

BIG DEBATE CLUB



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

IS IT BETTER TO PRESERVE TRADITIONS OR
EMBRACE PROGRESS?



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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...

Is it better to preserve traditions or embrace progress?

Doing something because it has happened for a long time is known as a tradition, and they are important as they acknowledge our history, beliefs, customs, and ways of doing things that are passed down from generation to generation. Progress, on the other hand, focuses on change, new ideas, technology, and improving how society works.

While preserving traditions is important because they help us understand who we are and where we come from, embracing progress is also important because it allows society to improve, solve problems, and adapt to a changing world. But should we be traditional or follow progress? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

According to UNESCO, why are cultural traditions important?

- a. They make countries more competitive
- b. They help preserve identity and diversity
- c. They stop societies from changing
- d. They replace modern education

Without preserving, or looking after, these traditions then they will be quickly lost. Globalisation has led to the disappearance of traditions. According to UNESCO, one language disappears every two weeks, showing how quickly traditions can be lost without protection. But do we need to move with progress, and irrelevant things will have to be lost?
(Source: UNESCO, [LINK](#))



FOR: It is better to preserve tradition

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


Traditions help build community bonds



You might be thinking that traditions help build community bonds. Participating in cultural traditions can reduce loneliness and help people feel part of a community. Heritage activities were linked with reduced social isolation in a 2022 review.

Traditions can improve people's well-being

You could say that traditions can improve people's well-being. In societies with strong tradition, people feel a strong identity and structure of beliefs creating stability and reassurance in their lives. For instance according to studies there is a 65% increase in children's self-esteem reported when involved in cultural practices.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that it is better to preserve tradition than embrace progress? 

Tradition helps people feel connected to each other



Cultural traditions help people feel connected to an identity and to a community. In the United Kingdom, the 2021 Census showed over 82% of people identified with a specific national identity, highlighting the importance of shared culture and traditions. (Source: *Infinity Learn*, [LINK](#))

Cultural heritage promotes tourism and therefore the economy



Historic traditions and cultural sites often attract millions of visitors in any country meaning it can earn money from people wanting to visit them, meaning honouring cultural places in particular can bring money into the country to support its everyday activities. VisitBritain reports tourism contributes over £200 billion to the UK economy each year. (Source: *VisitBritain*, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: It is better to embrace progress

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that it is better to embrace progress than preserve tradition.

Progress creates new opportunities for development and skills



You might think that progress creates new opportunities for development and skills. The government invested 70 billion in research and development in 2022, which is 2% of our economy. This shows as a country, we think it is important that we can study and invest to find new ways to grow and create new career paths and skills.

Employers find that school leavers lack some skills

Or you could also say innovation can mean economic growth. Digital and AI technologies can significantly raise future economic output for any country that embraces its potential progress. Adoption of emerging technologies could contribute 8% more to the UK's economy by 2035.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that it is better to embrace progress than preserve tradition? 🗨️

Progress improves quality of life



Progress can make your life easy and longer - advances in medicine, technology, and science have increased life expectancy. All this progress has led to global life expectancy rising from around 47 years in 1950 to over 70 years today. (Source: *World Health Organisation*, [LINK](#))

Progress promotes equality

Knowledge and advancement can often also lead to social progress, which has led to greater rights for many groups. For example, laws supporting equal rights have expanded significantly in the last 100 years including making discrimination illegal as well as advancing rights such as equal marriage for same sex couples in many countries. (Source: *United Nations*, [LINK](#))



FactSheet: Is it better to preserve tradition or embrace progress?



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

It is better to preserve tradition

Tradition helps people feel connected to each other

Cultural traditions help people feel connected to an identity and to a community. In the United Kingdom, the 2021 Census showed over 82% of people identified with a specific national identity, highlighting the importance of shared culture and traditions. (Source: *Infinity Learn*, [LINK](#))

If these traditions are not looked after, they will be lost

Without preserving, or looking after, these traditions then they will be quickly lost. Globalisation has led to the disappearance of traditions. According to UNESCO, one language disappears every two weeks, showing how quickly traditions can be lost without protection. (Source: *UNESCO*, [LINK](#))

Cultural heritage supports tourism and therefore the economy

Historic traditions and cultural sites often attract millions of visitors in any country meaning it can earn money from people wanting to visit them, meaning honouring cultural places in particular can bring money into the country to support its everyday activities. VisitBritain reports tourism contributes over £200 billion to the UK economy each year. (Source: *VisitBritain*, [LINK](#))

It is better to embrace progress

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Young people often support change and advancement

Pew Research surveys show younger generations are more likely to support social and technological change. As younger people have grown up with technology constantly advancing, it suggests societies naturally evolve over time. (Source: *Pew Research*, [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

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INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS



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DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

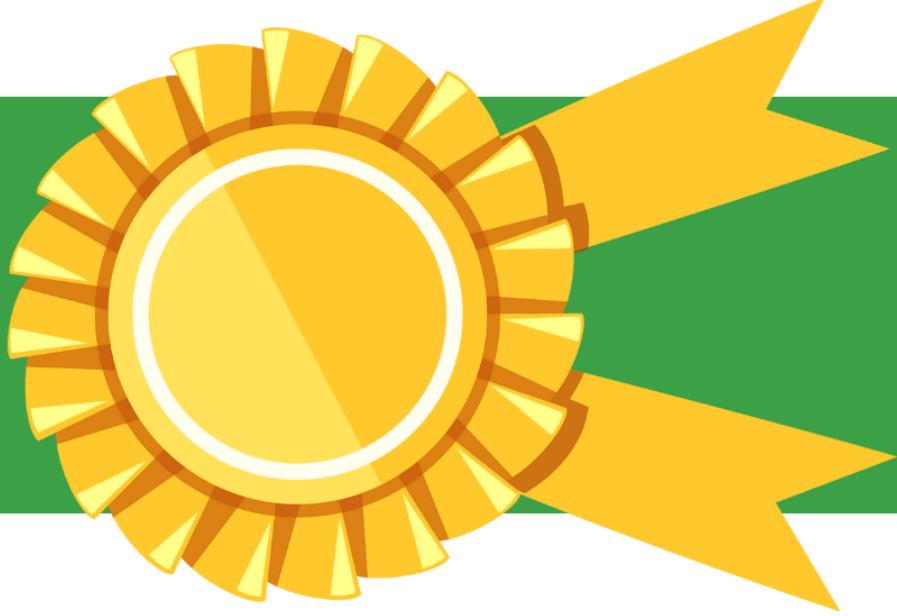
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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...

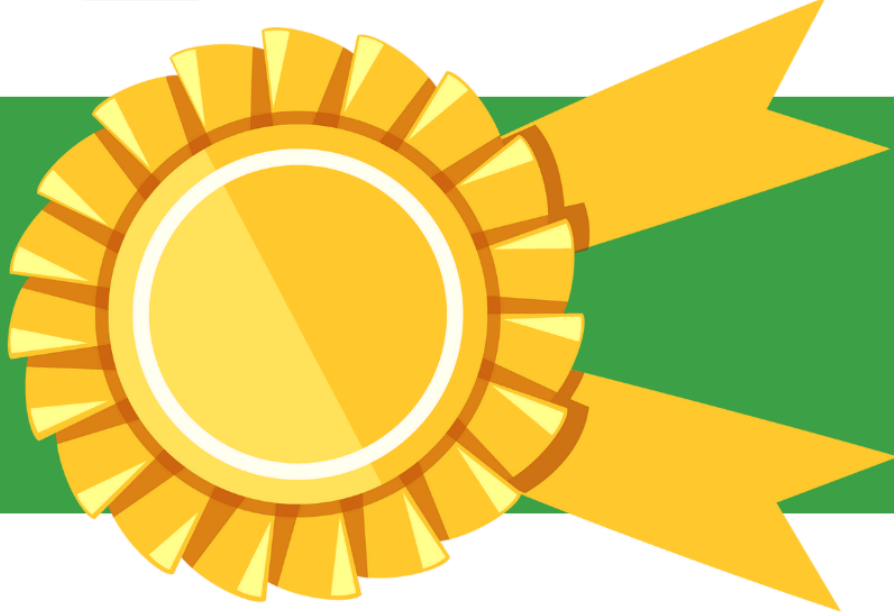
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

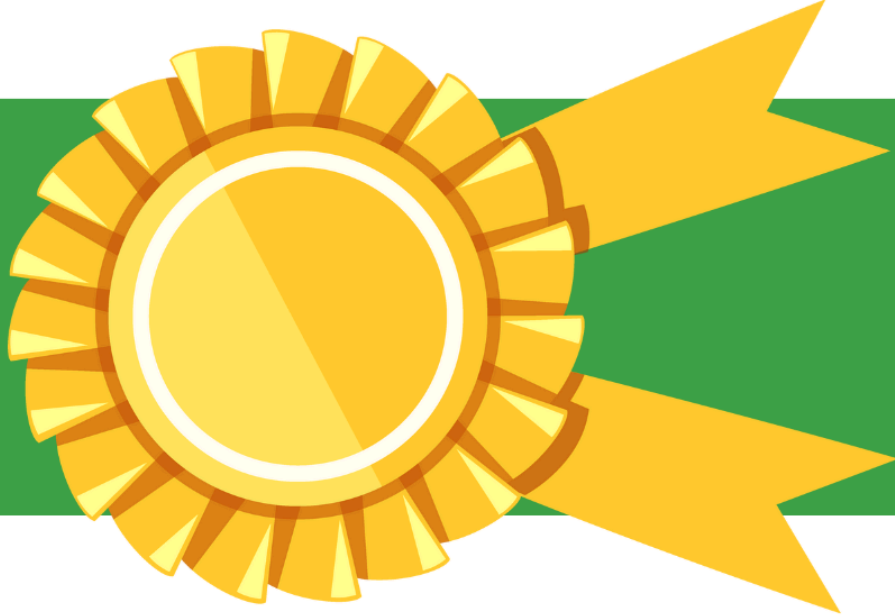
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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



Greg Sanderson

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