

BIG DEBATE CLUB



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

DO WE STILL NEED LIBRARIES WHEN WE HAVE THE INTERNET?



WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG

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...

Do we still need libraries when we have the internet?

Before the internet, when we searched for information, for school or for your everyday life, we often went to the local library to search through its many many books to find what we needed. However, now the internet gives us access to millions of websites in seconds. There are over 1.1 billion websites online today that we can use to find our information.

Public libraries are still widely used, according to Arts Council England, there are over 3,000 public libraries in England, and millions of visits are made to libraries each year. They are not just for borrowing books - they also provide study spaces, free internet access, community events and learning support. But do we still need them when we have the internet? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

Approximately how many public libraries are there in England?

- a. 10,000
- b. 3,000
- c. 1,000
- d. 300

In England, 30% of adults aged 16 and over used a public library service at least once in the previous 12 months. That's around 13m adults, 27% of which brought a child to borrow, browse or return books. Does this mean we still need libraries?



(Source: *Libraries Connected*, [LINK](#))

FOR: We do still need libraries

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


Libraries provide trusted and accurate information



You might be thinking that libraries provide trusted and accurate information. Anyone can post information online, and not all of it is accurate. Librarians are trained to help people find reliable sources. Research shows that misinformation spreads quickly online, so having trusted guidance can be important.

Libraries provide free access to resources encouraging success

You could say that libraries provide free access to resources thereby encouraging reading and success at school. The National Literacy Trust reports that children who enjoy reading are more likely to do well at school. Libraries encourage reading through clubs, story times and homework support. Libraries provide free access to books, computers and study spaces. This helps reduce inequality and gives everyone a chance to learn.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that we do still need libraries even though we have the internet? 

More young people are using libraries



The most recent figures suggest around two-thirds of children aged 5-15 visit a library each year in England, which shows it is an essential service for young people. (Source: *Libraries Connected*, [LINK](#))

Usage of libraries is an investment in the community



Research shows early “literacy interventions” through libraries could save £830m per school year group by boosting education and reducing future social costs. They also are a great use of taxpayer money in terms of benefiting the community. Suffolk Libraries Service, for instance, found an £8 “social return on investment” for every £1 of taxpayer money spent on the service – a measure which looks at everything from mental health to children’s literacy to happiness. (Source: *The Observer*, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: We do not need libraries when we have the internet

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that we do not still need libraries as we have the internet.

Digital books and resources are instantly available online



You might think that digital books and resources are instantly available online. Millions of e-books and audiobooks are now available online. Many schools also use online platforms for homework and research instead of physical books. The internet allows people to search for information instantly, from anywhere, at any time within seconds - so why go to the library?

Habits are changing meaning people are moving away from libraries

Or you could also say habits are changing meaning people are moving away from using libraries. Surveys show that young people spend more time online than reading printed books. If most research and entertainment is digital, some argue physical libraries are becoming less essential.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that we do not need libraries as we have the internet? 

Adults are not using libraries as much



According to a government blog, two-thirds of adults (66%) have not used a library in the past year, so understanding why people aren't engaging with libraries and how to attract them back is crucial if people should want to keep them running. (Source: GOV.UK, [LINK](#))

Libraries are closing due to lack of use

More than 180 libraries have closed or been handed over to volunteer groups since 2016, and the most deprived areas were four times as likely to lose a library than the richest. A third of those remaining have had their hours reduced. Without use, they are no longer considered an important use of local council funds. (Source: The Observer, [LINK](#))



FactSheet: Do we still need libraries when we have the internet?



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

We do still need libraries

Usage of libraries are an investment in benefit to the community

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Libraries are especially important for local businesses

A surprising number of businesses have been started in libraries. A simple effect of free bookable meeting rooms and a stable internet connection. They are twice as likely to succeed and continue trading after three years as businesses started elsewhere – an effect of lowering costs of entry. Business owners who began in libraries tend to be more diverse: between 2020 and 2023, 72% were women, 26% from ethnic minorities, and 12% from deprived areas. (Source: *The Observer*, [LINK](#))

We do not still need libraries as we have the internet

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People do not know what libraries can offer

It seems libraries not being used isn't about their lack of relevance, but not knowing about their services. According to surveys, 58% of library non-users indicated they are unfamiliar with library services beyond borrowing physical books. (Source: *GOV.UK*, [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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DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

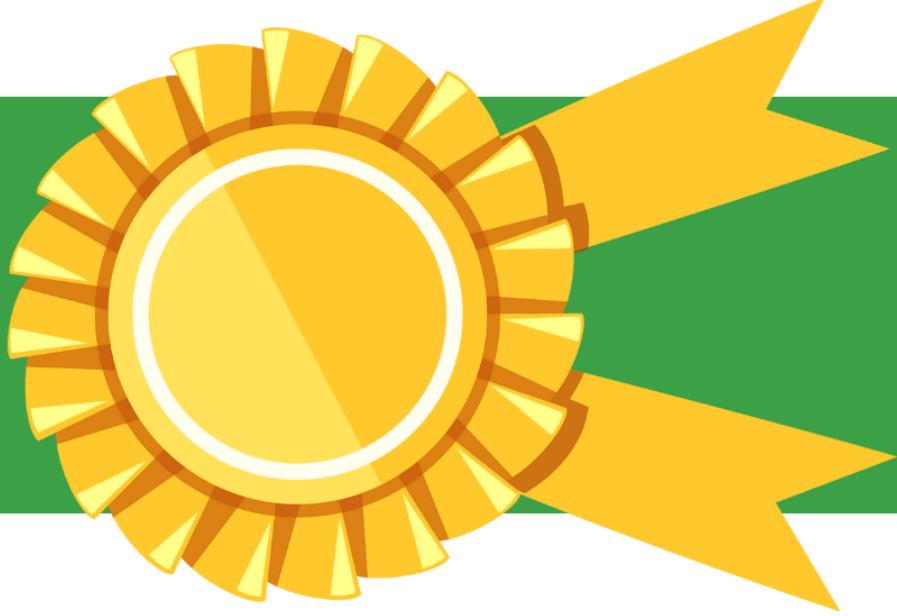
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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...

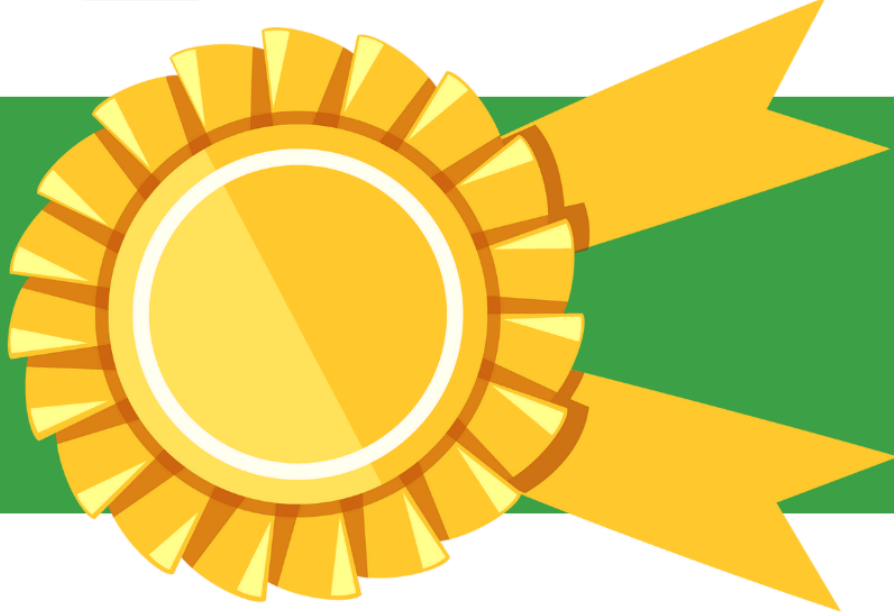
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

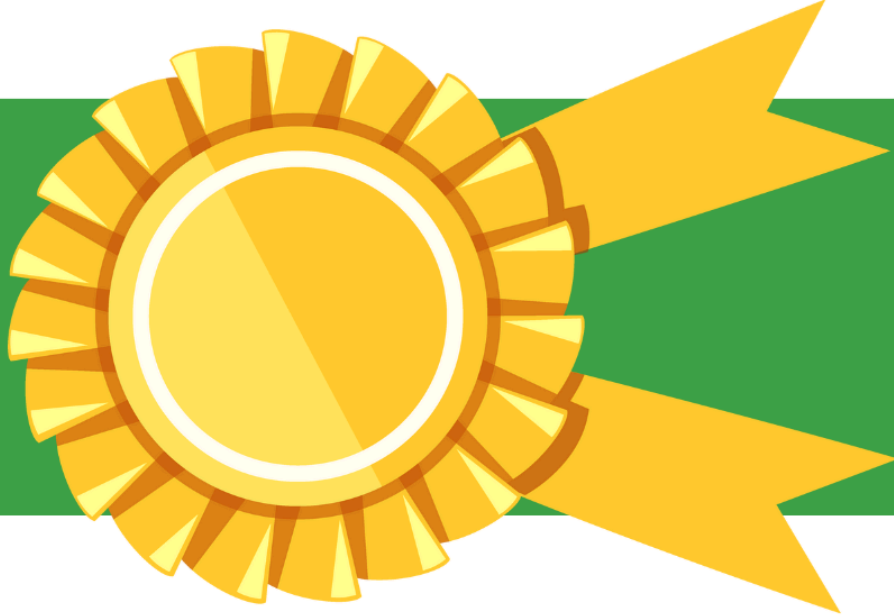
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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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