Debate Topics for Kids & Teens (by Age)

Motions for every age, from friendly to fierce

50 IDEAS

Elementary (ages 5–10): friendly & concrete

1. Cats make better pets than dogs.
2. Summer is the best season.
3. Recess should be longer than class.
4. Ice cream is better than cake.
5. It's better to read a book than watch the movie.
6. Every kid should have to help with chores.
7. Homework should be banned.
8. Video games are good for you.
9. It's better to be tall than short.
10. Schools should let kids wear whatever they want.
11. Pizza is the best food in the world.
12. It's better to have a lot of friends than one best friend.
13. Zoos are good for animals.
14. Kids should be allowed to have phones.
15. It's better to be an early bird than a night owl.

Middle School (ages 11–13): opinion & light persuasion

1. Social media does more harm than good for kids our age.
2. School should start later in the morning.
3. Students should be allowed to grade their teachers.
4. Year-round school is better than long summer breaks.
5. Junk food should be banned from schools.
6. Everyone should learn to code.
7. Uniforms should be required at school.
8. Kids should get paid for good grades.
9. Field trips teach more than classroom lessons.
10. Group projects are better than working alone.
11. Professional athletes are paid too much.
12. Books should never be banned from libraries.
13. It's more important to be kind than to be honest.
14. Homework does more harm than good.
15. Cities are better places to grow up than small towns.

High School (ages 14–17): analytical & policy

1. Social media companies should be responsible for misinformation on their platforms.
2. Standardized tests should not be used for college admissions.
3. Voting should be mandatory.
4. Artificial intelligence will do more good than harm for society.
5. School should teach financial literacy as a required class.
6. Community service should be a graduation requirement.
7. The voting age should be lowered to 16.
8. Cell phones should be banned during the entire school day.
9. Space exploration is worth the cost.
10. A four-day school week is better than a five-day week.
11. Cancel culture does more harm than good.
12. College should be free for everyone.
13. Governments should prioritize the environment over economic growth.
14. Homework should be optional in high school.
15. Everyone should be required to learn a second language.

Bonus: "This House Believes…" (formal style, ages 12+)

1. This House would ban homework.
2. This House believes technology is making us less social.
3. This House would make voting mandatory.
4. This House believes school uniforms should be required.
5. This House believes social media should have a minimum age of 16.

COACH'S TIP FOR PARENTS

The most valuable exercise is making your child argue the side they disagree with. It forces them to understand both sides, which is what most reliably turns a kid into a strong debater and a clear thinker. Praise the reasoning, not whether they "won."

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