



TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDELINES



Guideline	What This Looks Like
Set a purpose for the discussion.	<p>Review the purpose as a class before beginning.</p> <p>Remind students of the purpose if they stray too far off topic.</p> <p>Summarize the discussion, and then link the summary back to the purpose.</p>
Explain that the goal of discussion is not to come to agreement, but rather to have a better understanding of the topic by sharing different viewpoints and ideas.	<p>Teach and model for students the language around agreeing and disagreeing.</p> <p>Thank students when they contribute a new or different viewpoint.</p>
Recognize that students may become emotional when challenged or triggered. Teach them strategies to regulate their emotions. Ask students what helps them to feel safe and calm in the classroom.	<p>Students can do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Count to ten silently or take deep breaths.</i>• <i>Repeat a calming phrase silently, such as "I am safe."</i>• <i>Write their feelings in a notebook.</i>• <i>Acknowledge they are upset by using an "I" statement and a feeling word.</i>
If discussions become too tense, pause and give students time to reflect.	<p>Acknowledge that the conversation is tense.</p> <p>Ask all students to pause for five minutes and write a reflection on why the tension exists and what they need to reset and engage respectfully in conversation again.</p> <p>If applicable, ask students to list pros and cons for both sides of a heated argument.</p> <p>Adjourn the discussion and let students know you will continue it the next day.</p> <p>Remind students to leave the discussion in the classroom.</p>
Facilitate discussions by asking clarifying and probing questions.	<p><i>What does that mean?</i></p> <p><i>Can you say more about that?</i></p> <p><i>Does anyone else have anything to add to that information?</i></p> <p><i>Where did you learn that?</i></p> <p><i>Is that a fact or is it someone's opinion?</i></p> <p><i>Why do you think that?</i></p> <p><i>Are there other viewpoints to consider?</i></p>