



**Smart School Councils**

# DEBATE PACK

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

**IS HAVING REGULAR TESTS EFFECTIVE?**



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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 having regular tests effective?

When was the last time you did a test? Did you revise? Did you learn from your mistakes? Did it help you see where you needed to practice? Regular tests are used in many schools to check progress, measure understanding, and prepare students for their formal exams. These can include quizzes, spelling tests, topic tests, and mock exams.

Regular testing could be seen to help students remember information and improve learning through seeing where they are weakest. But it could be argued that too many tests cause stress and don't always show what students truly understand. So are regular tests effective? You decide.

## Brain Gym Question

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

According to education researchers, what is one benefit of frequent low-stress testing?

- a) It replaces teaching
- b) It increases memory and recall
- c) It eliminates stress completely
- d) It shortens school hours

Skills like creativity, teamwork, and communication are difficult to measure in written tests. This means testing may not reflect a student's full ability even despite regular testing. But regular testing can mean teachers can give feedback to improve the gaps in their knowledge. (Source:OECD, [LINK](#))



## FOR: Regular testing is effective

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


### Regular tests take the pressure off when doing formal tests



You might be thinking that regular tests take the pressure off when doing formal testing. Regular tests help students practise managing time, the pressure, and exam conditions before an exam where it is more formal. According to Harvard University, students who take practice tests score 10–20% higher in final exams, showing that practice testing can be effective.

### Regular tests help teachers track progress

You could say that regular tests help teachers track progress. Regular assessments help teachers identify gaps in understanding and adjust lessons. For instance, according to the Education Endowment Foundation, schools using frequent testing show up to 30% improvement in learning outcomes as tracking by their teachers can focus on places for improvement.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that having regular testing is effective? 

### Regular testing can improve memory



Research shows that recalling information through tests helps students remember it better. Studies found students who were tested regularly performed 10–30% better than those who only studied. (Source: Education Endowment Foundation, [LINK](#))

### Regular testing can encourage consistent revision



Frequent testing encourages students to review work regularly rather than cramming. This leads to better long-term learning habits that builds knowledge in both short-term and long-term memory rather than cramming and having the knowledge slip from your memory altogether. (Source: Education Endowment Foundation, [LINK](#))



## AGAINST: Regular testing is not effective

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that having regular tests are not effective.


### Too many tests cause stress and anxiety



You might think that too many tests cause stress and anxiety. Frequent testing can negatively affect students' mental health as they experience the exam stress and anxiety on a regular basis. According to the Mental Health Foundation, 1 in 3 students report high stress linked to frequent tests and exams.

### School tests don't always measure all types of intelligence

Or you could also say school tests don't always measure all types of intelligence. School tests are often written tests, and written tests regularly favour memory over creativity, teamwork, or problem-solving. According to the OECD, over 60% of teachers believe tests don't fully show what students can do.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that having regular tests is not effective? 

### Regular testing can reduce enjoyment in learning



When school consists of so many regular tests, it can make school and learning feel pressured rather than enjoyable. Research suggests enjoyment is important for long-term motivation towards their learning and educational success. (Source: *National Geographic*, [LINK](#))

### Too much testing can result in teachers focusing on test content

If there is so much testing, the teachers may focus only on content likely to appear in tests, rather than deeper learning, which could make the students less rounded and less developed learners. This can also limit creativity and broader understanding. (Source: *BBC Bitesize*, [LINK](#))



# FactSheet: Is having regular tests effective?

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



## Regular testing is effective

### ***Regular testing helps with memory***

Research shows that recalling information through tests helps students remember it better. Studies found students who were tested regularly performed 10–30% better than those who only studied. (Source: Education Endowment Foundation, [LINK](#))

### ***Regular testing encourages consistent revision***

Frequent testing encourages students to review work regularly rather than cramming. This leads to better long-term learning habits that builds knowledge in both short-term and long-term memory rather than cramming and having the knowledge slip from your memory altogether. (Source: Education Endowment Foundation, [LINK](#))

### ***Regular testing helps schools keep up their targets for their students***

Testing helps schools measure their schools' performance and compare their results nationally in order to try and ensure their performance is in line with or improves upon local and national schools. This can help improve standards across the education system by giving them something to compare and aim towards. (Source: UK Government, [LINK](#))

## Regular testing is not effective

### ***Too much testing can result in teachers focusing only on test content***

If there is so much testing, the teachers may focus only on content likely to appear in tests, rather than deeper learning, which could make the students less rounded and less developed learners. This can also limit creativity and broader understanding. (Source: BBC Bitesize, [LINK](#))

### ***Regular testing can reduce enjoyment of learning***

When school consists of so many regular tests, it can make school and learning feel pressured rather than enjoyable. Research suggests enjoyment is important for long-term motivation towards their learning and educational success. (Source: National Geographic, [LINK](#))

### ***So many tests can affect your health***

Having consistent anxious or stressful testing can cause and also can be affected by nerves, sleep, or health on the day. This means scores may not always show what a student truly understands, while also causing a vicious cycle of lack of sleep and anxiety based health issues making results not reflect their true ability and causing poor health and sleep as a result. (Source: NHS, [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**

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# DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

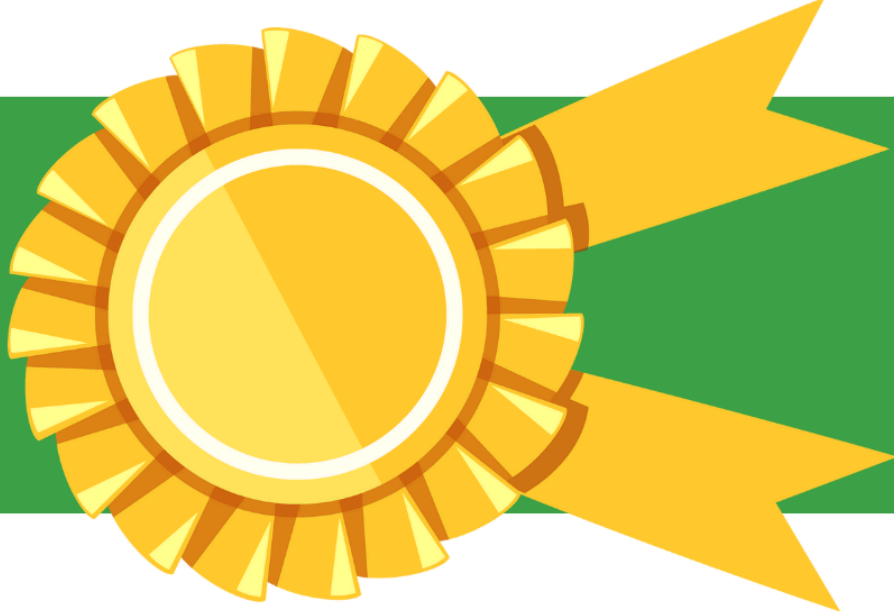
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

*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...

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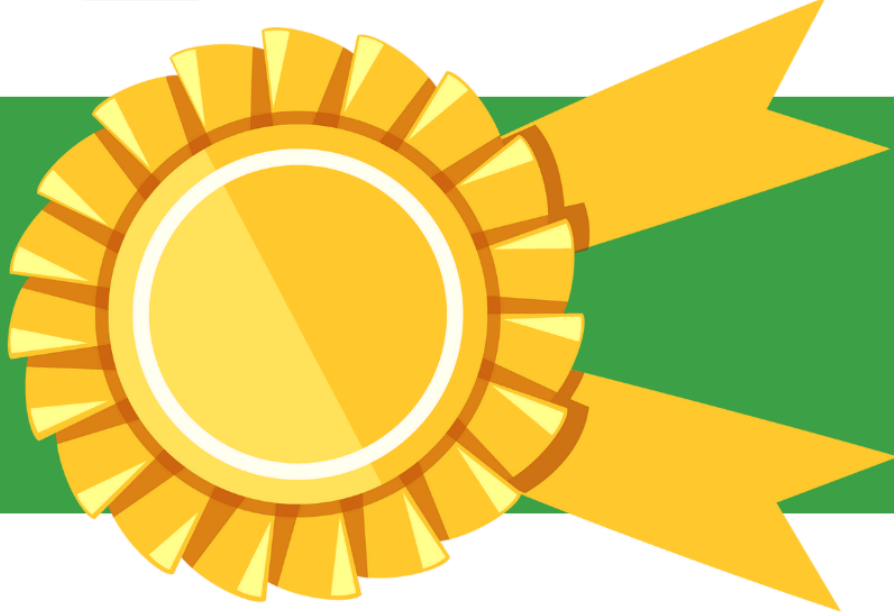
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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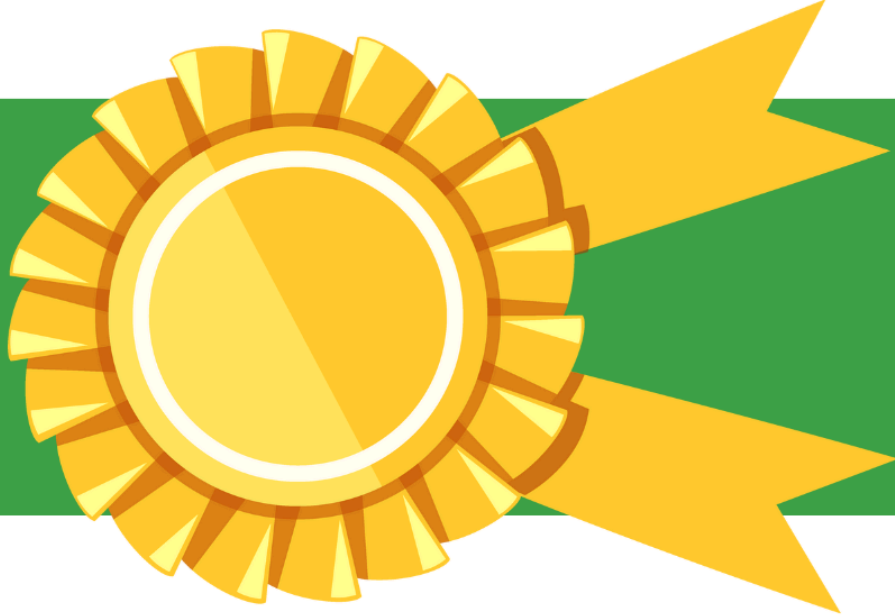
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

**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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