



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

DOES REALITY TV ACTUALLY DEPICT REAL LIFE?



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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... Does reality TV actually depict real life?

Reality TV supposedly features unscripted, real-life situations and people, rather than actors following a script. Some reality TV shows, like Bake Off or Big Brother, focus on competition where contestants react to and face challenges to win prizes, while other shows, like Keeping Up with the Kardashians or Love Island, follow the real daily lives of famous or beautiful people, giving us a glimpse into their relationships. Reality TV is popular because it feels relatable, but it can make us wonder: are these shows really showing what life is like or how people act, or are they just entertaining stories made to seem real despite some scripting?

So in this debate you can either argue that reality TV depicts real life or that it doesn't.

Brain Gym Question

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

Out of the following, which reality TV show was the first to be broadcast in the UK?

- a. The Only Way is Essex
- b. Strictly Come Dancing
- c. Love Island
- d. The Apprentice

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

A survey revealed that 61% of U.S. adults believe that what actors say in reality TV shows is mostly based on a script. [Article.](#)



FOR: Reality TV does depict real life

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

It's ordinary people in extraordinary situations

You might be thinking that reality TV is ordinary people in extraordinary situations. Many reality TV shows feature everyday people, not actors, in real-life situations. Shows like *Survivor* or *SAS: Who dares wins* put contestants in actual survival scenarios, showcasing how they react under pressure.

It can also show ordinary people in ordinary situations

You could say that some reality TV shows people in everyday experiences. Reality shows like *Gogglebox* highlight real people in their homes, reacting naturally to what they're watching on TV where the participants aren't actors, and their genuine opinions and reactions reflect everyday conversations that many families have.

Can you think of another reason why reality TV does depict real life? 

It has had a cultural impact on society

Reality TV has significantly influenced modern culture, shaping societal norms and behaviours by showcasing diverse lifestyles and perspectives.

It has genuine reactions

Many reality shows capture genuine emotions and spontaneous reactions, offering insights into human behaviour in various situations. This unscripted nature can reflect real-life interactions.

It must reflect reality if so many people watch and believe it

Nearly 80% of adult TV viewers watch reality TV shows, indicating the genre's widespread appeal as well as its role in reflecting our interests and our society as whole which people see themselves in. [Article](#).



AGAINST: Reality TV does not depict real life

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that reality TV does not depict real life.

Reality TV shows are partially scripted or staged



You might be thinking that some reality shows are partially scripted or staged. Although labelled as "reality," many TV shows are heavily edited to create drama or producers direct participants to act in certain ways for more entertaining content, this would mean it does not represent real life.

Reality TV has unrealistic situations

Or you could argue that reality shows depict unrealistic situations. Shows like *Im a Celebrity* or *Big Brother* place people in extreme or unusual situations such as competing in the jungle or trapped inside a house with strangers, which doesn't represent every day life for most viewers.

Can you think of another reason why reality TV does not depict real life? 

Editing and producer manipulation



Reality TV often involves selective editing and producer manipulation to create drama and entertainment, leading to distorted portrayals of reality. Reality TV therefore shows human activity but not in natural formats due to the manipulation of others.

Scripting means it does not represent real life



A significant portion of viewers, 61%, believe that reality TV content is mostly scripted, suggesting that these shows may not accurately represent real-life situations. [Article.](#)

FactSheet: Does reality TV actually depict real life?



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

Reality TV depicts real life

High viewership shows its closeness to reality:

Nearly 80% of adult TV viewers watch reality TV shows, suggesting that the genre resonates with real-life experiences and interests. [Source.](#)

Authenticity presumed amongst the youth:

Many girls think these programs reflect reality, with 75% saying that competition shows and 50% saying that real-life shows are "mainly real and unscripted." [Source.](#)

The increase in reality tv programmes shows people see themselves in them:

More than a quarter of today's primetime shows constitute some form of reality TV, indicating that a significant portion of television content consumed by audiences is reality-based. [Source.](#)

Reality TV does not depict real life

Viewers question its authenticity:

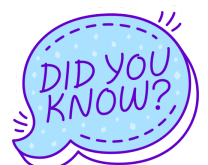
61% of surveyed adults in the U.S. believe that what actors say in reality TV shows is mostly based on a script, questioning the authenticity of these shows. [Source.](#)

It's changes youth perceptions of reality:

A study found that 37% of kids aged 11 to 17 who watch reality TV believe you have to lie to get what you want, compared to 24% of those who do not watch, suggesting that reality TV may impart misleading values. [Source.](#)

Reality TV rarely shows real body types:

Recent studies show that the average American woman is between a size 16 and a size 18. The average American man falls somewhere along the same lines. But most reality TV shows portray thin bodies—sizes 0 to 4. [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...





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social media!**

SHARE YOUR VOICE

We shout out the best opinions each week

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TWITTER @SSCCTY

INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS



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DEBATER OF THE WEEK

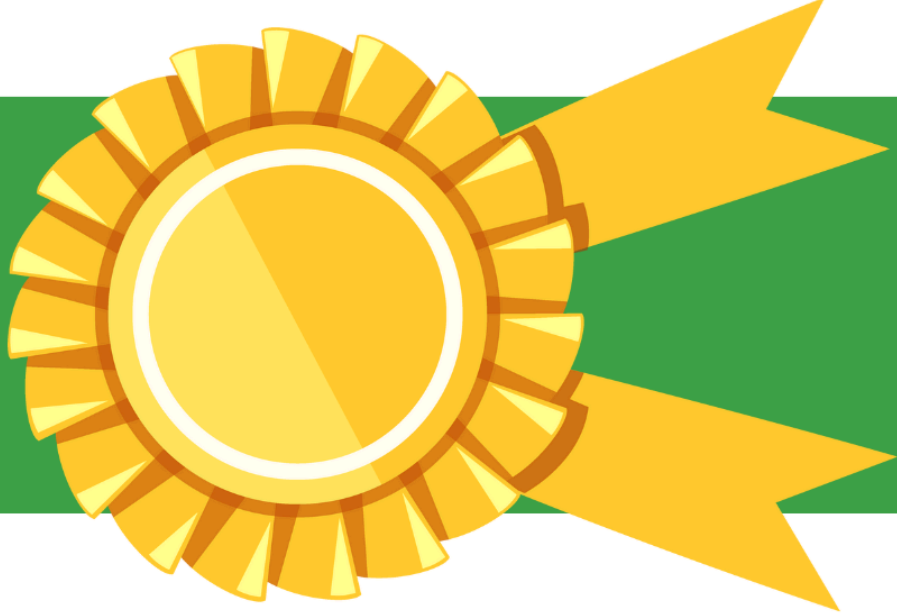
We are proud to present this certificate to...

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...

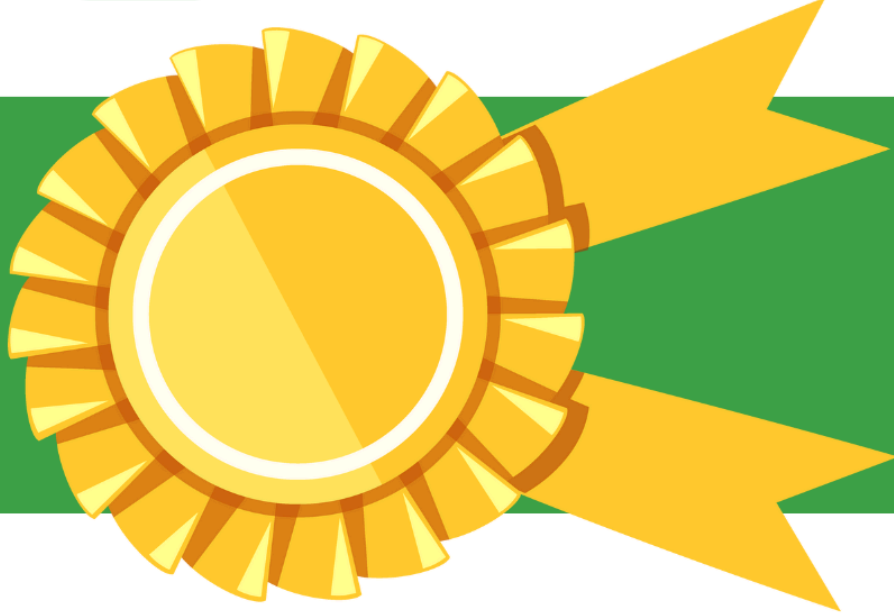
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

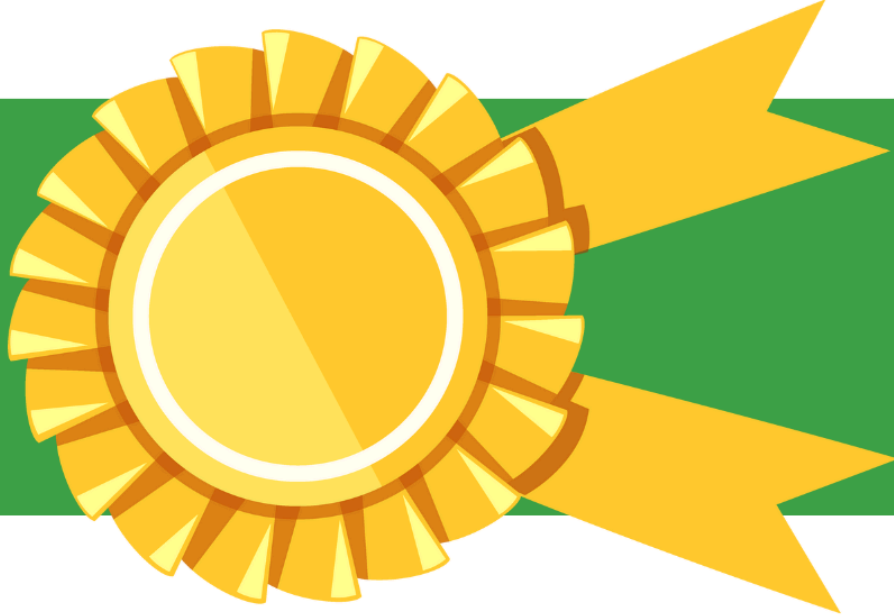
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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