



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

**IS A PACKED ITINERARY BETTER THAN A COMPLETELY
FREE SCHEDULE FOR A SUMMER BREAK?**



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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 a packed itinerary better than a completely free schedule for a summer break?

What a wonderful year we have had! I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I did. So as we look at a long break - but would you be more looking forward to a packed summer break with lots of activities or a break with completely free time? During this time, families might travel, children may attend summer camps or sports clubs, or they might spend time relaxing at home with friends and family.

Research from the American Camp Association suggests that organised summer activities can help young people build confidence, teamwork skills, and independence. However, other research from the American Academy of Pediatrics says that unstructured free play is important for creativity and problem-solving. So should summer be carefully planned or mostly free? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

According to health experts, how much physical activity should children aim to get each day?

- a. 10 minutes
- b. 30 minutes
- c. 60 minutes
- d. 2 hours

Ofcom found children aged 8–14 spend around 3-4 hours a day online on average.

Planned activities can encourage more offline experiences and social interaction that can benefit them socially. But should they not have down time in order to recover from the stress of school and be their own organisers? (Source: Ofcom, [LINK](#))



FOR: A packed itinerary is better for a summer break

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

A packed itinerary means new opportunities



You might be thinking that a packed itinerary means new opportunities to learn new skills and make new friends. Summer camps, sports programmes, and workshops can help children learn new abilities such as swimming, coding, art, or teamwork. Summer clubs and activities give children the chance to meet new people and build friendships outside of school. All amazing reasons to have a packed itinerary!

A packed itinerary full of active things to do can be good for you

You could say that having a packed itinerary full of active things to do can be good for you. Organised activities can often involve exercise and outdoor play, and health experts say children should aim for about 60 minutes of physical activity each day to stay healthy, by taking part in all of this outdoor activity you can make sure you stay fit and well.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that a packed itinerary is better than a free schedule in the summer? 

Activities can help reduce summer learning loss



Education Endowment Foundation studies suggest students can lose up to one month of learning progress over long summer breaks, especially in maths, known as the 'summer slide'. Educational summer activities may help students practice and maintain knowledge. (Source: Education Endowment Foundation, [LINK](#))

Activities can improve confidence and well-being



Research from the American Camp Association found that 96% of camp leaders reported children gained confidence and independence through structured summer activities. 92% of campers said the people at camp helped them feel good about themselves, and 70% to 74% reported trying activities they were initially afraid to do. (Source: American Camp Association, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: A free schedule is better for a summer break

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that a free schedule is better than a packed itinerary during the summer.

Free time allows for creativity and new skills



You might think that free time allows for creativity and new skills. When children have time to invent games, explore hobbies, or build things, they often develop creativity and imagination. They also develop important skills like practicing making their own choices about how to spend their day and time management.

Less structure means flexibility on how you spend your time

Or you could also say that less structure means flexibility on how you relax and spend time with the people in your life. A less structured schedule allows a student to do what they need for their well-being. Whether it is better for you to spend time together with your family, make spontaneous plans like trips or just rest and recharge before the new school year begins.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that a free schedule is better than a packed itinerary during the summer? 

School and exam stress is hard, the summer is good for recovery



Research from YoungMinds shows many young people experience stress linked to school pressure, roughly 63% of older teenagers struggling to cope with GCSE and A-Level exams. Summer breaks provide important recovery time for mental health. (Source: *YoungMinds*, [LINK](#))

Too many organised activities can hurt young people's well-being

Some psychologists warn that too many organised activities can leave children feeling tired or pressured. Particularly they noticed how children in America are so overscheduled that they have almost no 'nothing time.' They have no time to call on their own resources and be creative. Downtime is important for emotional wellbeing and rest. (Source: *Psychology Today*, [LINK](#))



FactSheet: Is a packed itinerary better than a completely free schedule for a summer break?

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



A packed itinerary is better for summer break

Activities improve confidence and well-being

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A packed itinerary can reduce screen time

Ofcom found children aged 8–14 spend around 3–4 hours a day online on average. Planned activities can encourage more offline experiences and social interaction that can benefit them socially. (Source: Ofcom, [LINK](#))

Activities can help reduce summer learning loss

Education Endowment Foundation studies suggest students can lose up to one month of learning progress over long summer breaks, especially in maths, known as the 'summer slide'. Educational summer activities may help students practice and maintain knowledge. (Source: Education Endowment Foundation, [LINK](#))

A free schedule is better for summer break

School and exam pressure is hard so summer is good for recovery

Research from YoungMinds shows many young people experience stress linked to school pressure, roughly 63% of older teenagers struggling to cope with GCSE and A-Level exams. Summer breaks provide important recovery time for mental health. (Source: YoungMinds, [LINK](#))

Having leisure time is linked to happiness

The OECD reports that leisure and life balance are important parts of wellbeing with summer breaks offering a vital opportunity to disconnect, reduce burnout, and mentally rejuvenate. Having free time to choose enjoyable activities can improve happiness and reduce stress. (Source: OECD, [LINK](#))

Too many organised activities can hurt young people's well-being

Some psychologists warn that too many organised activities can leave children feeling tired or pressured. Particularly they noticed how children in America are so overscheduled that they have almost no 'nothing time.' They have no time to call on their own resources and be creative. Downtime is important for emotional wellbeing and rest. (Source: Psychology Today, [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...

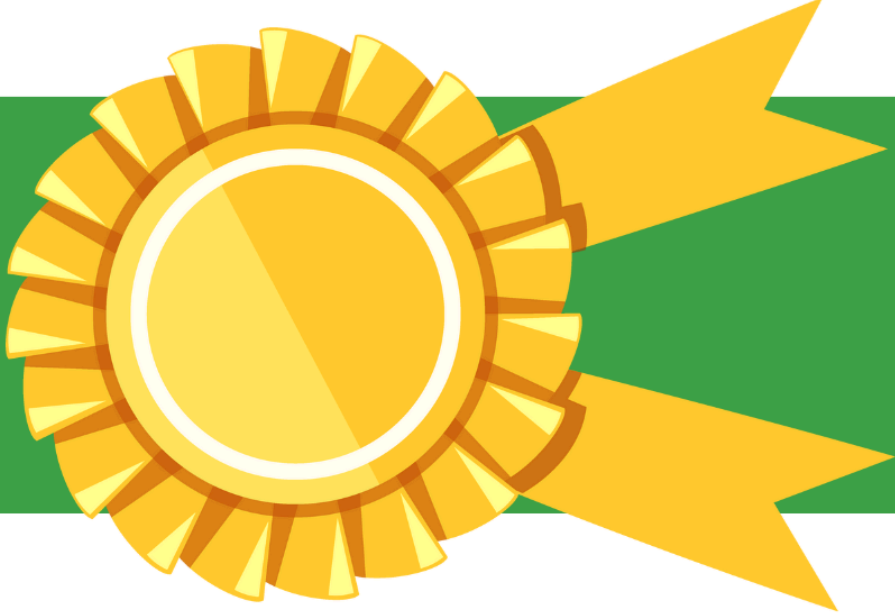
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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...

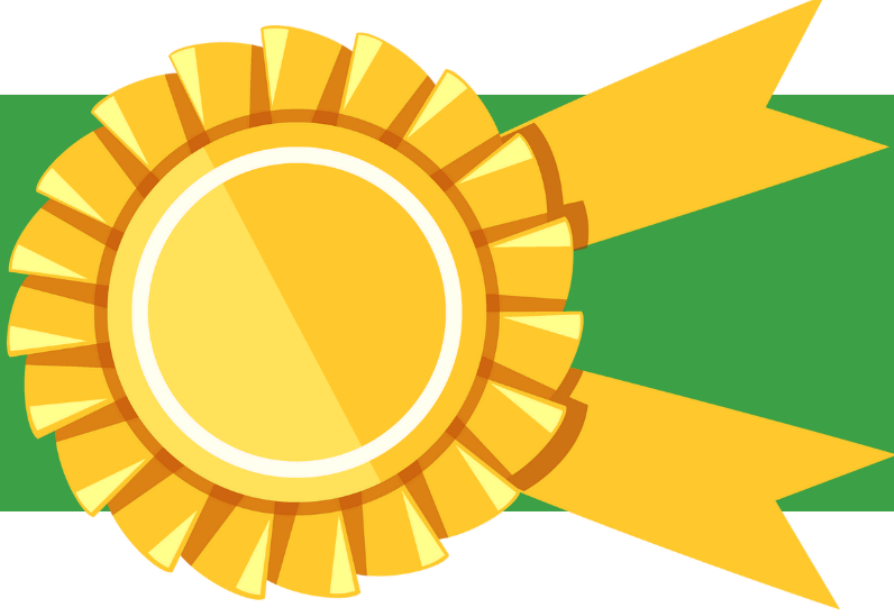
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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...

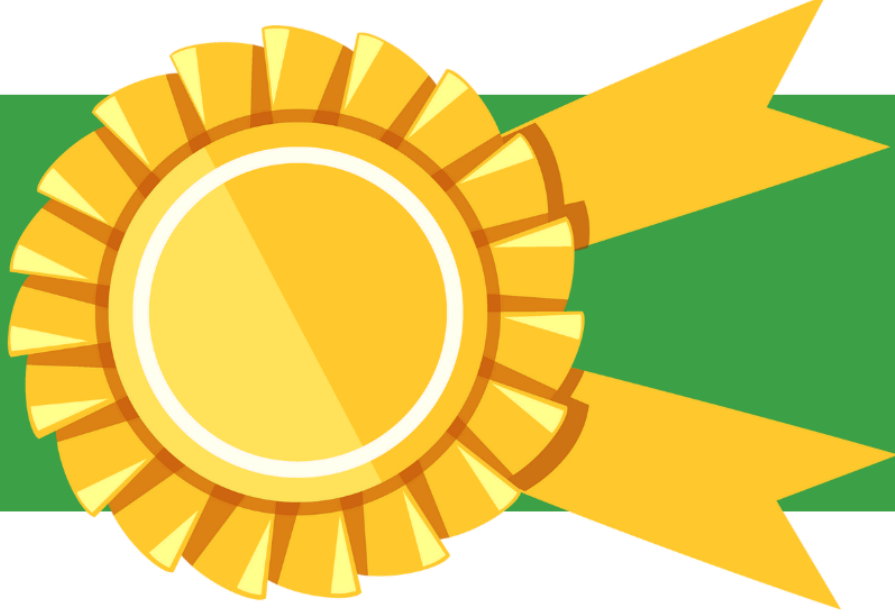
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



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