

# TED TALK LESSON



## WE'VE STOPPED TRUSTING INSTITUTIONS AND STARTED TRUSTING STRANGERS

### TEACHER'S NOTES

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Rachel Botsman at TED Summit One

We've stopped trusting institutions and started trusting strangers

[https://www.ted.com/talks/rachel\\_botsman\\_we\\_ve\\_stopped\\_trusting\\_institutions\\_and\\_started\\_trusting\\_strangers/up-next](https://www.ted.com/talks/rachel_botsman_we_ve_stopped_trusting_institutions_and_started_trusting_strangers/up-next)

Vocab  
matching  
answers

1. d
2. g
3. j
4. i
5. c
6. h
7. a
8. k
9. f
10. e
11. b

Vocab gap-fill  
answers

1. disruption
2. Bitcoin
3. dodgy
4. leap
5. trust
6. algorithm
7. chitchat
8. elusive
9. trustworthy
10. blockchain
11. cryptographic

Ted Talk video answers

1. These are all examples of how technology is creating new mechanisms that are enabling us to trust unknown people, companies and ideas.
2. No, it is not. Trust in institutions, banks, governments, and even churches is collapsing.
3. It's a platform that matches drivers and passengers who want to share long-distance journeys together.
4. The average ride taken is 320 kilometers.
5. A trust leap happens when we take the risk to do something new or different to the way that we've always done it.
6. She defines trust as a confident relationship with the unknown.
7. On the first level of "climbing the trust stack", you have to trust BlaBlaCar's idea. The second level is about having confidence in the platform. And the third level is about using little bits of information to decide whether the other person is trustworthy.
8. Trust has only evolved in three significant chapters throughout the course of human history: local, institutional and distributed.
9. Until the mid-1800s, trust was built around tight-knit relationships. Trust was mostly local and accountability-based.
10. In the mid-19th century, people moved to fast-growing cities such as London and San Francisco. We started to place our trust in black box systems of authority. Trust became institutional and commission-based.
11. Every day, 5 million people will take a trust leap and ride with Uber. In China, on Didi, the ride-sharing platform, 11 million rides taken every day. That's 127 rides per second, showing that this is a cross-cultural phenomenon.

# Warmer questions

- Should we always trust strangers?
- Why do some people have a hard time trusting others?
- Have you ever been betrayed by someone you once trusted?

## Reading section



### Love thy neighbour?

Trust is the basis of all human relations, from fortuitous meets to friendships and intimate relationships. It runs all the connections we have with each other. So the existence of trust in society is a social capital of fundamental value. The more trust there is in a society, the greater its social capital. Where there is more trust, it is easier to undertake projects, businesses or social initiatives.

It also happens that in communities where trust is a social observable fact, it is easier for citizens to pay their taxes and to comply with their civic obligations which, at the end of the day, returns for the benefit of all. But there are also individual advantages. People who trust others tend to be happier and more optimistic. Trust in others enriches us personally and increases our well-being. Thus, it is worth stressing that, there are important social and personal costs derived from the general mistrust of others.

There are numerous reasons that make trusting others very challenging. One reason is that most individuals were taught not to trust. Another reason is that many have suffered significantly during their childhood. However, regardless of the reason, most of us have had experiences in which trust was broken.

In the past, trust or mistrust was established naturally because deals were conducted by individuals who knew each other. In small communities, there were practical and personal means of preventing abuse of trust. But in the global world of today, people are required to interact with total strangers. As a result, trust is no longer established as it was before. On this subject, trust researcher Rachel Botsman describes trust as “a confident relationship to the unknown.” Botsman’s research focuses on how technology is changing society and the evolving line in how people trust each other. She explains why companies like Blablacar, AirBnB, Tinder, and Uber are so popular and successful, despite they are based upon the connections between complete strangers.



## Questions to consider

- Why is trusting others important in a global society?
- What are there societal benefits of trusting complete strangers?
- Using online shopping requires the seller to be trusted and in many cases, they are trustworthy to send goods and services to you. Why is it that we find it hard to trust individual people?
- Is it possible to have a community where everyone fully and implicitly trusts each other?
- Do you know any examples of where people trust each other on a deep level? Why do they do so?



## Vocabulary matching

Using the words on the left match them to their real definitions.

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Trust          | a. Dishonest or unreliable.   |
| 2. Chitchat       | b. A process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer.  |
| 3. Elusive        | c. Able to be relied on as honest or truthful.  |
| 4. Bitcoin        | d. A firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.   |
| 5. Trustworthy    | e. a type of secret code to allow for secure communications.  |
| 6. Disruption     | f. Jump or spring a long way, to a great height, or with great force.   |
| 7. Dodgy          | g. meaningless, or aimless conversation.  |
| 8. Blockchain     | h. Disturbance or problems which interrupt an event, activity, or process.  |
| 9. Leap           | i. A type of digital currency in which a record of transactions is maintained and new units of currency are generated by the computational solution of mathematical problems, and which operates independently of a central bank. |
| 10. Cryptographic | j. Difficult to find, catch, or achieve.  |
| 11. Algorithms    | k. A system in which a record of transactions made in bitcoin or another cryptocurrency is maintained across several computers that are linked in a peer-to-peer network.   |

## Vocabulary gap-fill

- The strike is expected to cause delays and \_\_\_\_\_ to flights from Britain.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is able to send money across the world in a few seconds without any fees or charges.
- They got involved with a \_\_\_\_\_ businessman and lost all their savings.
- Spiderman made a huge \_\_\_\_\_ over the wall and continued on his chase.
- I can't \_\_\_\_\_ her not to lie!
- The most rudimentary \_\_\_\_\_ repeats a single instruction.
- I found the \_\_\_\_\_ exceedingly dull.
- This is actually a common bird but had proved surprisingly \_\_\_\_\_.
- This system is \_\_\_\_\_ and safe in working.
- While Bitcoin and cryptocurrency may have been the first widely known uses of \_\_\_\_\_ technology
- Preventive measures include data encryption using various \_\_\_\_\_ methods.



## Video section

Something profound is changing our concept of trust, says Rachel Botsman. While we used to place our trust in institutions like governments and banks, today we increasingly rely on others, often strangers, on platforms like Airbnb and Uber and through technologies like the blockchain. This new era of trust could bring with it a more transparent, inclusive and accountable society – if we get it right. Who do you trust?

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Watch the video and then answer the questions below

1. Why is Rachel Botsman talking about Airbnb, Bitcoin, and Tinder?
2. Is trust in institutions on the rise?
3. What is BlaBlaCar?
4. How long does an average ride with BlaBlaCar normally take?
5. When does a 'trust leap' occur?
6. What is trust according to Rachel Botsman?
7. With BlaBlaCar as an example, what are the three levels of "climbing the trust stack"?
8. How has trust evolved?
9. How was trust built until the mid-1800s?
10. What happened in the mid-19th century?
11. How many people take trust leaps every day?

## The advantages of trusting others

1. Trusting others generates the synergistic power of teamwork. When people tie together the power of effective teamwork and synergy, they too reach significantly improved individual and team performance, higher output, greater personal satisfaction, and less stress.
2. Trusting others builds relationships and intimacy. Trust is progressively built as individuals get to see others making a sincere investment in both of their personal and professional relationship.
3. Trusting others releases time gives freedom, and improves efficiency. Trusting environments learn to successfully navigate conflict. Also, a strong sense of trust allows individuals to increase their productivity.
4. Trusting others facilitates service to others. People who trust each other behave differently and their behaviour affects the entire social culture of a country.
5. Trusting others makes people happy. Several types of research have indicated that people with a high level of trust, even for people they do not know, are apparently happier.

## The disadvantages of trusting others

1. Trusting others' human nature's fallibility is dangerous. Human beings are not perfect, and so trusting in someone is like taking a risk in your life. It is a dangerous thing to trust in a fallible being.
2. Trusting strangers' nature is unpredictable. The tendency of changes in people's character is one good reason not to trust strangers. The person you are putting your trust in can change his or her character at any moment. People change behaviour when they meet different people or change their environments.
3. Trusting strangers puts you in a danger zone. The negative effects of trust betrayal include: a broken heart, emotional pain, sense of dejection and, in the most extreme cases, even physical wounds or death.
4. Trusting others may lead to betrayal. People around us know our strengths and weaknesses. They can capitalize on our weakness and harm us very easily.
5. Trusting others may result in hurtful situations. The higher the unrealistic expectations, the more probable it is they will not be met. Expectations must be defined beforehand as a precautionary measure aimed at reducing any potential upsetting situation.

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## Task

How many more points can you think of that are related to the ideas above? Write your thoughts below and then discuss in your group.

## Extended discussion questions

1. How often have you questioned the trust you place in others?
2. Have you trusted someone only to find you have been lied to?
3. Have you ever reflected about the trust others place in you?
4. Can you trust someone you fear?
5. What is the relationship between trust and defencelessness?
6. Can you respect an individual you do not trust?
7. Can you trust an individual you do not respect?

## Potential debate motions

1. When we trust someone, we give them a large piece of ourselves. Trusting others is a dangerous thing to do.
2. Trusting strangers is almost entirely safe because it serves as a bonding agent in society.
3. People are no longer taking their civic responsibilities seriously. No one should drive a car, board a train or an airplane without extra legal protection.
4. As a general rule, individuals obey civic rules. We can be confident that all pilots and drivers are sober and alert.
5. The rising demand for state-of-the-art alarm devices indicates the increasing mistrust among citizens.
6. The growing success of companies like Uber and Tinder evinces that people across the globe are trusting strangers more than ever before.





# DEBATING PLANS

## PREMIUM 30-PAGE DEBATING LESSONS ON DOZENS OF TOPICS

These lessons are extensive and includes a magazine-like introduction, a 2-page article, vocabulary section, grammar exercises, and images for discussion. To help students organize their debate, worksheets are included for appropriate language and pros and cons to get them started. In total these lesson plans offer 30 pages of activities and tasks for students.

### Environmental Crimes

Debate Lesson Plan

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Should natural features be given legal rights to protect them from pollution? This debate will target issues relating to how to legally protect the environment and criminalise pollution.

### Food Tax

Debate Lesson Plan

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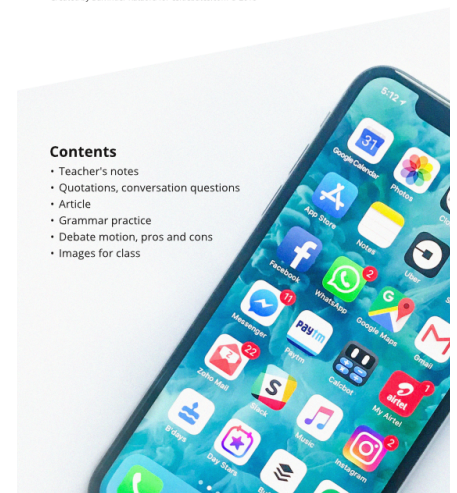


What are the best ways to tackle obesity? Some people advocate better food education, while others want to tax people to change their spending habits. Which is the most effective?

### Social Media

Debate Lesson Plan

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People are becoming increasingly concerned about social media. Discuss the main issues and find out what your students think and why.