

LONDON DEBATE CHALLENGE MOTION FACT FILES



Motion 1: This House Would ban home-schooling

Some background information

Some parents prefer to teach their children themselves. They are allowed to take their children out of school completely, but must give them a full-time education. They don't have to follow the national curriculum though.

There are lots of things that can be good about home schooling. Some families think it brings them closer to spend so much time together and for parents to see their children grow and learn. Parents like having flexibility over the content of lessons and can try to pace them just right for their child's needs. People sometimes choose to home-school for a variety of other reasons, from religious beliefs to bullying to disagreements with local schools.

There are no guarantees though, and critics wonder what happens when teaching is perhaps not well delivered by parents, or if flexibility is misused. It could also be stifling to spend so much time with parents and siblings and miss out on playing with others.

Key facts

- Around 0.5% of children are home-schooled in the UK, although this figure is 3.5% in the USA.
- 'Free schools' and academies are increasing in number and do not have to follow the national curriculum.

Activities for the class or club

1/ Why is schooling important? What do we hope the benefits are?

Students should individually brainstorm these questions for a few minutes and then feed back into a class discussion. Keep a list on the board. Top-up with anything from the list below that gets missed.

To learn facts and information

To learn skills that will be useful for secondary school

To learn life skills

To learn how to socialise and get on with people

Learn how to get into a routine and work hard

To have fun and see friends





2/ In pairs or small groups ask students to rank the list from most to least important and discuss their reasons. This task doesn't have a 'correct' answer, and if questions like 'Important to whom?' come up students should be encouraged to explore them. Feed back to a class discussion.

3/ In their groups now ask students to consider competing priorities - can they find priorities on the list which might conflict with each other? How? When students find a set of conflicting priorities they should discuss how they might try to resolve it.

Questions for students to ask themselves

Can you think which groups of parents might want to home-school their children? What if they frequently move? Have a particular set of religious beliefs?

Do you think parents are likely to be as good at teaching their children as teachers are?

What sorts of things do you think parents might want to leave out from the national curriculum when teaching their children? Is this a good thing?

Do you think home-schooled children miss out on the social aspect of school? Is this important? How else might they get that kind of social contact?

Some further resources

bbc.co.uk/news/education-35133119

theguardian.com/education/2017/jan/24/teacher-takes-children-out-school-education-sue-cowley

standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life/schools-out-forever-why-super-rich-parents-are-opting-to-educate-their-children-using-private-tutors-10044511.html

theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/06/state-sometimes-wiser-than-parents



