



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

SHOULD HUMANS TRY TO BRING BACK EXTINCT ANIMALS?



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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 humans try to bring back extinct animals?

What's your favourite animal? Mine is a red panda. But imagine if that animal didn't exist anymore - would you find any way to bring it back? Throughout history, animals have gone extinct due to natural causes, habitat loss, and human activity. But now, with advances in genetics, some scientists believe we could revive species that have disappeared.

Bringing back extinct animals could undo past mistakes or let future generations enjoy them but reviving lost species might cause new problems, such as diverting resources from protecting animals currently endangered. So should we bring them back? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

What is the main cause of most modern animal extinctions?

- a) Volcanic eruptions
- b) Asteroid impacts
- c) Human activity
- d) Ice ages

Roughly 75% of mammal extinctions in the last 500 years have been caused by humans, mainly due to overhunting, habitat destruction, and introducing invasive species. Should we bring them back to make amends? (Source: National Geographic, [LINK](#))



FOR: Humans should try to bring back extinct animals

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

Scientific advancements involved in bringing back animals can benefit everyone



You might be thinking that scientific advancements involved in bringing back animals can help everyone. Working on reversing extinction helps us improve genetic research and how to help with conservation of animals, which could help save the endangered species of today.

Bringing back animals could lead to healthier ecosystems

You could say that bringing back extinct animals can mean we go back to healthier ecosystems. Some extinct animals played a key role in their environment and bringing them back could help restore balance to nature. For example, woolly mammoths might help stop permafrost from melting by keeping Arctic grasslands healthy.

Can you think of another reason why humans should try to bring back extinct animals? 

Bringing back important species could be good for the environment



Some extinct species were "keystone species," meaning their presence had a large impact on their ecosystems. The woolly mammoth, for instance, helped maintain Arctic grasslands by knocking down trees and spreading seeds. Scientists argue that returning them could slow permafrost melting, which traps carbon and affects climate change.

Bringing back animals could create public excitement for conservation



Bringing back extinct animals could spark public excitement and support for conservation. Studies show that seeing charismatic species, like the passenger pigeon or Tasmanian tiger, boosts public interest in biodiversity. (Source: National Geographic Kids, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: Humans should not try to bring back extinct animals

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that humans should not try to bring back extinct animals.



Should bringing back extinct animals be our priority?

You might ask, should bringing back extinct animals be our priority? Should our priority be to put our resources into bringing back previous animals when we can ensure we save the endangered animals we have today?

Didn't these animals die for a reason?

Or you could also ask, didn't these animals die for a reason? If we bring back animals that died due to reasons like a lack of habitat, they might struggle to survive, or worse, they could disrupt modern ecosystems.

Can you think of another reason why humans should not try to bring back extinct animals? 

Will it upset our current ecosystems?



Extinct animals reintroduced into modern ecosystems could become invasive or disrupt food chains. For example, ecosystems have evolved without mammoths for 4,000 years, so bringing them back could upset existing plant and animal balances.

Would it be worth the price?



De-extinction projects can cost millions of pounds per species. That money could instead support efforts to save the over 42,000 species currently threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List. (Source: *National Geographic*, [LINK](#))

FactSheet: Should humans try to bring back extinct animals?



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

Yes

Bringing back excitement could create public excitement for conservation

Bringing back extinct animals could spark public excitement and support for conservation. Studies show that seeing charismatic species, like the passenger pigeon or Tasmanian tiger, boosts public interest in biodiversity. (Source: National Geographic Kids, [LINK](#))

It could mean more biodiversity and stronger animal species

By adding lost genes back into current ecosystems, we could increase biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. For instance, genes from extinct species might help modern relatives resist disease or adapt to climate change. (Source: Smithsonian Magazine, [LINK](#))

Bringing important animals back could be good for the environment

Some extinct species were “keystone species,” meaning their presence had a large impact on their ecosystems. The woolly mammoth, for instance, helped maintain Arctic grasslands by knocking down trees and spreading seeds. Scientists argue that returning them could slow permafrost melting, which traps carbon and affects climate change. (Source: *BBC Earth*, [LINK](#))

NO

Will it hurt our current ecosystems?

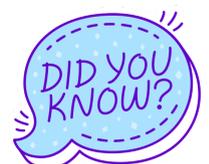
Extinct animals reintroduced into modern ecosystems could become invasive or disrupt food chains. For example, ecosystems have evolved without mammoths for 4,000 years, so bringing them back could upset existing plant and animal balances. (Source: *American Scientist*, [LINK](#))

Is it worth the price?

De-extinction projects can cost millions of dollars per species. That money could instead support efforts to save the over 42,000 species currently threatened with extinction according to the IUCN Red List. (Source: *National Geographic*, [LINK](#))

This could weaken arguments for current endangered animals

Some conservationists worry that de-extinction sends the wrong message—that extinction isn't permanent. This could weaken efforts to **prevent species loss today**, creating a mindset that science can always “fix” nature. (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...





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social media!**

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We shout out the best opinions each week

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DEBATER OF THE WEEK

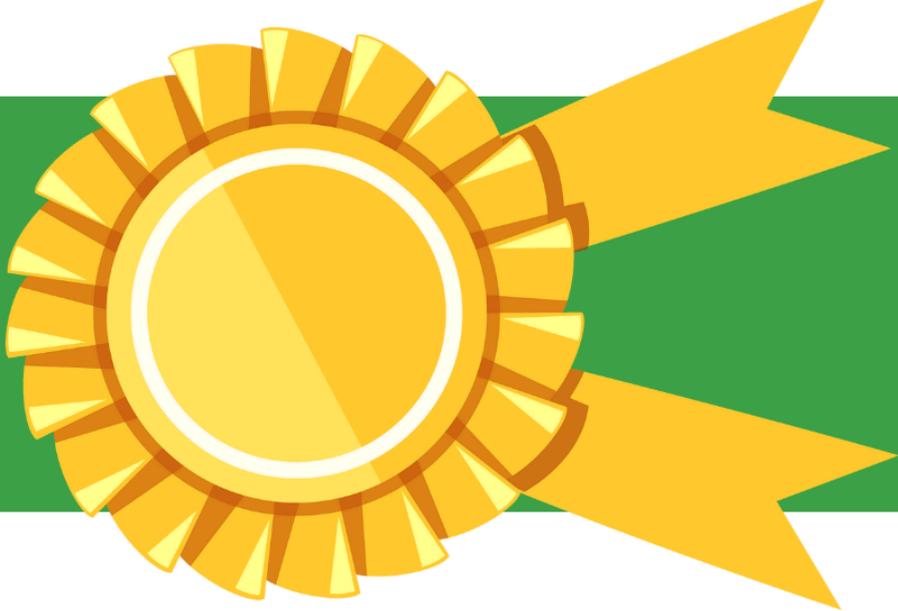
We are proud to present this certificate to...

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...

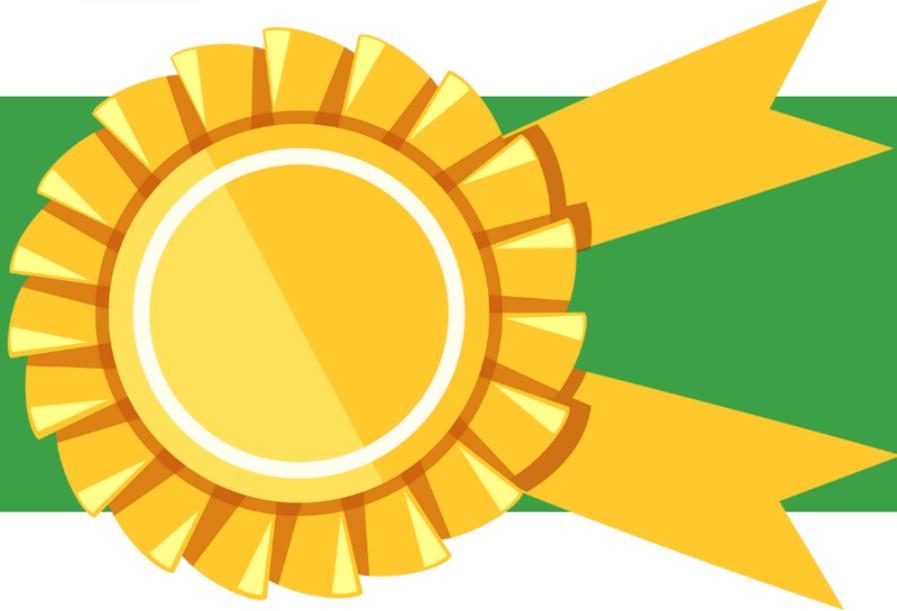
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

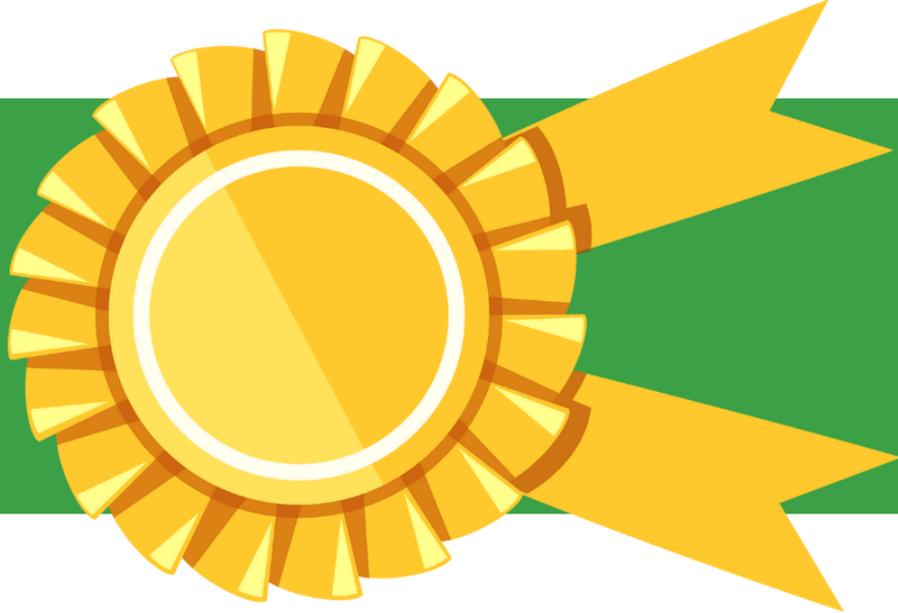
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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