Classrooms as Bridging Spaces: Activity Menu for K-12 Educators

Choose one or more activities to bring the skills of communicating across differences into your classrooms. Whether you have 10 minutes or multiple class periods to dedicate, there are activities and tools that can fit your needs.

Curriculum & Teacher Tools		
Grade	*Activity*	*Link*
9-12	Empower students to start a BridgeUSA chapter. BridgeUSA is a multi-partisan student movement that champions viewpoint diversity, responsible discourse, and a solution-oriented political culture.	BridgeUSA
6-12	Teach civics through the historical lens of Voting Rights	Right to Vote Guide by Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
6-12	A podcast series focused on civic education in divided times, complemented by a comprehensive guide for educators aiming to navigate the complexities of teaching civic education in a polarized environment.	Courageous Conversations About Our Schools with Guide hosted by Ken Futernick*
All	Choose from 15 practices to help kids bridge divides. Educators and parents can help students engage across differences at school, in their homes, and throughout their community.	15 Practices to Help Kids Bridge Divides from Generation Citizen, Greater Good Science Center and Making Caring Common
K-16	Media literacy is core to understanding multiple perspectives. Integrate media literacy and critical thinking into core subject-area learning. Includes teacher-created lesson plans, how-to videos and guides across every grade and subject.	Project Look Sharp
6-12	Easily schedule a virtual, facilitated dialogue between classrooms of students who are the political, racial, geographical, and socio-economic opposite of each other.	Mismatch by AllSides and Living Room Conversations* *Use EARLYADOPTERS code to access a free conversation.*
9-16	This six-session curriculum explores the science that explains our differences and helps students reach across the divide	Perspectives program from the Constructive Dialogue Institute
6-12	The LARA method (Listen, Affirm, Respond, Ask Questions) can provide a framework to stabilize contentious conversations in the classroom.	Are you Ready to Talk? Toolkit from Stanford SPARQtools
K-8	The Prohuman Foundation is developing a character-based curriculum to support educators who want to bring the Prohuman approach into their classrooms. Pilot or review lessons from this new resource.	Prohuman Foundation email info@prohumanfoundation.org

Standalone lesson		
6-12	My Political Autobiography can be used as an in-class or at-home assignment to help students engage in a discussion of their political beliefs by reflecting on the connections between their experiences, their values, and their political views.	My Political Autobiography: A Workbook by Essential Partners See also: Step Inside This house lesson (exercise + worksheet)
9-12	Provide students with the tools necessary to have civil and informed conversations about the Israel-Palestine conflict through an activity that leads students to recognize biased media coverage and helps students thoughtfully express their viewpoint.	Israel-Palestine Conflict Activity from Institute for Youth in Policy*
9-12	Americans are more similar across the political spectrum than they often believe, also known as the "Perception Gap." Revealing the Perception Gap is one of the most effective interventions to reduce polarization. Follow this lesson to improve classroom civil discourse by reducing anxiety about cross-partisan discussion, while students learn there are well-supported positions between the polar opposites.	Perception Gap lesson plan from More Like US Findings showing effectiveness of closing the Perception Gap
6-12	Structured lesson that centers current events to strengthen students' listening skills	Current Events Activity from the Better Arguments Project*
Short Activity - 10 minutes or less		
Any	Normalize sharing diverse perspectives by playing the Spectrum game in class	View Do All 5th Graders think the Same? or pick from Best Of playlist on Jubilee
6-12	With students, watch one of the videos from the menu. Each video either models dialogue across lines of disagreement or explains the science behind how to bridge divides. Conduct a brief discussion by asking questions such as "What is your reaction?" and "What's something new you learned?"	Videos can be found on the Middle Ground School Solutions website (see "Brief Videos for Classroom Use")
6-12	Use exit ticket or partner protocol to assess and encourage students' development of five bridging mindsets, including resisting the urge to "win" and listening deeply.	See Better Arguments Exit Ticket Exercise or Current Events Exercise*
6-12	Get students moving around the room. Make space for them to state their position on a matter and listen to their peers.	The Facing History and Ourselves Barometer: Taking a Stand on Controversial Issues

*Email required to download materials.

Thank you to our partners for generously contributing free resources to this list. If you have additional activities or curriculum that you would like to be considered for this list, please email alice@allsides.com.

We are grateful to our member organizations who helped populate this initiative: