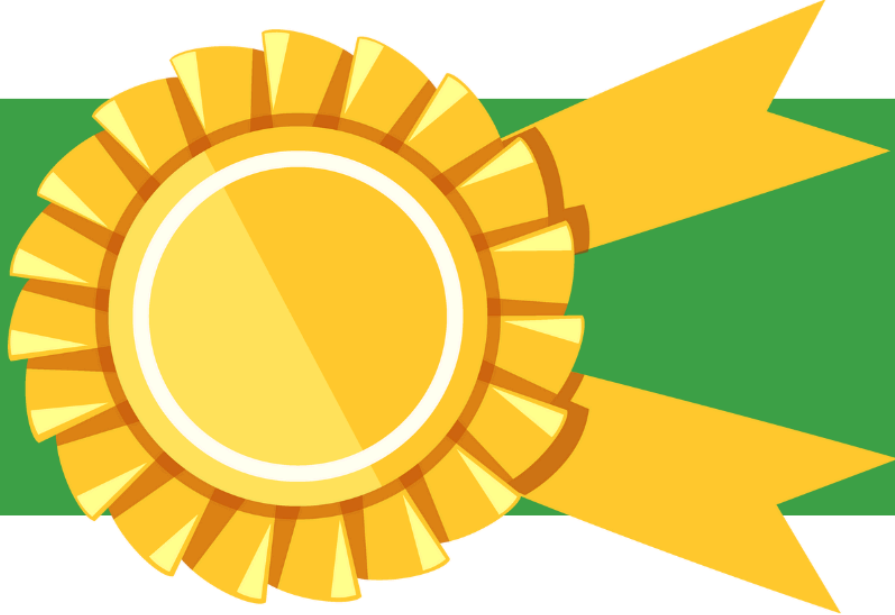
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

**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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