

English through history debate topics

Choose a question below, then flip a coin to decide if you can ask it to someone else (heads) or have to answer yourself (tails = tell). Discuss it if you like, then take turns doing the same for other questions below.

OR

Choose a topic from below, use a coin to decide who takes which side and debate it.

- Imagine Neanderthals have just been discovered living somewhere. Have a parliamentary debate on whether they should be given the same rights as homo sapiens (= us). If not, what rights should they have? If you decide that they should, have another debate on whether apes and/ or monkeys should have increased rights too.
- Was the appeasement of Hitler a mistake, or did it give the Allies time to prepare for WWII?
- Should denying the Holocaust or other genocide like the massacre of Armenians in Turkey be a crime?
- Should the main aim of history lessons be the teaching of national pride?
- Should central government be allowed to approve history textbooks or curricula?
- Should former colonial powers have to pay compensation to their former colonies?
- Should historical artefacts be returned to their original countries, even if it is hundreds of years later?
- Should aboriginal people have special rights to the land of a country, even if the other people have been there for hundreds of years?
- On reflection, was colonisation mainly a good or bad thing?
- Should school history lessons concentrate on world history or the history of your country?
- Should history be taught, or should students just be shown how to research periods and topics that they are interested in?
- Is it the business of foreign countries, e.g. ex-colonies, how they are represented in the textbooks of other countries?
- Should it be possible to sue governments for historical crimes of different governments in the same country?
- Should the crimes of previous governments (e.g. military regimes) be punished, forgiven, or forgotten?
- Can you find any examples of a justified attack on another country in history?
- If a part of the history of your country could make you ashamed of your ancestors, should it be avoided in school history lessons?
- Are historical dramas, novels and films a good way of teaching history, despite their inaccuracies?
- Is history an important subject in schools, or should it be relegated to a lesser role while more practical subjects like business studies are promoted more?
- If _____ hadn't happened, would it have been a good or bad thing?
- Was _____ inevitable, or could it have been stopped?

Ask about any questions which you couldn't understand, avoided, are not sure that you answered correctly, etc, discussing them as a class each time.

Make up similar questions about history for each other.