



Smart School Councils

DEBATE PACK

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

IS IT BETTER FOR YOU TO CONQUER YOUR FEARS?



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...

Is it better for you to conquer your fears?

What are you scared of? I am scared of spiders and heights. But people can be scared of anything from balloons, being without their phone or the colour yellow. Fears are natural emotional responses that protect us from danger. But sometimes this fear can stop us from trying new things or reaching our goals.

While conquering fears builds confidence and opens opportunities in life, facing fears isn't always necessary, we can instead manage or understand the fear can be more helpful than forcing someone to completely overcome it. So should we conquer our fears? You decide.

Brain Gym Question

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

According to mental health researchers, which reaction is most likely to make your fears get stronger over time?

- a) Talking about the fear with someone you trust
- b) Gradually facing the fear in small steps
- c) Avoiding the fear completely
- d) Learning calming breathing techniques

The APA explains that facing your fears can increase your belief that you are capable of dealing with difficult situations. The APA has discussed how exposure therapy is a helpful treatment for several conditions, including phobias, panic disorder and social anxiety disorder in order for patients to be happier and have more confidence in themselves. (Source: American Psychological Association, [LINK](#))



FOR: It is better for you to conquer your fears

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

Conquering your fears builds confidence and mental strength



You might be thinking that conquering your fears builds confidence and mental strength. A 2013 study showed that individuals who face fears step by step report up to a 30–50% reduction in fear-related stress meaning they can live a less stressful life and have more confidence through less fear.

Conquering your fears open up the world to new opportunities

You could say that conquering your fears opens up the world to new opportunities. Avoiding fear can limit experiences like public speaking, trying new activities, or taking leadership roles. Facing fear often opens doors. In one survey of students, those who confronted fears of public speaking had an 80% increase in classroom participation and more confidence in future presentations.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that it is better to conquer your fears? 

Facing your fears can mean more opportunities



The NHS explains that people with claustrophobia may avoid lifts, tunnels or public transport. Around 10% of the UK population are estimated to experience claustrophobia during their lifetime. By facing their fears, they can have more opportunities to travel and experience adventure. (Source: NHS, [LINK](#))

Facing your fears means you are free to enjoy your life



The American Psychological Association explains that when people are carefully exposed to the thing they are scared of, it can lessen their fear, making them free to enjoy their life. In England, 2.6% of adults were identified as having a phobia in a 2023 Survey, and they all are avoiding things in their lives due to those fears. (Source: American Psychological Association, [LINK](#))



AGAINST: It isn't necessarily better to conquer your fears

Now let's change positions and consider why you might argue that it isn't necessarily better for you to conquer your fears.

Forcing someone to conquer fears can cause unnecessary stress



You might think that forcing someone to conquer their fears can cause unnecessary stress. Not everyone benefits from pushing through their fear; for some, this can cause increased stress, especially without support. Research shows that intense, unstructured attempts to face fear can raise anxiety levels by 10–15% in some people.

Some fears are there to protect us

Or you could also say not all fears need to be conquered, some are there to protect us. Some fears, such as fear of heights or dangerous animals, exist to keep us safe. Trying to overcome these fears could lead to risky behaviour as we are no longer scared of the danger. Studies show that these fear responses help individuals avoid hazards and decrease risk-taking behaviour by up to 40%.

Can you think of another reason why you might argue that it isn't necessarily better to conquer your fears? 

Fear can protect us from danger



Fear is a natural response that can alert us to danger and prepare our bodies to react. The NHS describes fear as a natural response to stressful or dangerous situations and explains that the body releases hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol when we are scared. (Source: NHS, [LINK](#))

Learning to manage a fear can be a more manageable goal

Learning how to manage a fear so that it doesn't stop you doing things can be a more realistic goal. In England, 20.2% of adults had a common mental health condition, which should take a person's priority to look after rather than completely get rid of a fear, so managing it might make more sense. (Source: NHS, [LINK](#))



FactSheet: Is it better for you to conquer your fears?



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

It is better for you to conquer your fears

If you conquer your fears, it means you are free to enjoy your life

The American Psychological Association explains that when people are carefully exposed to the thing they are scared of, it can lessen their fear, making them free to enjoy their life. In England, 2.6% of adults were identified as having a phobia in a 2023 Survey, and they all are avoiding things in their lives due to those fears. (Source: American Psychological Association, [LINK](#))

Facing your fears can boost confidence

The APA explains that facing your fears can increase your belief that you are capable of dealing with difficult situations. The APA has discussed how exposure therapy is a helpful treatment for several conditions, including phobias, panic disorder and social anxiety disorder in order for patients to be happier and have more confidence in themselves. (Source: American Psychological Association, [LINK](#))

Facing a fear can create new opportunities

The NHS explains that people with claustrophobia may avoid lifts, tunnels or public transport. Around 10% of the UK population are estimated to experience claustrophobia during their lifetime. By facing their fears, they can have more opportunities to travel and experience adventure. (Source: NHS, [LINK](#))

It is not necessarily better to conquer your fears

Fear can protect us from danger

Fear is a natural response that can alert us to danger and prepare our bodies to react. The NHS describes fear as a natural response to stressful or dangerous situations and explains that the body releases hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol when we are scared. (Source: NHS, [LINK](#))

Learning to manage a fear might be a more manageable goal

Learning how to manage a fear so that it doesn't stop you doing things can be a more realistic goal. In England, 20.2% of adults had a common mental health condition, which should take a person's priority to look after rather than completely get rid of a fear, so managing it might make more sense. (Source: NHS, [LINK](#))

Fear can also stop us from taking part in risky behaviour

Some fears, such as fear of heights or dangerous animals, exist to keep us safe. Trying to overcome these fears could lead to risky behaviour as we are no longer scared of the danger. Studies show that these fear responses help individuals avoid hazards and decrease risk-taking behaviour by up to 40%. (Source: LinkedIn, [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 @SSCCTV

INSTAGRAM @SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS



WWW.SMARTSCHOOLCOUNCILS.ORG.UK

DEBATER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

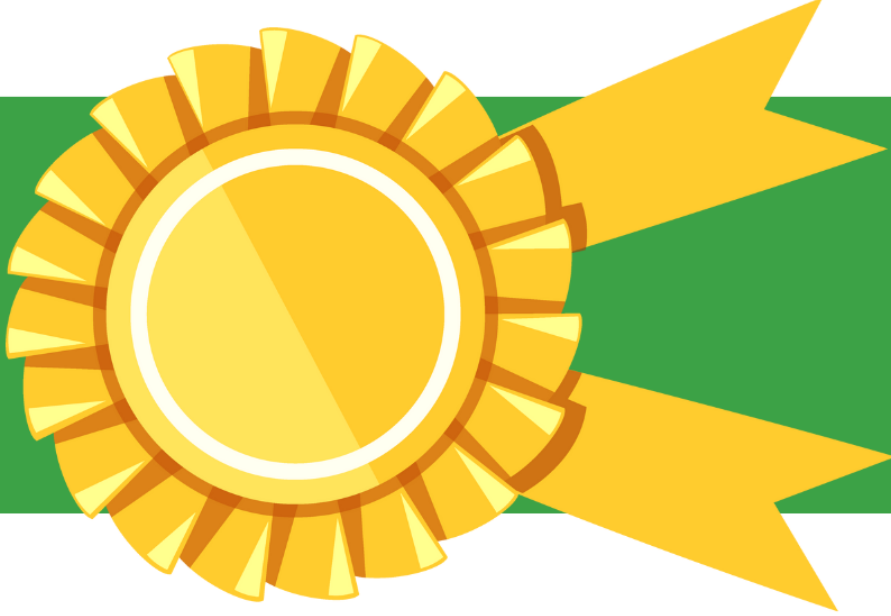
For debating fairly, respectfully and persuasively. Well done!

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



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart
School
Councils
Community



CLASS MEETING LEADER OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

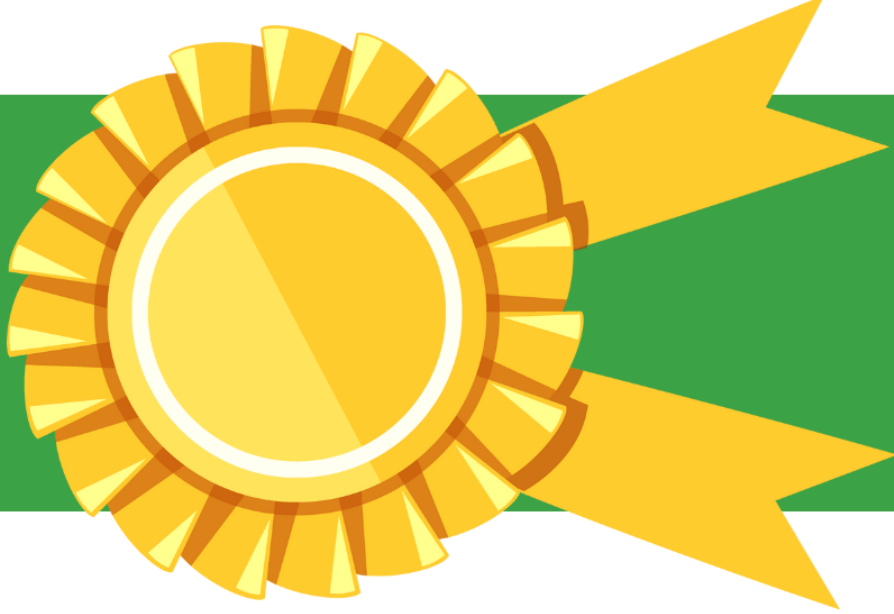
For showing skill and confidence in leading today's Class Meeting.

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



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart
School
Councils
Community



BEST IDEA OF THE WEEK

We are proud to present this certificate to...

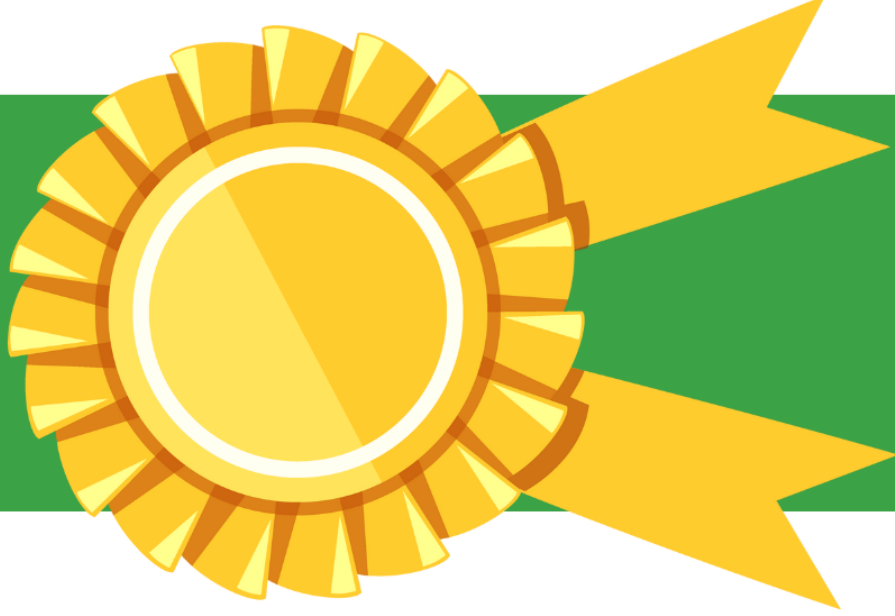
For speaking up with a great new idea on today's topic. Amazing.

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



Greg Sanderson

Founder, Smart School Councils



Smart
School
Councils
Community

