

Resource 19: Arguments for and against special treatment of very able pupils

For	Against
Very able pupils will only reach their full potential if they are given lots of stimulating experiences that match their ability.	Very able pupils should be able to use their intelligence to learn for themselves.
Very able pupils have the right to learn and be intellectually challenged at a level that is appropriate for them.	Teachers are too busy to provide a special programme for a handful of pupils.
Very able pupils often enter schools equipped with a mastery of the basic skills. This needs to be recognised by the school and arrangements made so they don't feel different and isolated for being in advance of their peers.	Schools cannot be expected to alter their normal systems of organisation to accommodate a few precocious children.
When the needs of the very able are considered and the educational programme is adapted to meet these needs, these pupils make significant progress and their sense of competence and security is enhanced.	The curriculum is already in place and offers all pupils the opportunity to do well if they make the effort.
Society relies on the contribution made by the very able. If they are not encouraged to achieve then there will be no progress made in areas that are vital to the future well-being of the population as a whole.	There is no real evidence to say that all very able children grow up to be innovative and talented adults. Society would be better advised making sure everyone can master the basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic than concentrating on a few who may or may not turn out to be exceptional.