

Discussion Coordinators

Your group will work together to coordinate discussion using notes you work on together. You need not share these notes with the class, they are just used to help your group coordinate the discussion for that day.

What are we discussing?

The research for that day will often be a good starting point for discussion. But as our work continues, you may encourage more synthetic discussion that connects that day's research with previous discussions, questions, and topics.

How do we begin?

Two great ways to begin are:

- taking an inventory of questions that the seminar has by writing them up on the board (using shorthand notes) — just gathering these questions can often result in getting more clear on the relevant issues
- sharing a short presentation of what your group thinks the main issue in the research is, what the research is arguing or explaining, why and how it is relevant to the core questions in the class, clearing up any technical terms, etc. If you choose this path, be open to questions throughout.

What do we do from there?

You are guiding and coordinating a discussion, which primarily means keeping discussion going and making sure that interesting side discussions don't stray too far off track. To do this, you'll need some tools for when discussion stalls or when we lose focus on the core questions in the course.

Luckily, you'll have your **Discussion Questions Group** to rely on as well. Sometimes discussion ends because the topic has been addressed and it's simply time to move on. You can get things started again by asking members of the **Discussion Questions Group** to contribute a question, or go to the inventory on the board from the beginning of class.

You will also have your **Text Resources Group**. When you suspect that a puzzle or question might be best approached by examining the research, ask the class to look for places in the text that might help, and ask the members of the **Text Resources Group** to take the lead.

When does it end?

The end of class is a great time to wrap up by returning to the big picture and by reviewing what the class has learned.

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Extra Tips

- Know and use your peers' names.
- Rephrase questions — sometimes by altering them — and ask whether this rephrasing is what the person intended.
- When someone raises a question, ask them first what they think might be a good direction for answering the question.
- After a response or a question has been contributed, ask others to comment on it rather than commenting on it yourself.
- Leave sufficient wait time after asking a question before answering it yourself, repeating it, rephrasing it, or adding further information.
- Listen carefully and provide positive feedback.
- You can use ice-breakers and idea-generators such as
 - Solo free write: each person writes about the question or topic from the research for 5-10 minutes
 - Think-Pair-Share: peers to split into pairs for small group discussion about a posed questions to feed into group discussion.
 - Note: guided activities like this require an advance plan and clear questions and instructions.