



**Smart School Councils**

# DEBATE PACK

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

**IS IT BETTER TO KNOW MULTIPLE SUBJECTS OR BE AN EXPERT  
IN JUST ONE?**



[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... Is it better to know multiple subjects or be an expert in just one? Would you consider yourself a 'jack of all trades' who is good at a few things? or are you an expert in just one? I'm an expert in 2000s music or Pokémon. But is it better to be an expert in one special subject or have knowledge across several topics? For instance, would you prefer to excel in one school subject, like being a math whiz, or to be pretty good across a few, like math, history, and art? Being an expert could help you stand out, but having a well-rounded knowledge can make you versatile and give you more options for the future. But which would you prefer?

So in this debate you can either argue that it is better to be an expert in one subject or that it isn't.

## Brain Gym Question

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

Which famous inventor was known for his wide range of knowledge across multiple subjects?

- a. Nikola Tesla (Designed electrical systems)
- B. Thomas Edison (Designed communication systems)
- c. Leonardo Di Vinci (Designed flying machines)
- d. Alexander Graham Bell (Invented the telephone)

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

While deliberate practice is important, it is not the sole determinant of expertise - researchers found that practice has varying degrees of progress across different domains: approximately 26% in games, 21% in music, 18% in sports, 4% in education, and less than 1% in professions. [Article](#).



## FOR: It is better to be an expert in one subject

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

### Experts can make a big impact

You might be thinking that experts can make a big impact. Specialists are more likely to make groundbreaking contributions to the world as they know so much about the subject it can solve big problems or create amazing things - Marie Curie's focus on radioactivity changed the world through her expertise!

### Being a master of something means you gain trust

You could say that being a master of something means you gain trust. By being an expert on something through knowledge or through practice means you can gain a reputation to be depended on - if a doctor was doing a complex surgery, you would want a doctor who is a master in that surgery rather than one who is good in a few fields.

Can you think of another reason why it is better to be an expert in one subject? 

### There is a higher demand for specialists in the job market

Specialists are often sought after for their expertise, leading to higher salaries and better job security, for instance, surgeons, AI researchers, and legal experts earn premium wages due to their deep knowledge.

### More efficient problem-solving due to expert knowledge

Experts solve problems faster and more effectively due to their deep understanding of one field, for instance, a cybersecurity expert can address a complex security breach better than a general IT technician.

### Specialised workers can mean more productivity

Specialised workers can increase productivity and lower production costs due to better knowledge and understanding amongst them. This is especially true as companies grow, using expert knowledge can help them scale efficiently and successfully. [Article](#).



## **AGAINST: It is better to know multiple subjects**

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that it is better to know multiple subjects rather than be an expert in one.


### **Knowing different subjects makes it easier to problem-solve**



You might be thinking that knowing different subjects well makes it easier to problem-solve. Combining knowledge from different areas often leads to innovative solutions. Imagine an artist with engineering skills designing better buildings!

### **Knowing multiple subjects makes you more adaptable**

Or you could argue that knowing multiple subjects makes you adaptable. Knowing multiple subjects makes it easier to adjust to new challenges or careers. For example, someone with both tech and business skills can thrive in many industries.

Can you think of another reason why it is better to know multiple subjects rather than be an expert in one? 

### **Good knowledge over multiple subjects can create better leaders**



Nonviolent campaigns have been more successful than armed campaigns in achieving political goals. While only one in four violent campaigns succeed, about three out of four nonviolent campaigns succeed.

### **Many skills means many opportunities for success**

Generalists can experience downturns in success or demand for some of their products or skills but with skills in many fields, they can keep going with their more successful offerings. [Article.](#)

# FactSheet: Is it better to know multiple subjects or be an expert in just one?



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

## It is better to know multiple subjects

### *It can increase the ways to make money in a company:*

Generalisation encourages economic diversity, meaning lots of different ways to bring in money, making a company more economically secure, especially in periods of economic uncertainty because they can lean on different ways to make money. [Source.](#)

### *It can mean you are adaptable:*

Generalists can shift careers and adapt to different industries, making them more resilient in uncertain job markets and more ability to survive if skills become less needed as society changes. [Source.](#)

### *It can make you a better leader:*

Generalists are better suited for leadership roles because they understand multiple perspectives. [Source.](#)

## It is better to be an expert in just one

### *Being an expert can bring in a higher salary:*

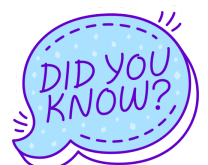
Specialists often command higher salaries due to their deep expertise. For instance, in the legal field, attorneys with specialised skills can command higher fees than generalists. [Source.](#)

### *Being an expert can create respect and professional recognition:*

Specialists are often regarded as leaders in their field, leading to speaking engagements, publications, and other opportunities to showcase their expertise. [Source.](#)

### *Being an expert is in high demand in the job market:*

The job market shows a robust demand for workers with deep specialisations, especially in fields like IT, data engineering, sales, marketing, operations, logistics, and manufacturing. [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**

**TWITTER @SSCCTY**

**INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS**



**[WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG.UK)**



# DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

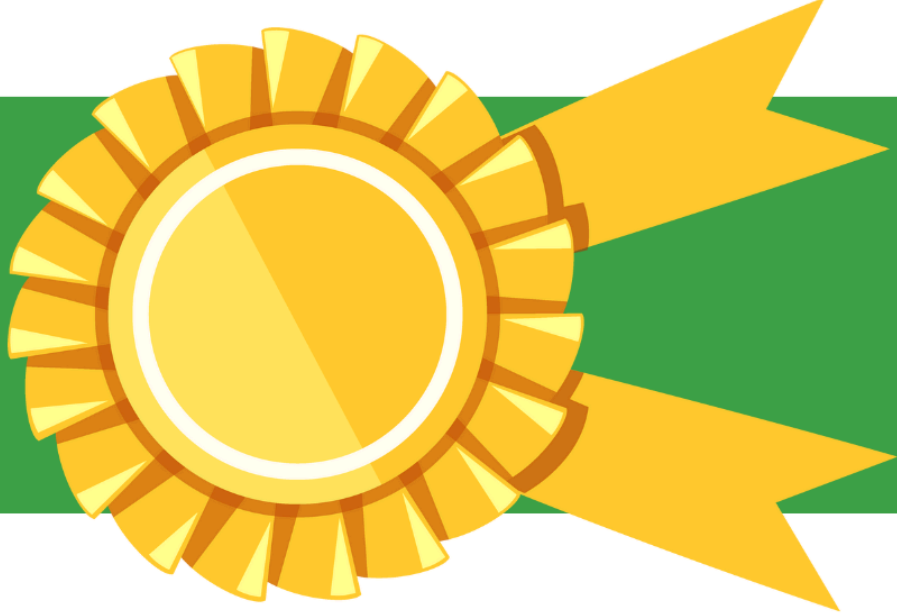
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

*Share a snap or video @SSCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!*



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart  
School  
Councils  
Community



# CLASS MEETING LEADER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

---

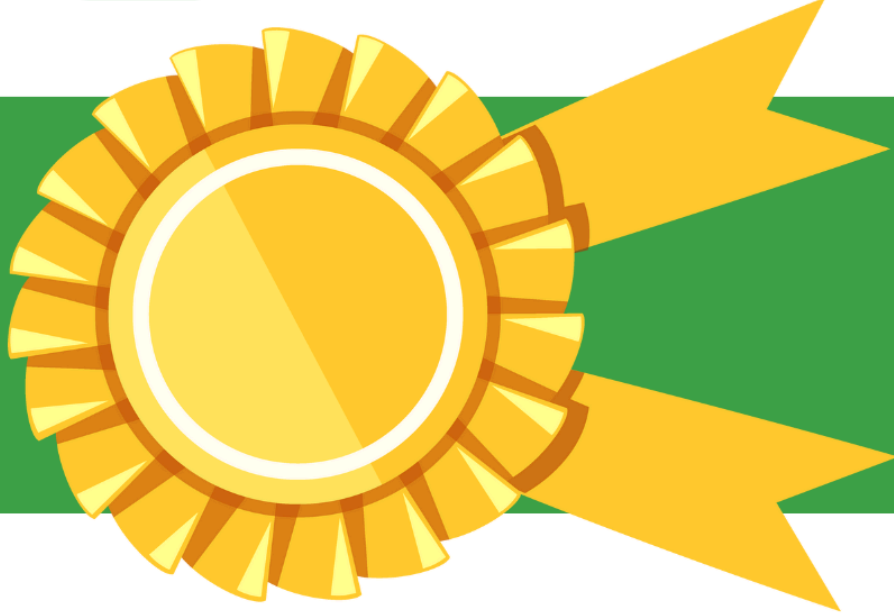
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

*Share a snap or video @SSCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!*



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart  
School  
Councils  
Community



# BEST IDEA OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

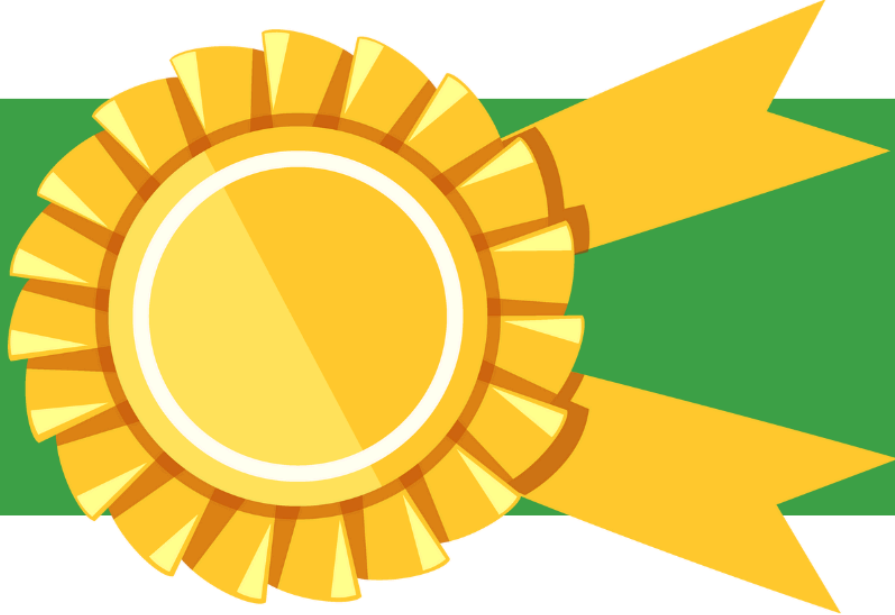
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

**Share a snap or video @SSCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!**



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart  
School  
Councils  
Community

