



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

SHOULD THE INTERNET BE FREE AS ITS SO IMPORTANT TO THE
MODERN WORLD?



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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 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 the internet be free as it's so important to the modern world?

Some would argue that the internet has become so fundamental to interacting with society that we are dependent on it to access the world—whether it is using apps to connect to your homework, accessing important information and ideas, or engaging with people both nearby and across the globe.

For these reasons, should the internet be free so everyone can engage with society effectively? Or should we pay for it to ensure it works efficiently through new and constantly improving technology? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

Which country was the first to make internet access a legal right for all citizens?

- a. Finland
- b. Canada
- c. Japan
- d. Germany

The World Economic Forum emphasises that internet access is not a luxury but a **basic necessity** for economic and human development, essential for accessing education, healthcare, and government services. (Source: World Economic Forum, [LINK](#))



FOR: The internet should be free as it is so important

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

Internet is essential for modern life so everyone should access it



You might be thinking that the internet is essential for modern life so everyone should access it. The internet is needed for education, healthcare, and finding jobs. By not making it free, we don't give everyone equal opportunities to progress in society and reduce the divide between those who can and can't afford it.

You need the internet to stay informed and boost democracy

You could say that without the internet, it would be harder to stay informed and boost democracy. The internet allows people to stay informed, express their opinions, and participate in political and social discussions. If access depends on the ability to pay, only wealthier people may have full access to all the information and to take part in online debates, limiting democracy and freedom of expression.

Can you think of another reason why the internet should be free as it is important? 

It is limited in so many places which holds some back



According to a UNICEF-ITU report, two-thirds of the world's school-age children (approximately 1.3 billion) lack internet access at home, hindering their educational opportunities.

In the UK, many struggle to afford internet access



In the UK, 2.5 million households struggle to afford internet access, and 1 in 14 homes have no access at all, indicating that even in developed nations, internet access is not universally achievable. And with 1 in 10 British people saying they would cut back on food for internet access shows free internet is needed. (Source: Good Things Foundation, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: The internet should not be free even if it is important

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that the internet should not be free even if it is important.




If the internet were free, it might be of poor quality

You might be thinking that the internet not being paid for could risk poor quality. If the internet were free, there might be slower speeds, more advertisements might appear in order to use it, or restrictions on which areas can access it.

If we are not paying, who will?

Or you could also ask if we are not paying, who will? Internet services require infrastructure, maintenance, and security. If it's free, who covers the cost? Governments? Taxpayers? Private companies?

Can you think of another reason why the internet should not be free even if it is so important? 

Will the infrastructure support everyone having the internet?

Only 35% of people in developing nations have any form of online access, suggesting that infrastructural challenges may impede the feasibility of providing free internet universally.



Will the internet being free mean everyone can access it?

UNESCO reports that in 2022, there were 187 instances of internet shutdowns in 35 countries, raising concerns about governments controlling or restricting internet access, even if it's provided for free. (Source: UNESCO, [LINK](#))



FactSheet: Should the internet be free as it's so important to the modern world?



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

Yes

Belief that the internet is a human right

A global survey by Ipsos found that 83% of internet users believe affordable internet access should be a basic human right. This underscores the widespread perception of the internet as essential for modern life. (Source: *IPSOS*, [LINK](#))

Lack of access can reduce inequality and opportunities

According to a UNICEF-ITU report, two-thirds of the world's school-age children (approximately 1.3 billion) lack internet access at home, hindering their educational opportunities. (Source: *UNICEF*, [LINK](#))

Increased internet can have economic benefits

The World Bank states that increasing internet access in developing countries to 75% could boost their collective GDP by \$2 trillion and create 140 million new jobs, highlighting the economic advantages of broader internet access. (Source: *World Bank*, [LINK](#))

NO

Will free access mean the same access?

Programmes or websites offering free internet access to selected services, like Facebook's Free Basics, have been criticised for violating net neutrality principles (allowing all internet users to use all of the internet in the same way) by limiting users to a curated selection of websites. Would we expect those who use the free access to only be able to access certain websites picked for financial benefit to the programme while people who choose to pay can have free access? (Source: *Utunnel*, [LINK](#))

Even if it is free, there may be barriers preventing its use

UNESCO reports that in 2022, there were 187 instances of internet shutdowns in 35 countries, raising concerns about governments controlling or restricting internet access, even if it's provided for free. (Source: *UNESCO*, [LINK](#))

Will infrastructure be an issue?

Only 35% of people in developing nations have any form of online access, suggesting that infrastructural challenges may impede the feasibility of providing free internet universally. (Source: *World Economic Forum*, [LINK](#))



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

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TWITTER @SSCCTV

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...

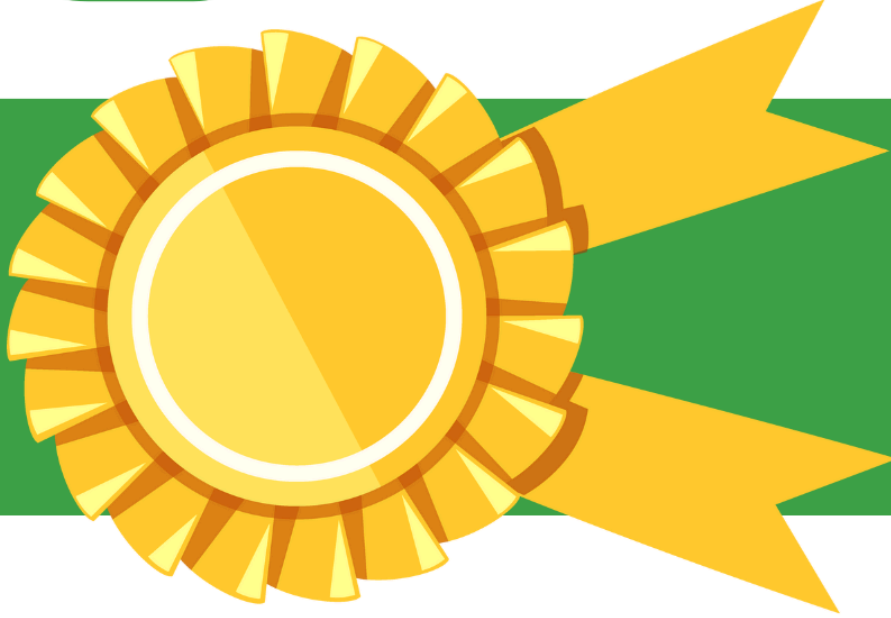
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

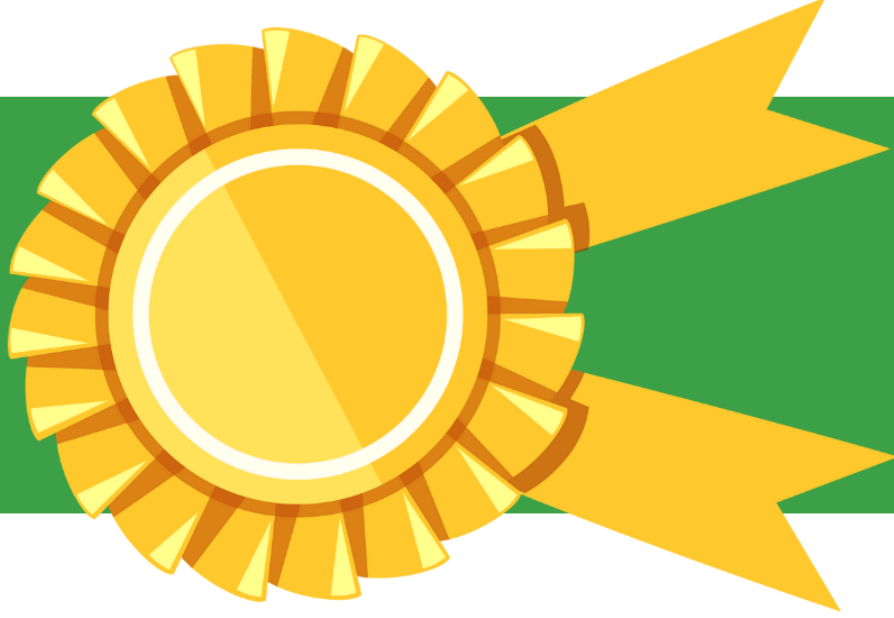
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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