



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

IS REMEMBERING THE PAST THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT FUTURE
HATE CRIMES?



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...

Is remembering the past the best way to prevent future hate crimes?

On the 27th January, we observe Holocaust Memorial Day, to remember the horrible way people were treated in World War 2 as well as victims of other horrific events such as genocide. We commemorate events like these to make sure we prevent it happening again.

But is remembering the past the best way to prevent further harm? Remembering and learning about the consequences of hatred could be seen as the most powerful tool to stop history repeating itself. But while remembrance is important, tackling hate crimes also needs strong laws, education, and community action in the present. So which is more effective? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

In which year did the UN officially designate 27 January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day?

- a) 1945
- b) 1975
- c) 2005
- d) 2015

Research shows people who have been educated about the Holocaust tend to express fewer harmful stereotypes and feel more willingness to challenge intolerant behaviour, which can lower support for hateful ideas that fuel hate crimes. (Source: *ADL*, [LINK](#))



FOR: Remembering the past is the best way to prevent future hate crimes

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

Remembering these events can create empathy



You might be thinking that education in remembering these events can create empathy. A 2019 UNESCO report found that Holocaust education can increase empathy and reduce hateful attitudes in students, making them less likely to support hate-based actions.

Setting goals together can help us believe in ourselves

You could say that understanding means we learn from our mistakes. Remembering past events keeps societies alert to early warning signs such as propaganda, scapegoating, and discriminatory laws that have historically come before hate crimes in order to prevent them.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that remembering the past is the best way to prevent future crimes? 

The public strongly backs education to stop hate crimes



Surveys show strong public backing for teaching about antisemitism and the Holocaust as part of efforts to prevent hate. For example, around 84 to 89% of American adults support antisemitism and Holocaust education in schools. (Source: ADL, [LINK](#))

Education reduces hate crimes for all communities



A study in the United States found that hate crimes against groups including Black, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+ and Latino communities fell significantly (e.g., 55% drop for Black communities and 54.8% for antisemitic crimes) in states with compulsory Holocaust education. (Source: JNS, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: Remembering the past is not the best way to prevent future hate crimes

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that remembering the past is not the best way to prevent future hate crimes.



Memory alone is not enough

You might think that memory alone is not enough. Research from the Anti-Defamation League shows that even in countries with strong Holocaust remembrance programmes, hate crimes still persist, suggesting that memory must be paired with actions and legal measures.

A modern society needs modern preventions

Or you could also say a modern society needs modern preventions. Hate crimes today can be fuelled by modern technology such as social media's fake news and modern issues such as economic inequality - addressing these needs modern solutions, not just remembering the past.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that remembering the past is not the best way to prevent future hate crimes? 

Historical lessons will weaken over time

As survivors of past atrocities pass away and misinformation spreads, memory can fade or become distorted, meaning history lessons can weaken over time and lose effectiveness if not actively reinforced. Declining awareness of major historical facts has been observed globally. (Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, [LINK](#))



Remembering the past doesn't solve contemporary hate

Critics argue that focusing on one historical atrocity (like the Holocaust) doesn't automatically give people tools to prevent all forms of contemporary hate, such as Islamophobia, racism, ethnic violence, or other hate crimes, without broader social changes too. Some experts suggest multi-faceted approaches are needed. (Source: OSCE, [LINK](#))



FactSheet: Is remembering the past the best way to prevent future hate crimes?

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



Remembering the past is the best way

The public strongly backs historical education to prevent hate

Surveys show strong public backing for teaching about antisemitism and the Holocaust as part of efforts to prevent hate. For example, around 84 to 89% of American adults support antisemitism and Holocaust education in schools. (Source: ADL, [LINK](#))

Education has seen a decrease in hate crimes for most communities

A study in the United States found that hate crimes against groups including Black, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+ and Latino communities fell significantly (e.g., 55% drop for Black communities and 54.8% for antisemitic crimes) in states with compulsory Holocaust education. (Source: JNS, [LINK](#))

More education means less hateful ideas and stereotypes

Research shows people who have been educated about the Holocaust tend to express fewer harmful stereotypes and feel more willingness to challenge intolerant behaviour, which can lower support for hateful ideas that fuel hate crimes. (Source: ADL, [LINK](#))

Remembering the past is not the best way

Remembering one event in the past doesn't solve contemporary hate

Critics argue that focusing on one historical atrocity (like the Holocaust) doesn't automatically give people tools to prevent all forms of contemporary hate, such as Islamophobia, racism, ethnic violence, or other hate crimes, without broader social changes too. Some experts suggest multi-faceted approaches are needed. (Source: OSCE, [LINK](#))

Historical lessons will weaken over time as survivors die and sources fade

As survivors of past atrocities pass away and misinformation spreads, memory can fade or become distorted, meaning history lessons can weaken over time and lose effectiveness if not actively reinforced. Declining awareness of major historical facts has been observed globally. (Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, [LINK](#))

Education doesn't guarantee understanding

Even with compulsory teaching, many young people still lack basic knowledge about historic hate events, suggesting that simply remembering the past doesn't guarantee understanding that can prevent hate crimes. For example, a notable share of young adults cannot name key Holocaust sites or events. (Source: *The Guardian*, [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

#BIGDEBATECUB

TWITTER @SSCCTY

INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS



DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

For debating fairly, respectively and persuasively. Well done!

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



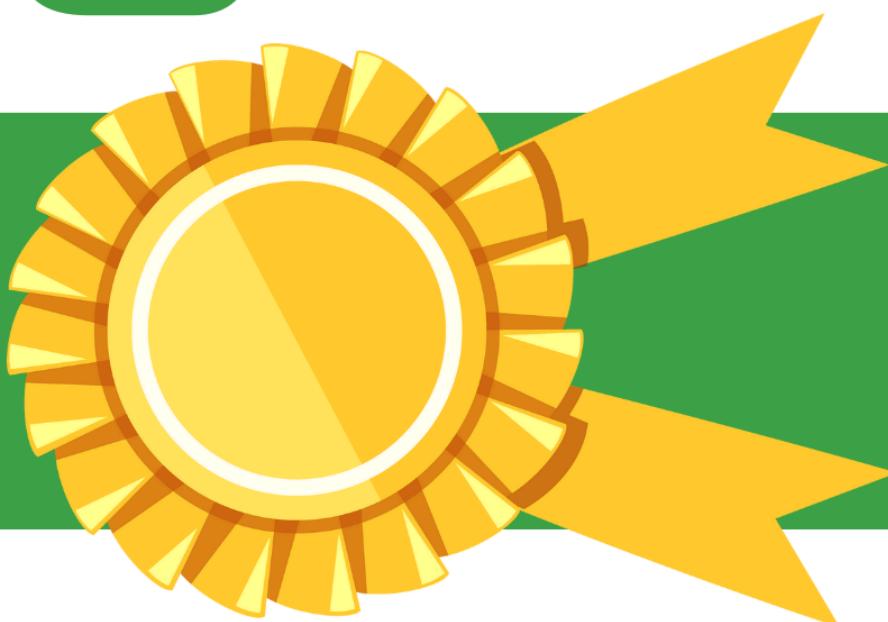
Greg Sanderson

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 @SSCCCTY on Twitter for a national shoutout and a prize!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg".

Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils

A green rectangular logo with the text "Smart School Councils" in white, with "Community" in a smaller font below it.

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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