

Discussion Tips & Starters

Use these only if they're helpful. Most important is being your authentic self, letting others be their authentic selves, and sharing what's really on your mind.

Questions That Open Things Up

- "What do you all think about ____?"
- "I found out that _____. Did anyone find something similar or different?"
- "Something I'm still trying to figure out is _____. Does anyone have any ideas about it?"
- "I was surprised that _____. What do folks think?"
- "I feel that _____. Does anyone else feel this way or differently?"

Build on What Someone Said

- "I'm wondering about that too."
- "I found the same thing."
- "That reminds me of what ____ said earlier..."
- "I want to add to what ____ shared..."
- "I saw it a little differently, but it connects..."
- "I'm thinking about ____'s point, and now I'm wondering..."

Amplify or Highlight Someone's Idea

- "I just want to slow down with what ____ said — that stood out."
- "I think ____ made a great point we could look at more."

- “What ____ said really changed how I was thinking.”
- “Let’s return to ____’s idea — it feels important.”

Show You’re Present (Even Without Speaking Yet)

- Turn toward the speaker.
- Nod or make eye contact to show you’re tracking.
- Jot a quick note if something sparks a thought.
- Pause before jumping in — silence gives space.
- If someone’s been quiet, ask if they want to add something.

This could live:

- On the back of your rubric (printable version).
- On a classroom poster or slide before discussions.
- As a handout in students’ notebooks or folders.
- Or as a bookmark-sized card they can keep.

rich conversation.

To Begin or Invite In:

- "What do folks think about...?"
- "I noticed something that surprised me..."
- "I'm wondering if anyone else saw it this way..."
- "I'm still trying to figure out..."
- "Here's something I found interesting..."

To Share or Reflect:

- "I learned that..."
- "Something I didn't expect was..."
- "This made me think about..."
- "One thing that stood out to me was..."

To Explore Perspectives:

- "Do people think this is a good or bad thing?"
- "What would this look like in real life?"
- "How might someone disagree with this?"
- "Why do you think this matters?"
- "Is there another way to look at this?"

 To Redirect or Deepen:

- "Can we go back to what ____ said earlier?"
- "How does that connect to what we talked about yesterday?"
- "What's at the heart of this issue?"