



# Group Chat Templates

Teacher Guide & Facilitation Toolkit

*Discord · WhatsApp*

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## What Is This?

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This toolkit contains two interactive, student-facing HTML templates — one designed to look like Discord, one like WhatsApp — for running live or asynchronous group discussions. Students open the file in a browser, pick a name (and role, in the Discord version), and chat.

The format is the pedagogy. The constraints of each platform — short message norms, reaction economies, informal register — are doing instructional work. You're not just gamifying discussion. You're placing students inside a context that changes how they think and write.

### # Discord Template

Students join with assigned roles and debate in a channel-style format. Emoji reactions create a visible map of class consensus.

*Best for: structured debate, roleplay, text analysis*

### # WhatsApp Template

Students join with a name and colour. Short message format with read receipts and emoji reactions. Feels like a real group chat.

*Best for: character voice, informal Socratic, peer feedback*

## How to Set Up

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### Before Class

1. Download the two HTML files from the blog post (discord-template.html and whatsapp-template.html).
2. Open one or both in a browser — they run entirely offline, no login required.
3. Project the template on your screen, OR share the file with students to open on their own devices.
4. Use the Teacher Setup bar at the top to set a channel name / group name before students join.






## During Class

- Students open the file and enter their name. In Discord, they also pick a discussion role.
- Type your discussion prompt or first message to kick off the thread.
- Let the chat run for 8–15 minutes. Resist the urge to jump in immediately — watch who's leading and who's lurking.
- Use the typing indicator and reaction patterns to track engagement in real time.
- After the activity, scroll back through the chat together. The log is your debrief material.

## Discord: The Five Roles

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Assigning roles before the session turns an open discussion into a structured debate. Each role has a clear job. Students lean into it — or fight against it, which is also productive.

Role	Badge	Their Job
The Skeptic		Question everything. Push back. Ask "what's the evidence?"
The Defender		Support the main argument. Find the evidence that holds it up.
The Context Provider		Bring the background — author notes, historical context, other texts.
The Hype Person		Build momentum. Amplify the best ideas. Synthesise the thread.
The Lurker Who Goes Off		Stay quiet — then drop the take that reframes everything.

Pro tip: The Lurker role is magic for students who freeze in class. Give it to them explicitly. You will not regret it.

# Discussion Starter Prompts

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Paste these directly into the chat to start the thread, or write them on the board as the "opening message."

## English / ELA

- "Did [character] actually have a choice? Start the thread."
- "One word for the theme of this chapter. Defend it."
- "Who in this book would have the most chaotic group chat? Why?"
- "Unpopular opinion about this text. Go."

## Social Studies / History

- "Was [historical event] inevitable? Skeptics, start."
- "Who in this era would have been posting on Nextdoor? What would they say?"
- "First message is from a peasant in [time period]. What are they worried about today?"
- "Rate the decision-making of [historical figure] out of 10. Show your working."

## Science

- "The mitochondria is NOT the powerhouse of the cell. Defend this wrong take."
- "You are a nitrogen molecule. What is your Monday like?"
- "What would [scientific concept] complain about in a group chat?"
- "Hottest take about [this unit]. Go. Context Providers, be ready."

## Math

- "Is a square a rectangle? The Skeptic goes first."
- "Explain [concept] to someone who missed class. Use only short messages."
- "Which function has the most villain energy? Make the case."

# Subject-by-Subject Activity Ideas

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Subject	Discord Version	WhatsApp Version	What students learn
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ELA	Roleplay debate: is Pip sympathetic?	Character voice: text as Gatsby	Close reading, narrative perspective
History	Was the French Revolution justified?	Chat as a 1789 Paris resident	Causation, situated perspective
Science	Debate: is Pluto a planet?	Ecosystem crisis thread	Evidence evaluation, systems thinking
Math	Is 0.999... equal to 1?	Peer explain a concept	Mathematical argument, precision
Art / Media	Is this image propaganda?	Live annotation of a film still	Visual literacy, bias recognition

## Using the Chat Log for Assessment

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The chat log is not just a record — it's evidence of thinking. Here's how to use it.

### What to look for

- Who built on someone else's idea (look for replies and @mentions)?
- Who changed their mind during the thread?
- Where did the conversation lose the thread — and why?
- Which messages got reactions, and which were ignored?
- Who stayed in role (Discord) or sustained a consistent voice (WhatsApp)?

### Low-stakes assessment ideas

- Screenshot the thread. Students annotate three messages that shifted the conversation.
- Ask students to write a 100-word reflection: "What did the chat get wrong that the essay needs to get right?"
- Peer assessment: each student nominates the message that made them think hardest, and why.
- The lurker's big drop: ask The Lurker to turn their final message into an opening thesis for an essay.

The debrief is the lesson. Scrolling back through the chat together — live, on the projector — is where the metacognitive work happens. Do not skip it.

# A Quick Word on Digital Citizenship

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Using these templates is a natural moment to talk about how we behave in digital spaces. You don't need to turn it into a separate lesson — weave it in.

- Before the activity: "What makes a group chat a good one? What makes it a nightmare?" This primes norms.
- During the activity: notice who's being heard and who's being drowned out. That's the same question online and in class.
- After the activity: "Is there anything in that chat you'd want to delete? Why? What does that tell us about permanent vs temporary communication?"

The templates are sandboxed — nothing is sent anywhere, stored, or shared. But the habits students practice here are real.

## Facilitation Tips

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- Set a timer. Eight to twelve minutes is usually the sweet spot before the energy drops.
- Don't jump in too early. If the chat goes quiet for 90 seconds, that's normal — someone is about to say something.
- For Discord: check in with the Lurker at the 8-minute mark. Give them a gentle "any minute now" look.
- For WhatsApp: if you want character voice work, establish whose perspective before they start. Ambiguity breeds confusion.
- Screenshot the best threads. Build a gallery of "this is what a good discussion looks like."
- The first time you run it, lower the stakes. Let them get weird. The second time, add more structure.
- If a student writes something they regret: that's a lesson, not a disaster. Lean into it with curiosity.