



**Smart School Councils**

# DEBATE PACK

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

**SHOULD STUDENTS HAVE A SAY IN THEIR SCHOOL'S LUNCH MENU?**



[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 that's not in the video

# Introduction and Brain Gym Question

## Introduction



Welcome to Big Debate Club!

My name is Becky and today we are debating the question...

Should students have a say in their school's lunch menu?

Author Virginia Woolf once said, "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well." With most school students eating at least one, if not two, meals at school every day, it's essential to ensure they're dining well there.

But how can we best achieve this? Should students have a say in what's served, ensuring they enjoy their meals while also reducing food waste? Or should schools maintain control, sticking to nutritional guidelines to guarantee balanced and healthy options, even if it means students might not always get their favourites? You decide!

## Brain Gym Question

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

Which of these foods is most commonly wasted in school lunch programs?

- a. Vegetables
- b. Fruits
- c. Milk
- d. Bread

A **2019 study by the USDA** found that **vegetables make up the largest portion of wasted food in school lunch programs**, followed by milk and fruit. The study showed that **over 31% of vegetables served in schools go uneaten**. (Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019, "School Food Waste Estimates.")



## FOR: Students should have a say


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

### Empowers students to be involved in school processes

You might be thinking that it empowers the students to be involved in their school processes. Giving students a voice teaches them responsibility and makes them feel valued. For example, creating a lunch menu through questions in their Smart School Council class discussions could give students a sense of responsibility to make sure all of their classmates eat well.

### Students can make healthy choices

You could say that it means students can make healthy choices while reducing waste. If students have input, they could choose healthier foods they actually like, instead of wasting food they don't want to eat but have been decided by adults.

Can you think of another reason why students should have a say? 

### Students feel more confident

Letting students have a say in their school lunch menu makes them feel like their opinions matter and boosts their confidence. By being validated when they help make decisions, they feel their contributions make a positive impact and that they are respected in their school community.

### Schools with student input see better meal satisfaction

A **2018 study by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health** found that when students help choose school meals, they are **more likely to eat them and enjoy their lunches**. Schools that involved students in menu planning saw **higher satisfaction rates** and less food waste. (Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2018, "School Nutrition and Student Involvement.")



## AGAINST: Students should not have a say

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that students should not have a say.




### Practical challenges

You might be thinking that there might be practical challenges. Schools must work within budgets and time constraints so adding student input could mean more expensive ingredients or elaborate meals meaning meal planning is more complicated and less efficient.

### Experts have designed lunches to meet nutritional guidelines

Or you could argue that students eat well due to well-supported set food standards so why go against this? Experts have designed school lunches to meet strict nutritional guidelines so if students choose meals, they might prioritise taste over health or not have enough knowledge, leading to less balanced and repetitive diets.

Can you think of another reason why they should not post pictures? 

## Younger students could struggle to make balanced choices

If students pick their own meals, they might choose foods they like rather than what's healthiest. This could lead to unbalanced diets with too much sugar or not enough vegetables.



## Students often choose taste over nutrition

A 2019 study by the CDC found that when given the choice, **students are more likely to pick less nutritious foods**, such as pizza and fries, over healthier options like vegetables and whole grains. This suggests that without guidance, school meals might become less balanced. (*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019, "School Nutrition and Student Choices."*)



# FactSheet: Should students have a say in their school's lunch menu?



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

## Yes

### ***It teaches responsibility***

When students help choose their meals, they learn decision-making skills and take responsibility for their food choices. Schools that involve students in meal planning see a greater sense of ownership among students. (Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2018, "School Nutrition and Student Involvement.")

### ***It leads to healthier eating habits***


A study found that when students have a say in their school menu, they are more likely to choose and eat healthier foods. (Source: World Resources Institute, 2021, "Reducing Food Waste in Schools.")

### ***It reduces food waste***

Schools that involve students in menu planning see up to 30% less food waste, as students are more likely to eat what they help choose. (Source: World Resources Institute, 2021, "School Food Waste and Student Choice.")

## NO

### ***It can be impractical***

Schools must work within budgets and time limits. Allowing student input could make meal planning more complicated, with higher costs for food and preparation. (Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019, "School Meal Program Costs.") 

### ***Students might choose unhealthy options***

A **2019 CDC study** found that when given the choice, students often pick **high-fat, high-sugar foods like pizza and fries** over healthier options like vegetables and whole grains. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019, "School Nutrition and Student Choices.")

### ***School meals are designed by nutrition experts***

School lunch programs follow strict health guidelines to ensure balanced nutrition. If students had full control, meals might become less healthy. (Source: USDA, 2020, "National School Lunch Program Guidelines.")



# 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...

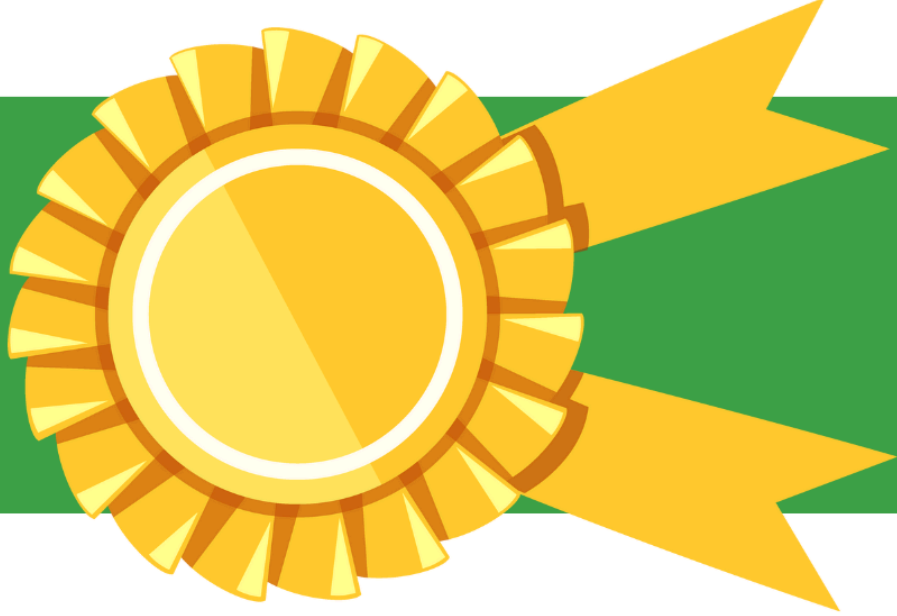
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart  
School  
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Community



# CLASS MEETING LEADER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

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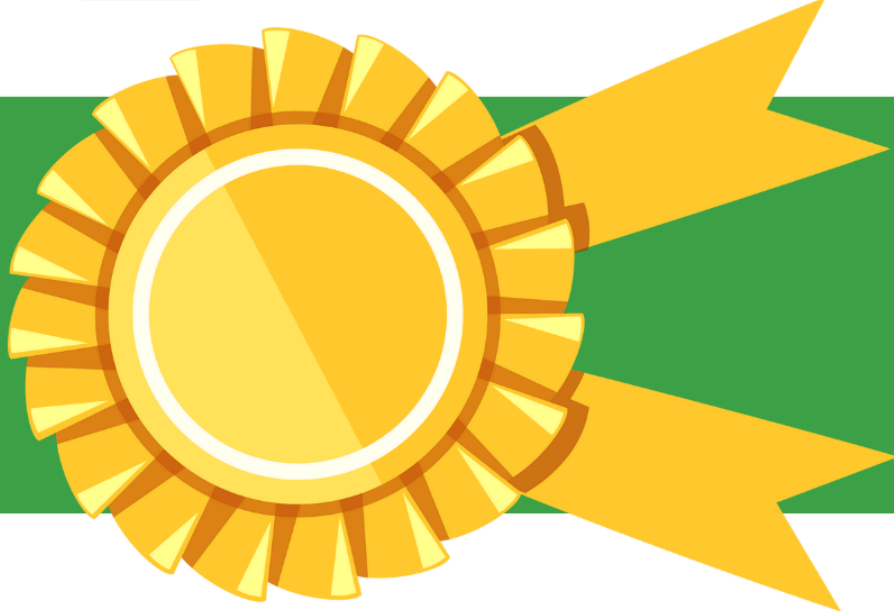
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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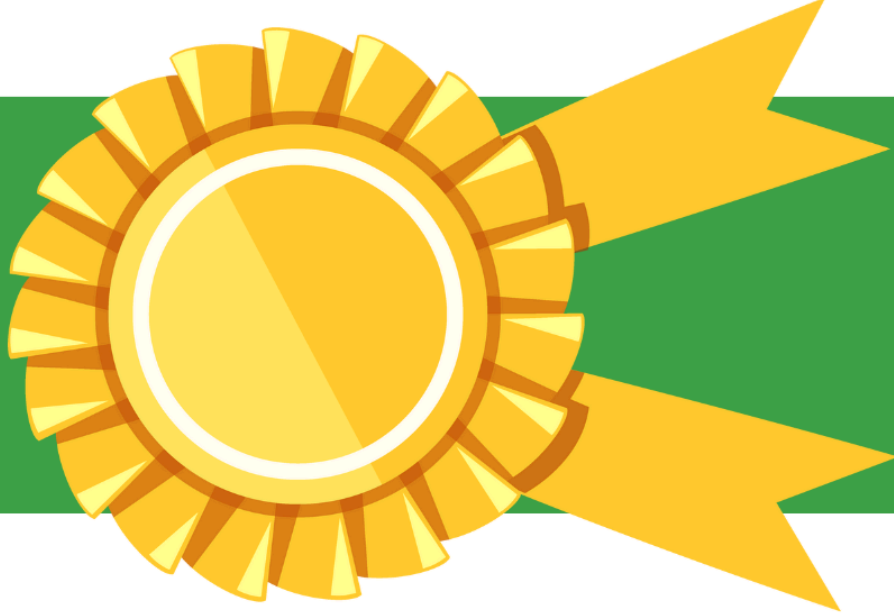
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

**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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