



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

IS BEING POPULAR IMPORTANT?



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 that's not in the video

Introduction and Brain Gym Question

Introduction



Welcome to the Big Debate Club! My name is Greg and today we are debating the question... Is being popular important?

Being popular can mean having lots of friends, getting attention, or being admired and to many it can seem like a big deal, especially in schools, on social media, and even in the workplace. Some people believe being popular opens doors to opportunities and helps you succeed.

On the other hand, popularity doesn't always last. People like Vincent van Gogh weren't popular during their lifetimes, but their work became legendary later. This makes us wonder: is it better to focus on being well-liked, or should we aim for something deeper, like personal growth or long-term achievements? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

On average, how many close friends do people need for long-term happiness, according to research?

- A) 1-2
- B) 5-6
- C) 10-12

Which of the 3 potential answers will you choose? Pause the video, turn to your partner and tell them your answer.

A study from the University of Virginia found that teenagers with **one or two close friends** tend to have **lower anxiety and higher self-esteem** in adulthood. Those who focused on being popular often felt **lonelier later in life**. [Article](#)



FOR: Being popular is important

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

Being popular can give you influence

You might be thinking that being popular can give you influence. With lots of people listening to you, popularity gives you a platform to influence people to make a positive difference. Social media influencers, for example, use their popularity to raise awareness about important issues, promote brands, or even start movements like climate change activism.



Being popular gives you support and connections

You could say that being popular gives you support and connections. Being popular means you have lots of people who support you, creating a larger support system when you need it or connections to get you advantages because of who you know.

Can you think of another reason why you could argue that being popular is important? **II**

Being popular can create opportunities

Being popular can lead to exciting opportunities. You might get picked for leadership roles, invited to fun events, or even have an easier time making important connections for the future due to the people who you meet - with opportunities it is often who you know.



Popularity can boost confidence

When people like and accept you, it can make you feel more confident. Popularity can help you feel comfortable speaking up, trying new things, and believing in yourself.

Popular students often become leaders

A study found that students who are well-liked by their peers are more likely to become leaders later in life. They build strong social skills, which help them succeed in school and future careers. [Article](#)



AGAINST: Being popular isn't important

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that being popular isn't important.



Being popular is often short-lived and unreliable

You might be thinking that being popular is often short-lived and unreliable. Popularity often depends on trends or superficial appearances, which can fade quickly. For example, once-popular celebrities or athletes sometimes struggle to stay relevant for long periods of time, showing that popularity doesn't always lead to lasting success.

Being popular isn't important as it's not real

Or you could argue that popularity isn't important as it's not real. Popularity can come with pressure to act a certain way, which might not reflect who you truly are. For instance, some social media stars might have an Instagram feed which portrays a fantastic life with great adventures but then talk about feeling lonely despite having millions of followers.

Can you think of another reason why you could argue that being popular isn't important? 

Being popular can be stressful



Popularity often comes with pressure. People who are popular might feel they always have to impress others, act a certain way, or keep up with expectations. This can be exhausting and stressful, making it harder to just be yourself.

Focusing too much on popularity isn't always helpful



A study from the **University of Virginia** found that teens who cared a lot about being popular didn't always feel happier later in life. Those who focused on close friendships instead tended to feel more confident and supported as they grew up. (Source: Narr, R. K., Allen, J. P., et al. (2017). "Close Friendship Strength and Adolescent Adjustment," *Child Development*.)

FactSheet: Is being popular important?



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

Being popular is important

It can help you make connections

Being popular means more people know you, which can lead to helpful connections. Research shows that strong social networks can help with future opportunities in school and work. (Source: University of Oxford, 2018, study on social capital and success.)

It helps you develop leadership skills

Studies show that students who are well-liked by their peers are more likely to take on leadership roles. Being socially confident can help people work well in teams and communicate better. (Source: University of Illinois, 2014, study on peer status and leadership.)

It can boost confidence

Feeling liked and accepted can make people feel more confident in social situations. Research suggests that social acceptance in school can lead to better emotional well-being. (Source: American Psychological Association, 2019, study on peer relationships and self-esteem.)

Being popular is not important

It can be stressful

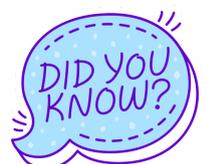
Trying to stay popular can make people feel pressure to act a certain way. Some studies suggest that constantly seeking approval from others can increase stress. (Source: University of California, 2016, study on social anxiety and peer approval.)

Close friends matter more

A study found that having one or two close friends is more important for long-term happiness than having lots of acquaintances. People with strong friendships feel more supported as they grow up. (Source: University of Virginia, 2017, study on friendship quality and well-being.)

It doesn't always last

Being popular can depend on trends and social groups, which change over time. Some studies show that childhood popularity doesn't always lead to success in adulthood. (Source: Journal of Adolescence, 2015, study on long-term effects of peer status.) 



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...

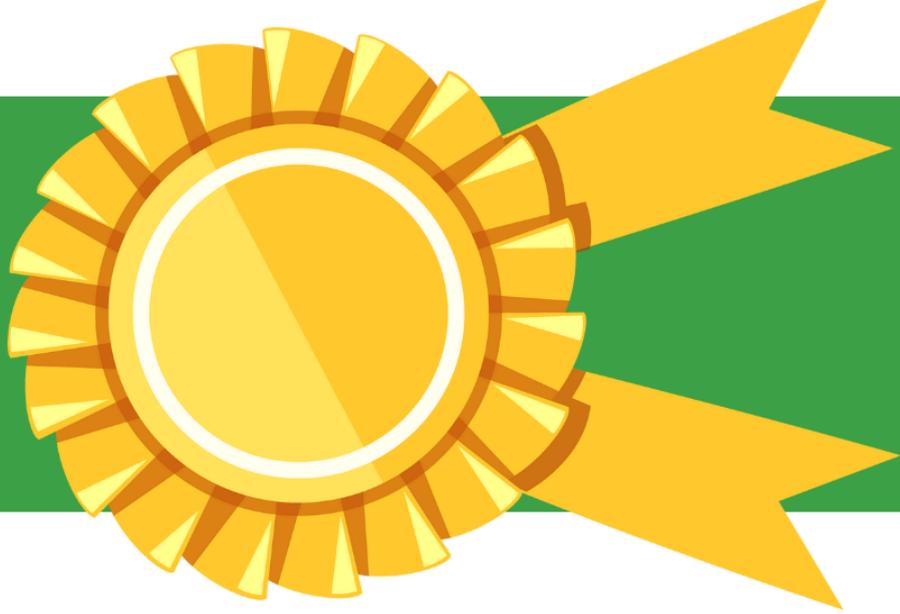
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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...

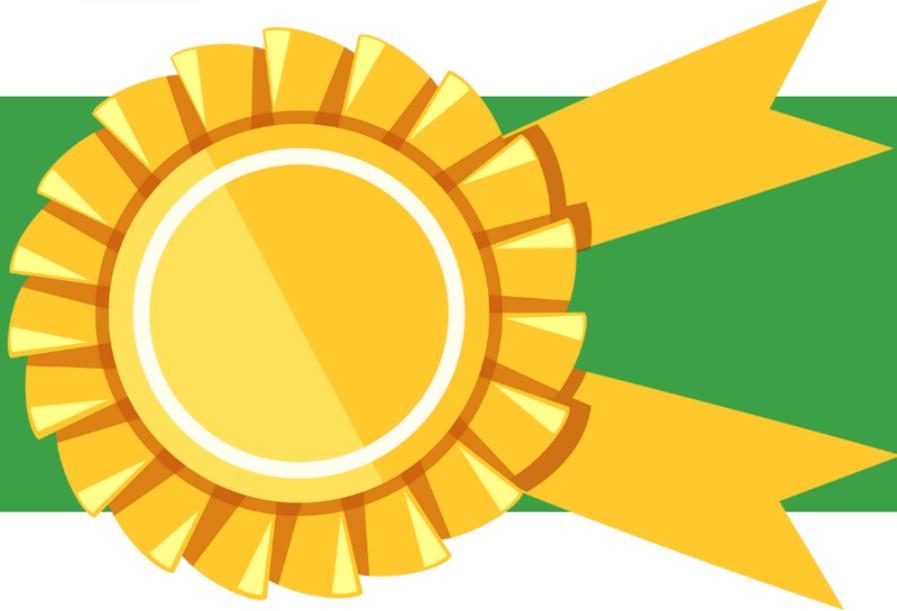
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

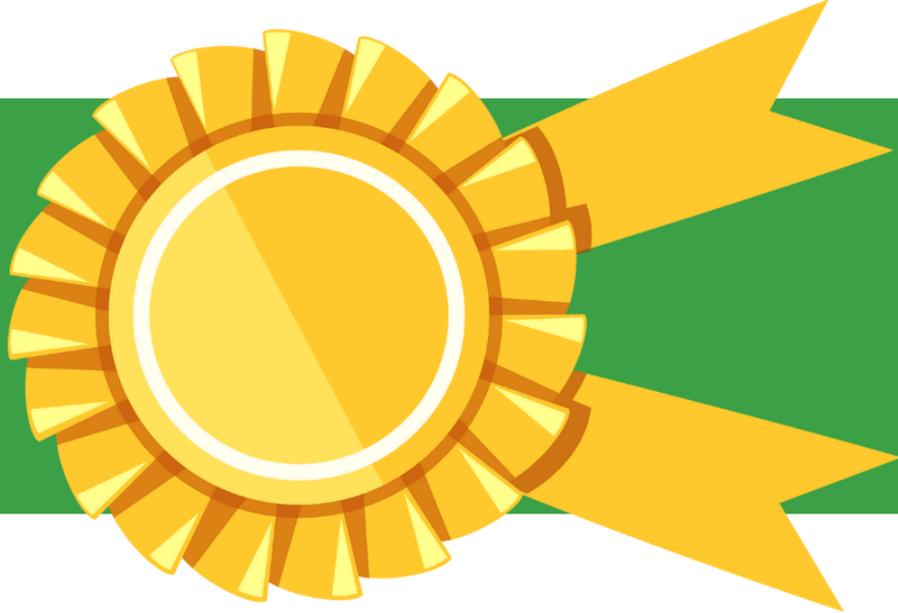
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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