

ENGLISH — ORACY · Y5–Y6

Debate: Should School Start Later?

Structured argument script — Y5–Y6

Roles and rules

How a structured debate works

- CHAIR (1): introduces motion, manages turns, rules on points of order
- FOR team (4 speakers): argue that school SHOULD start later
- AGAINST team (4 speakers): argue that school SHOULD NOT start later
- FLOOR (remaining pupils): can make points after main speeches
- Rules: no interrupting, one speaker at a time, engage with what the other side says
- After the debate, the class VOTES on the motion

Opening speeches — FOR the motion

FOR 1: Research from sleep scientists around the world shows that teenagers and children need more sleep than adults. When school starts at 9am, many children haven't had enough sleep. Their brains are still half asleep when the most important learning happens. FOR 2: In countries where school starts at 9:30 or 10am, attendance rates are higher, mental health problems are lower, and test scores are actually better — not worse. We lose nothing by starting later. We gain a lot. FOR 3: Children who arrive tired at school don't learn properly for the first hour anyway. So starting earlier doesn't mean more learning. It means an hour of tired, unfocused sitting. FOR 4: We ask children to come to school ready to think and work hard. But we make it almost impossible by starting at a time when their brains are not ready. That is not their fault. It is a system problem. And we can fix it.



Opening speeches — AGAINST the motion

AGAINST 1: Parents work. If school starts later, parents who need to be at work at 9am have nobody to look after their children. A later school start would only work for families who have someone at home. Most don't. AGAINST 2: Children who start school later finish later. That means after-school activities, clubs, sports and homework are pushed even later into the evening. You don't gain time — you just move it. AGAINST 3: The solution to tiredness is not a later school start — it's an earlier bedtime. If we focused on screen time and sleep habits, we wouldn't need to reorganise every parent's working day. AGAINST 4: The real world doesn't accommodate people who want to start later. Getting children used to an early start is preparing them for life. Making school easier doesn't make life easier.

