ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

CHALLENGING MOTIONS PACK

This more challenging motion pack should stretch the skills of a class or club who've got some debate skills under their belt already. Each motion has been chosen to provide a thorny question for students to grapple with. To help out, we've provided an introduction and some starter questions for each ones – these can be used to stimulate discussion, or split between students to prepare in advance.

Each motion has been written in two ways – either as "This House…", which refers to the tradition of debates occurring as if in the House of Commons; or as a simple "we should" statement for students to discuss.

You can find more motions on the ESU Resources page – these are updated on a regular basis, and can be found at http://www.esu.org/our-work/esuresources

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

This House Believes that media coverage of the Paralympics should focus on the performance of the athletes, and not the "inspirational" aspect of their stories

Media coverage of the Paralympics should focus on the performance of the athletes, and not the "inspirational" aspect of their stories

Overview:

During the Paralympics, the media often focuses on the ways in which athletes have overcome their disability. They say that their achievements are impressive because of what they have overcome. This inevitably leads to less focus on the athletic achievements. Do you think the media should focus more on the athletic achievement?

Starter questions:

Are the inspirational stories valuable? Who for?

How does this make the athletes feel? Are they being treated as primarily athletes, or primarily people with disabilities?

Should the media aim to treat people with disabilities exactly as they treat other athletes?

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

This House Would rather have a government of experts than a democratically elected one

We should have a government of experts than a democratically elected one

Overview:

While we democratically elect our Government, we could instead have a system where experts about economics, healthcare, education, the environment and so on made all the policy decisions for us. They wouldn't be elected, but would have a lot of expertise in their subject area. Do you think this is a good idea?

Starter questions:

Why is it important that people have input into what decisions are made? Could experts manage without that input?

What is the technically correct answer to a question like whether eating meat is morally correct?

What could the public do if the rulers started making mistakes, or choosing policies that just benefited them?

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

This House Would set aside University places for children from disadvantaged backgrounds

We should set aside University places for children from disadvantaged backgrounds

Overview:

While 14% of British children go to a private school during Sixth Form, people who went to private school make up a significant number of students at the best Universities, for example around 4 in 10 students at Oxford and Cambridge were privately educated. People from disadvantaged backgrounds often face more barriers to accessing University. Do you think we should allocate a certain amount of places to people from the poorest backgrounds?

Starter questions:

What should University be about? Should it reward the students who do the best at A-Levels, or should it try to spread the opportunities they give as widely as possible?

Why is it harder for students from poorer backgrounds to get to University? Is a system that admits based on grades fair to those students?

Which students will benefit most from University?

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

Given the technology, This House Would allow medical procedures that give humans superpowers

Given the technology, we should allow medical procedures that give humans superpowers

Overview:

Imagine if humans could be given superpowers through surgery or some other medical procedure. It would let people do incredible things, and give them a lot of power. But with great power comes great responsibility. Do you think people could handle that responsibility?

Starter questions:

What sort of valuable things could people with superpowers do?

How would we stop people with superpowers from harming others? What if they were too strong for the police to arrest if they committed a crime?

What sort of person would be able to get superpowers? What sort of person would be attracted to having superpowers?

ESU TEACHING RESOURCE

This House Would pay a wage to stay-at-home parents and carers

We should pay a wage to stay-at-home parents and carers

Overview:

Raising a child or looking after a sick or elderly relative is important and difficult work, and people often give up the chance to have a job and earn money in order to do it. While some professional carer roles exist, many people who care for a family member do so entirely unpaid. Do you think this is a role that should earn a wage?

Starter questions:

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?