LONDON DEBATE CHALLENGE MOTION FACT FILES

Motion 1: This House Would pay a £25,000 per year wage to stay-at-home parents and carers

Some background information

Raising a child or looking after a sick or elderly relative is important and difficult work. Children or the infirm often require care and attention around the clock. The rewards can be significant, though, with well-raised children developing secure attachments, clear boundaries and having their learning supported. People often have to give up the chance to have a job and earn money in order to do it. For some other people the cost of childcare is so large that taking a job isn't worth it even if they wanted to.

It can also be very personally rewarding for parents to have the chance to spend time with their child and see them develop and grow. While some professional carer roles exist, many people who care for a family member do so entirely unpaid. Not all parents want to stay at home, however, and it is not necessarily clear that those who do work should have to pay to cover the costs of others.

Do you think this is a role that should earn a wage?

Useful facts

- Around three quarters of mothers with dependant children are in full or part-time jobs
- Nursery costs in London average more than £150 per week for a single child
- Families are entitled to some free and some tax-free childcare, but this is often not enough.

Activities for the class or club

1. Consider the following professions. Individually, rank them according to how much money you think they should be paid:

- Doctors
- Charity workers
- Investment bankers
- A star football player
- Nurses
- Politicians
- A violin player in an orchestra
- Soldiers
- A teacher
- Professional carers

When you have ranked them, share your rankings with the class. Be prepared to explain why you think your top pick deserves the highest salary.

2. Consider the following factors when deciding on how much people should be paid for their work. Which of these do you think is the most important?
- How many hours you work
- How much you help people you work with
- How many people your work affects
- How much fun it is to do
- How much money you make for the business you work for
- How many years you studied at University for
- Whether it is something you are expected to do anyway
- How emotionally demanding your work is

When you have ranked them, share your rankings with the class. What is your top factor? Look back at the list of professions from section 1. Which profession from that list does your most important factor mean should be paid the most?
3. Look at each of the factors from section 2 above. Discuss how these apply to stay at home parents and carers. Are there any other important factors that are missing?

Questions for students to ask themselves

Is this a role that should be compensated with money? Are there other more meaningful rewards that come from doing it?

Does paying people to be parents and carers make them treat their role like a job? Is that a good thing?

What sort of people tend to be stay-at-home parents? Does this policy recognise their unpaid contribution to society? Or does it push certain people into child-caring roles?

Is this policy affordable? How might it be funded?

Some further resources

theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/sep/29/number-of-working-mothers-in-england-rises-by-a-million-in-20-years

which.co.uk/news/2017/11/sandwich-generation-more-worried-about-elderly-care-than-childcare/

Motion 2: This House Believes That the state should protect minority languages e.g. through the subsidisation of education or minority language media

Some background information

In many countries, there are minority groups who speak a different language to the countries' major language(s) spoken by the majority of citizens. For example, many people in the United Kingdom speak Welsh or Scots Gaelic. Language can be an important way to access culture, with folk stories, poetry and songs all depending on a native tongue. It could be a real cultural and historical loss if these things are discarded because nobody speaks the language.
In the modern world minority languages can struggle without outside support. Historically, many minority languages have been un-supported or actively repressed by dominant groups. Majority languages like English are easily available through varied media. Popular tv shows, much of the internet and so on are all more likely to be in English and so young people naturally develop this language. This can leave difficult questions about whether to artificially support minority languages or leave them to wither.
Speakers of minority languages can feel isolated from the wider culture of the nation. On the other hand, younger generations who do not learn these languages can feel cut off from their local communities and older generations.
Do you think the state should take steps to ensure they survive?

Useful facts

- Nearly 600,000 people speak Welsh (around 20% of the population) while around 60,000 speak Scots Gaelic (around 1% of the population.)
- There is far more educational provision available in Welsh than Gaelic.
- The UK public sector is estimated to spend more than £150 million per year on translating things like documents & official proceedings.

Activities for the class or club

Imagine we live in a country called Debatopia. The main language, spoken by the majority of the population, is Debatopian. Would you provide support for other language groups if they made up 49% of the population? 20%? 5%? 1%? What kind of support? Fill in the boxes in the table with either YES or NO. Be prepared to explain your answers!

	49%	20%	5%	1%
Businesses have to show signs in both* languages				
Prominent politicians should know both languages				
Translators should be provided for free				
Government forms should be provided in this language				
There should be schools that teach entirely in the minority language				
Road signs have to be in both languages				
Art in this language should receive a subsidy				
The national anthem should be in both languages				

*i.e. both Debatopian and the minority language.

Would you choose to learn the other language if 49% of people in Debatopia spoke it? How about for the other percentages?

Questions for students to ask themselves

Does this policy make it more likely that minority groups will not learn the language of the majority? Is that a good or bad thing?

How much of the culture of minority groups relates to the language? How far is this worth protecting?

How do you feel about providing essential services (e.g. translators when you speak to the police) for those who don't speak the majority language?

Some further resources

news.un.org/en/story/2013/03/434112-protection-minority-languages-human-rights-obligation-un-expert-says

whywelsh.wordpress.com/2013/08/20/the-welsh-language-costs-too-much/

theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/17/languages

Motion 3: This House Would Ban Gambling

Some background information

Gambling is the placing of money or something of worth on an event which has uncertain outcomes, with the aim to win more money or things of value.
Gambling commonly occurs on the results of sport or on games of chance, but can also be on things like election results. Generally, a higher return on the money placed occurs if the event is less likely (referred to as "the odds"). Sometimes restrictions are placed upon which activities people can gamble upon. Gambling is generally restricted to adults (18+).
In the UK, Gambling is regulated by the Gambling Commission.

People often gamble as a form of entertainment. On the one hand, this may be because it makes the engagement with the first activity more pleasant. A football fan might find a game more exciting if they have placed a bet on the outcome. On the other hand, some individuals are willing to take the risk purely in the hope of gaining money.

Where it is legal, Gambling can help fund work by the government with taxes levied on gambling wins and organisations. Gambling makes a lot of money worldwide.

Some states do not allow gambling; one reason is that gambling can be an addictive activity for some people. The Government is discussing increased restrictions on some forms of betting, such as 'fixed odds betting terminals'. Banning gambling can lead to people travelling to areas where it is legal for "gambling tourism," or for illegal gambling to take place.

Key facts

- Nearly 73% of the adult population of the UK participate in gambling. Approximately 1% of the UK are estimated to be problem gamblers.

- Approximately 7% of the population suffers from an alcohol use disorder, like alcoholism (addiction to alcohol).

- The government collects approximate £1.5 billion in tax revenue each year from gambling. The UK Government brings in approximately £300 billion tax in total.

Activities for the class or club

1. As a class, make a list of things that are banned, and laws that restrict our freedom (easiest for the next phase if these are done on post-it notes or index cards). Now group these banned actions or laws (using hoops for the circles of a Venn diagram, or circles on big sheets of paper) according to the reasons why they are banned.

2. Ask everyone in the class to think of an example of someone gambling. E.g. gran's weekly bingo; slot machine addict etc. Now, as a class, place these along a line from "gambling has a very positive effect on this person's life" to "gambling has a very negative effect on this person's life.

Questions for students to ask themselves

When is it ok for the government to ban something?

Is gambling bad for everyone? How could you describe the different groups of gamblers?

If the government banned gambling, would everyone just stop? If not, what would happen?

Some further resources

theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/17/maximum-stake-for-fixed-odds-betting-terminals-cut-to-2

gamblingcommission.gov.uk/news-action-and-statistics/Statistics-and-research/Levels-of-participation-and-problem-gambling/Gambling-participation-and-problem-gambling.aspx