

Kentucky Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics 
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Discussion Guide for Teens

Welcome to Participation in Your School's Teen Round Table Discussion

We are excited that you are joining us!

Discussions teach us to think critically and communicate effectively. They teach us to pay attention. They teach us to be vulnerable, and to appreciate different perspectives. Discussions bring us closer together, and help us become the best possible versions of ourselves. Discussions are for life.

Think of this Discussion Guide as your Round Table "textbook". It is a resource that will help you understand values and develop the techniques that make for great discussions. We've done our best to keep it short and sweet. Good luck, have fun and stay curious!

Listen to **understand**.

When someone else is speaking, you are actively listening. You do your best to “put yourself in their shoes”. You think about how their ideas relate to your own knowledge and beliefs. You give them your full attention because you know and expect that they will do the same for you. You know that compassion never goes out of style.



Encourage **others** to contribute.

You understand that the best discussions happen when everyone has the opportunity to contribute ideas. You want everyone to grow and improve together. As a result, you actively encourage your classmates to contribute, especially the ones who aren't naturally talkative. You remember that we are all at different levels and have different strengths and weaknesses.

Require evidence.

You know that the best ideas are supported by good evidence. You do your best to ensure that your facts and sources are credible and balanced. You actively seek out evidence that contradicts your beliefs because that is how you become wiser, and develop stronger arguments. You hold your classmates to the same standard, and insist that they also support their ideas with evidence.



Speak up.

You know that your perspective is unique, valuable, and always improving. You are committed to practicing sharing your ideas because that's how you will continue to grow.

Try these for starters:

I think / believe _____ because _____.

One answer / solution might be _____.

My evidence / research suggests that _____.



Challenge ideas. **Respectfully.**

You are not afraid to challenge the ideas or opinions of others. You do so with respect and gratitude for their contributions, and you always challenge the idea not the person.

Try these for starters:

I disagree with _____ because _____ .

I understand your point about _____, but _____ .

I have a concern about _____ because _____ .

Ask thoughtful **questions**.

You know that all great discoveries start with great questions. You are curious to explore new ways of thinking. You ask your classmates for clarification when necessary.

Try these for starters:

I would like clarification. What did you mean by _____?

Have you considered _____ from the perspective of _____?

What evidence can you present for / against _____?



Build on **ideas**.

You understand the importance of working together in the discussion. You try to connect ideas. You build on the points of others, and appreciate when they do the same for you.

Try these for starters:

I want to build on your point about _____ .

I see a connection between _____ and _____ .

_____ is interesting because _____ .



Seek Truth.

You know that life is not black and white, and that complex problems rarely have simple solutions. That's why you know it is so important to strive for the truth, even though the perfect "truth" is often impossible to find. You consider many different perspectives while searching for the truth. You are willing to admit when your ideas or assumptions are faced with legitimate criticism, and expect the same honesty and humility from others

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