

Guidelines for Discussions

Team Members:

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Background/Context:

- Teachers could do this activity to establish these norms before a debate

1) Purpose

- a) Introduction of what class is going to do; explain the goal (potentially a KWL)
- b) Learn more if we're more engaged
- c) Understand the purpose
- d) Reasons for protocol
- e) Critical thinking, civil discourse
- f) Need for every student to feel safe and valued
- g) Frame the goal:
 - i) Clarity, understanding
 - ii) *Not* persuasion
- h) When we have discussions, what's the purpose?
- i) Listen
- j) Use your peers as a learning resource

2) Group brainstorm discussion:

- a) Theme: What are the dos and don't of classroom discussions?
- b) Assign roles (set the norm that everyone has something to contribute)
 - i) Recorder
 - ii) Visual aid
- c) Small groups/pair-share/whole class
- d) Goal: get buy-in from them, take ownership
- e) Write on poster

3) Do's/Don'ts

Do's

- Focus on ideas, not people
- Seek to understand before being understood
- Keep it in the classroom/maintain the “safe space”
- Back up all claims w/ specific evidence from reliable sources
- Open-ended questions
- Academic language (use script/sentence starters when necessary)