

Teacher Notes – Session 1;

How do we debate the important topics and issues in our lives?

Slide 1 -

Question Time: how do we debate the important topics and issues in our lives?

Mary Somerset Webb
Expert on Money

Rosie Jones
Comedian

Robin Shattock
Scientist

David Lammy
Labour MP for Tottenham

Matt Hancock
Conservative MP

Intro to Question Time –
[Vaccination debate – 10.40 minutes](#)

What is your first impression of Question Time and of the people taking part in the debate?

Students are going to watch the first 11 minutes from an episode of Question Time before discussing first impressions of the format and of the people taking part in the debate. The context is COVID and they will be thinking about why there is a range of people taking part in the debate. The discussion of the format should be in pairs or small groups and will need Teacher input to stimulate ideas among the students.

Slide 2 –

Question Time: how do we debate the important topics and issues in our lives?



Mary Somerset Webb
Expert on Money



David Lammy
Labour MP for
Tottenham



Rosie Jones
Comedian



Robin Shattock
Scientist

What does each debater bring to the topic?

Talk to your partner about the role and knowledge that each debater might bring to the debate.

For instance – Mary Somerset Webb might talk about how the Covid pandemic has made it difficult for people to manage their money.

Write a sentence for each debater in your booklet.



Matt Hancock
Conservative MP
Government Minister

Here students will be working on a worksheet in their Question Time Booklet. They will discuss with a partner or a small group the role and knowledge that each debate participant brings to Question Time before writing a full sentence on each. There is an example sentence for Mary Somerset Webb as a model.

Teacher input to stimulate thinking might give context to each participant that can be gauged from watching the first 11 minutes of the episode. Emphasis needs to be on the role of expert knowledge and on the need to have a Labour and a Conservative Politician. Matt Hancock was also a Government Minister for Health at the time.

Slide 3 –

Question Time: What makes a good debater?



[David Lammy on being English](#)

- Listens carefully to the caller
- Keeps his tone polite and stays calm
- Responds with clear points



[MP Diane Abbott asks a question in Parliament](#)

- Speaks clearly
- Really knows what her question is about
- Asks a question with specific detail



[Should Head Scarfs be banned - 3 minutes](#)

- Talks from a personal perspective
- Remains calm when interrupted
- Responds clearly to each point made

Students are going to watch 3 clips of people debating to form ideas on what makes an effective participant in a debate. Each clip has a different format and context and this will need to be explored. There are three bullet points under each clip graphic to aid thinking and discussion.

David Lammy is hosting a Radio phone in and takes a question on his nationality and right to describe himself as British/English. Lammy deals with the caller very carefully and politely even though the call might be very a very personal attack on him that is essentially racist.

Diane Abbott – MP – is asking a question in Parliament to the then Home Secretary Sajid Javid. Abbott is bringing up a topic that is unpopular but where there is a very moral angle and is suggesting that the Conservative Government is anti Muslim in not considering the rights of a young Muslim woman who left the UK to join a Terrorism group. She was a child when she left the UK and the Government were not allowing her to return.

The clip from Good Morning Britain is about a proposed law to ban the wearing of head scarfs in shops and workplaces. The young Muslim woman is asked to explain the importance of this traditional dress for Muslims and while being interrupted she explains how the head scarf means different things to different women and in doing so challenges the idea that all Muslims are the same.

Slide 4 –

Question Time: When is debate not effective in changing minds?

- Jeremy Corbyn asks
A number of serious questions

- Prime Minister Cameron
Answers the first with
Detail

- On the second question
Other MPs start to laugh

- Corbyn finishes a question
but the Prime Minister answers
with pre made notes on the
topic but does not answer the
question.

- Prime Minister Cameron then
starts to personally insult
and the Conservative MP cheer
his rudeness.



[Prime Ministers Questions in Parliament](#)

**Why might people watching be put off by the way
That this debate was conducted?**

1,
2,
3,

Using what you have
seen and what you
Have discussed today
What would you say
are the 4 things that
make a good debater?

1,
2,
3,
4,

The most important
Thing is that

This is the final slide for the first session and covers ideas about when debating goes wrong as well as asking students to consider what they have learnt in a plenary activity.

Students will watch the clip of Prime Ministers Questions to see how in Parliament a serious set of questions can be thrown of track when one of the debaters refuses to engage positively in discussion. Having watched the clip students are asked to discuss with a partner or in a small group before taking a note of 3 things that spoil the debate.

For the Plenary students are asked to consider 4 things that make a good debater. They will make a note of the 4 ideas in their Question Time Booklet.