



How to hold a debate

Explain to the class that a debate is based around a suggestion or motion.

Some possible SUGAR SMART motions:

- Vending machines in this school should not contain sugary drinks.
- The only desserts provided in this school should be fruit.
- In this country, energy drinks should be banned for sale to under-16s.

Present the motion to the class.

Divide students into proposers and opposers. Ask them to research and write down arguments which either support or oppose the motion.

Seven students are then selected to be:

- Speaker. This person chairs the debate but cannot take part or vote
- First proposer to speak
- First opposer to speak
- Opposer to sum up
- Proposer to sum up
- Two tellers to count the votes

Explain the rules of debating:

As followed in the Houses of Parliament

1. The debate is chaired by the Speaker, whose decision on all matters is final.
2. You can only speak ONCE during the debate. Your speech should be about two minutes long. If you can, develop an argument rather than making a single point.
3. But you can 'intervene' as many times as you like. To intervene is to ask a question about a point being made. E.g. Are those statistics up-to-date?
4. You can use notes to help you with your speeches and make notes during the debate.
5. If you want to speak during the debate, you should catch the Speaker's eye by standing up as soon as someone has finished speaking. The Speaker will pick someone from those standing up.

6. If you spot someone breaking these rules you should tell the Speaker. This is called a point of order.

Hold the debate in this order:

- The Speaker presents the motion.
- The first proposer presents the arguments for the motion.
- The first opposer presents the arguments against the motion.
- One of the proposers presents their arguments for the motion.
- An opposer presents their arguments against the motion.
- This side to side motion continues until everyone has had their say.
- An opposer sums up their group's main argument.
- A proposer sums up their group's main argument.
- Name one side of the classroom the 'aye' wall and the opposite side the 'no' wall.
- The Speaker re-reads the motion.

Students vote:

- Students vote to support or oppose the motion, depending on which they thought were the most convincing and well-constructed arguments. This may not necessarily be what they believe personally. The Speaker can't vote.
- They do so by going to the 'aye' or 'no' side of the classroom.
- The two tellers count up the votes (bodies), on either side of the room.
- The Speaker announces the result of the vote.

(from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4450000/newsid_4458000/4458081.stm accessed 1/5/18. And in more detail including tips on style, tone and body language: <https://outspokenela.files.wordpress.com/2017/02/the-oxford-union-guide-to-schools-debating-copy.pdf>)

Some background to SUGAR SMART Oxford:

This is a national campaign **led by Jamie Oliver** and Sustain, and Oxford is the lucky 13th of 50 cities to be taking part.

As a city, we're having too much sugar and it's bad for our health. Sugary drinks are a particular culprit – a can of soft drink can contain 9 teaspoons of sugar and a bottle 13 teaspoons – when adults and young people aged 11+ are recommended to have a maximum of 7 teaspoons a day (30 grams).

The result of this for our city? Tooth decay, sugar highs and crashes, weight gain, lack of physical fitness – which increases levels of diabetes, heart disease and other health issues.

Oxford's Great Sugar Debate ran until 15th January 2018 and asked people:

- Should Oxford be doing something about sugar?
- If so, what could be done in businesses, cafés and restaurants, schools and colleges, vending machines?
- What is the best way to help people in Oxford reduce their sugar intake from sugary drinks in particular?

Following on from the [public launch at the Kassam Stadium](#) in November; 665 people from Oxfordshire responded to the public consultation, 421 online and 244 via a postcard.

Of those who responded, 41% said they thought they had more than the recommended maximum amount of sugar per day, and a further 17% were not sure. 92% thought young people had more than the recommended maximum amount of sugar per day.

66% were very concerned about the amount of sugar in our food and drinks and 30% were a bit concerned. Only 4% were not at all concerned.

In order of popularity, the measures that people thought businesses should take were:

1. **Offer tap water as standard** in cafes and canteens (62% of people agreed with this).
2. Make healthier options more visible (52%)
3. Traffic light ratings (red/yellow/green) on drinks (46%)
4. Sugar Smart assemblies or debates in schools and colleges (44%)
5. Limit the proportion of sugary drinks in cafés and canteens (41%)
6. Display information about sugar in drinks in vending machines (38%)
7. 10p 'sugar tax' on sugary drinks in cafés and canteens (36%)
8. Individual challenges to cut out sugary drinks for a week (28%)

Only 1% of people who responded thought no action was needed at all in Oxford's workplaces, cafés, canteens, leisure centres, schools and colleges.

In response to this public demand for action, Oxford's organisations are now being invited to take action to make it easier for people to reduce their sugar consumption.

In schools and colleges, this means running assemblies or a GREAT SUGAR DEBATE with students.

Your school can also get in touch with the SUGAR SMART Oxford team at mail@sugarsmartoxford.org to see what other measures your school can put in place.

For example, your school could sign up to one or more of the SUGAR SMART business commitments:

- Promote free tap water in conjunction with the [Refill Oxford](#) campaign
- Adopt a traffic light sticker system on canteen drinks menus
- Make 80% of drinks offered sugar free
- Make healthier options more visible
- Display sugar content information on vending machines
- Introduce a 10p sugar tax on sales of sugary drinks in canteens, to go to a children's health fund
- Or other actions e.g. free fruit for staff, cake-free events, install a water station...

If your school signs up to three or more commitments, you will be awarded a SUGAR SMART golden teaspoon.

Get in touch: mail@sugarsmartoxford.org