

OXFORD UNION DEBATE WORKSHOP

IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GOOD FOR THE HUMAN RACE?

09.03.2017



Cherwell College hosted a debate workshop, in collaboration with the Oxford Union, this week. We were joined by Seb and Ben, two volunteers from the University of Oxford who are heavily involved in debating and with the Union. Ben, an experienced debater and a long-standing member of the Union's best training group, is new to this collaboration whilst Seb, who recently judged the World Universities Debating Competition 2016, has joined us at Cherwell before.

Our students were split into two teams, one arguing the proposition and one arguing the opposition. Each team carefully cultivated their ideas and counter-arguments, under the guidance of Seb and Ben.

Basim, Chris, Joseph and Mark argued that Artificial Intelligence would have a negative impact on the human race; their points included a projected loss of jobs, and consequent economic ruin, for humans when increased A.I. reduced the need for human input, the ethical dilemma of effectively enslaving an intelligent 'species' to perform menial human tasks and the risk of mechanical errors leading to anything from car



crashes to a robot uprising. The opposing team, made up of Lily, Harry and Fatima, pointed out the increased precision and efficacy of A.I.-run medical procedures, the potential to save human lives and time in driverless vehicles and the development of art and culture that would ensue from human's no longer being hindered by tedious daily tasks.

The opposing sides spoke alternately, and the debate comprised of six 3 minute speeches in total. Seb and Ben then invited questions from the floor, which provoked lively discussion from both teams; these questions included queries about the certainty of economic decline from the development of A.I., and what the tangible benefits to human life Artificial Intelligence could



realistically bring about. Points were well-made on each side, although in some cases further research would have been beneficial.

Cherwell College would like to extend its warmest thanks to the Oxford Union for working with us in organising this event, as well as to Seb and Ben for their expert guidance and help. We hope to continue this collaboration next term with further debating workshops in the British Parliamentary style.