# on the big table

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# Host a Community Conversation
## Teacher Guide

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*"Every good conversation starts with good listening"*

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# What is happening in your community?

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| **Kentucky Academic Standards** | **HS.C.I.Q.2** Generate supporting questions to develop knowledge, understanding and/or thinking relative to key civics concepts framed by compelling questions.<br>**HS.C.I.CC.1** Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics. |
| **Staging the Question** | Students generate a list of potential topics related to the compelling question. |

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| **Formative Performance Task** | **Formative Performance Task** | **Formative Performance Task** |
| Compare the characteristics of a conversation and a debate. | Compare the different roles of participating in a community conversation and select which role you would like to play. | Construct an evidence-based claim, or series of claims, about how your role can encourage all voices to be heard. |
| **Featured Sources** | **Featured Sources** | **Featured Sources** |
| **Source A:** Excerpt from Bridges, *Education, Democracy, and Discussion*<br><br>**Source B:** Excerpt from Parker, *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life*<br><br>**Source C:** Excerpt from "Deliberation vs. Debate," Indiana University.<br><br>**Source D:** Excerpt from d'Alembert, "Conversation, discussion." | **Source A:** Description of different roles in a community conversation:<br><ul><li>Facilitator</li><li>Note-taker</li><li>Table participant</li><li>Presenter</li></ul> | **Source A:** Excerpt from Cain, *Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverted Kids* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Community Conversation** | **DISCUSS** Conduct the conversation in your classroom, school, or other public space. |
| | **UNDERSTAND** Document the issues discussed at your table conversation, identifying main ideas and themes, while also being thoughtful in documenting participants' perspectives fairly. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Taking Informed Action** | **ASSESS** Reflect upon the results of the conversation. Research one or multiple issues discussed and evaluate what is being done (or not being done) about the issue(s). |
| | **ACT** Contact a stakeholder about the issue, sharing the results of your conversation and research. |

## Hosting a Community Conversation Inquiry Description

What is a *community conversation?* Community conversations are opportunities for friends, neighbors, colleagues, classmates, and others to gather around a table and have a real conversation about issues important to them.

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

Provide an opportunity for students to model respectful and courageous conversation.

Deepen students' knowledge of local issues.

Explore ways to take action on causes they care about.

Enhance commitment to school, community, and peers.

Allow students to engage and learn together.

Source: Bluegrass Community Foundation

The purpose of this guide is to help walk students through the process of hosting and facilitating a community conversation, where participants discuss the present and future issues facing their communities. Through dialogue with their peers, students are fostering greater inclusion, belonging, and understanding within their classrooms, schools, and larger communities.

Using an inquiry structure, the Inquiry Design Model (IDM), this guide helps scaffold student in preparing for a conversation, addressing the conversation's compelling question: what issue do you care most about in your community? Through a series of supporting questions, students will organize and prepare themselves to facilitate equitable conversations at their schools or local organizations.

Through the course of the community conversation resources, students will employ the skills and dispositions of citizens committed to democratic discourse. Using the conversation to take action reinforces the value of learning from one another in a community conversation. Likewise, this resource provides pathways for students to use the conversation as a springboard for civic action. **In a recent global survey through the World Economic Forum (2017), they found that 55.9% of young people do not believe their views are considered before important decisions are taken.** By providing resources for taking action and connecting to local stakeholders, this resource helps develop students' civic agency and efficacy, providing an opportunity to apply civic learning and engage with local civic figures.

This community conversation inquiry structure reflects the inquiry practices of the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies* and *C3 Framework* to help teachers and students craft conversations, the following guide provides a framework based on the IDM's Taking Informed Action structure. Based on the Inquiry Design Model, Taking Informed Action occurs in three stages: *understand, assess*, and *act*. More information about steps to *take informed action* can be found here: How can I take informed action?

This resource was developed using resources from OTT2022, the CivicLex's On the Table resources, , the Global Human Project's Big Table, and other sources as noted.

## Teacher Modifications

These resources are designed for teachers to adapt and modify according to their students and classroom needs. In addition to outlining the steps of conducting a community conversation, optional exercises are provided as examples for helping students participate in conversations and civic action. See Teacher Procedures.

## Additional Resources

[Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)](), Teachinghistory.org

The SAC instructional model provides a structure to engage in a discussion, rather than debate, about a controversial topic. This structure can be applied to many different topics.

[Deliberation vs. Debate](), Indiana University, Center for the Study of Global Change

## Learning Standards & Instructional Framework

The following Kentucky Academic Standards (2019), FCPS Instructional Framework indicators, and FCPS Graduate Profile Success Skills are highlighted in this inquiry lesson:

| Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies | |
|---|---|
| I: Questioning | **HS.C.I.Q.1** Generate compelling questions to frame thinking, inquiry and/or understanding of key civics concepts. <br> **HS.C.I.Q.2** Generate supporting questions to develop knowledge, understanding and/or thinking relative to key civics concepts framed by compelling questions. |
| C: Roles and Responsibilities of a Citizen | **HS.C.RR.1** Evaluate the civic responsibilities of individuals within a society. <br> **HS.C.RR.2** Explain how active citizens can affect the lawmaking process locally, nationally and internationally. |
| G: Kentucky Geography | **HS.G.KGE.1** Explain how Kentuckians view sense of place differently based on cultural and environmental characteristics of varying regions of the state. |
| I: Using Evidence | **HS.C.I.UE.2 /**Gather information and evidence from credible sources representing a variety of perspectives relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics. |
| I: Communicating Conclusions | **HS.C.I.CC.2 /**Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics. <br> **HS.C.I.CC.1** Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics. |

| Fayette County Public Schools *Graduate Profile Success Skills* | |
|---|---|
| **Prepared and Resilient Learner** | • Demonstrates knowledge of content skills and standards <br> • Applies content knowledge to real world contexts and in interdisciplinary ways |
| **Globally and Culturally Competent Citizen** | • Explores community and global issues from the perspectives of those most impacted and creates actionable solutions <br> • Employs democratic processes to come to decisions and solutions |
| **Emerging Innovator** | • Employs a sense of curiosity and inquiry; seeks to learn <br> • Applies a design process (e.g. research, ideation, modeling, prototyping and testing) to create new solutions, products and processes |
| **Effective Communicator** | • Uses appropriate conventions and evidence to convey ideas clearly in writing, verbally, digitally and visually <br> • Adapts message to purpose and needs of the audience |

| Productive Collaborator | ● Works effectively with diverse groups to accomplish a common goal |
|---|---|
| | ● Actively listens to understand others' ideas and perspectives |

## Staging the Compelling Question

| Staging Question | What issues are facing your community? |
|---|---|
| Featured Resources | Issue prompts and resources |
| | ● On the Table 2022 |
| | ● Dimensions of Civic Learning |
| | ● Global Human Project, The Big Table: Louisville Conversation Card topics |
| | ● CivicLex Issue Hub |
| | ● Findings from the World Economic Forum (2017) survey |

In staging the inquiry, teachers can have students generate an initial list of possible topics or ideas related to the conversation's central questions, modified here for students: what issues are facing your community?

To help structure students' staging discussion, teachers may choose to use one of the provided resources. Selection should be based upon which of the resources would best support students' discussions. Each of the resources is described below.

**ON THE TABLE 2022 QUESTIONS**   These questions are guiding conversations for On the Table 2022. (See Box 1).

| ON THE TABLE 2022 | BOX 1 |
|---|---|

- Do you like living in your neighborhood? What would make your neighborhood a better place to live?
- Do you think protecting the environment should be a high priority in Lexington? What do you think should be done to protect the environment in Lexington?
- Do you think Lexington is a place where everyone can succeed financially? What do you think would help make Lexington a place where everyone can have financial success?
- Over the past 50 years, Lexington has been designed mostly for cars. How important do you think it is for Lexington to prioritize other transportation options like walking, biking, and public transit vs prioritizing cars over the next 20 years? What do you think should be done to improve transportation in Lexington?
- Lexington is growing, and over the next 20 years, new developments could be built downtown, along major roads, in existing neighborhoods, and on farmland. Do you think growth in Lexington is a good thing? Where do you think new growth should happen in Lexington and what should it look like?
- Finally, think about Lexington as a whole. Do you like living or spending time in Lexington? What do you think would make Lexington a better place for you to live or spend time in?

**DIMENSIONS OF CIVIC LEARNING**   These six dimensions of civic learning reflect different outcomes civic education is building towards, developed for the *Be a Citizen* initiative. (See Box 2).

| DIMENSIONS OF CIVIC LEARNING TOPICS | BOX 2 |
|---|---|

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**KNOWLEDGE BUILDING**  What do you wish you knew more about in your community?  What do you wish more people knew about your community?

**FAIRNESS BUILDING**  Do you think all people are treated fairly in your community? Why/why not?

**COMMUNITY BUILDING**  Do you think all people feel like they belong in the community? Why/why not?

**CARE BUILDING**  Does the community care about and take care of one another? How so? Or why not?

**FREEDOM BUILDING**  Are community members treated fairly by elected officials and/or police officers? Why/why not?

**DEMOCRACY BUILDING**  Do you feel you are listened to in your community? Is your community heard in your city/state?

**GLOBAL HUMAN PROJECT, THE BIG TABLE: LOUISVILLE CONVERSATION CARDS**  These cards were created after hosting community conversations in Louisville, KY and, likewise, wanting to continue the conversations throughout the year. A selection of the Louisville-specific card topics are included here. (See Box 3).

| GLOBAL HUMAN PROJECT, THE BIG TABLE: LOUISVILLE CONVERSATION CARD TOPICS | BOX 3 |
|---|---|

- Equal rights
- Home ownership
- Reparations
- Vacant properties
- Health equity
- Poverty
- Citizen and police relations
- Nonprofit collaboration
- Education
- Public art
- "Welcoming city"
- Redlining
- Homelessness
- Conversations and change
- Cross race conversations
- Segregation
- Resiliency
- Compassion

**CIVIC LEX ISSUE HUB**  [CivicLex](#) is a Lexington, KY non-profit "started around an expressed and significant need for information about issues that are impacting Lexington, and education about how local government works." The CivicLex website includes an ["Issue Hub,"](#) where a series of community issues and associated resources are provided. Teachers may select any of the following issue categories to frame conversations and, likewise, use the CivicLex resources to support student work. Structuring student work around one of these categories can help structure their civic action task. In particular, students may share their research with CivicLex to contribute to their Issue Hub. Below are sample questions. Teachers are encouraged to substitute them with their own and/or have students generate questions. (See Box 4)

| CIVIC LEX ISSUE HUB | BOX 4 |
|---|---|

**AGRICULTURE & FOOD**  Do people in your neighborhood/town have access to enough healthy food?

**ARTS & CULTURE**  What kind of arts/culture do you see in your community? What kinds of arts and/or community events should the city invest in?

**COMMUNITY DESIGN**  What is changing in your neighborhood? How is it growing or evolving?

**DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING**  Does the community care about and take care of one another? How so? Or why not?

**ECONOMIC & WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT**  What kind of jobs are in your community? What kind of jobs are wanted? What kind are needed? Do the opportunities reflect your career interests?

**EDUCATION**  How do you feel your education is preparing you for your life in college, career, and civic life? What opportunities do you have? What opportunities do you need?

**ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY**  What environmental questions are facing your community? Are some groups affected more than others?

**GENERAL GOVERNANCE**  Do you feel you are listened to by local leaders? Why or why not?

**IMMIGRATION**  Is your town welcoming? Why or why not?

**PUBLIC HEALTH**  What health issues do people in your community face? Do they have access to healthcare? What is needed for more people to have access?

**PUBLIC SAFETY**  Do people feel safe in your community? How would you describe your community's relationship with law enforcement?

**TRANSPORTATION**  Does public transportation adequately address your community's needs? Why or why not?

**FINDINGS FROM THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, GLOBAL SHAPERS SURVEY (2017)**  Over 30,000 young people from 186 countries participated in this survey. Findings from the survey revolved around five primary themes: global economic outlook, governance and civic engagement, technology and innovation, values and society, and business and workplace. Teachers should note that this survey as a perceptible economic focus, rather than a more holistic assessment of students' concerns, as may be reflected in the other resources provided here. In this regard, teachers are encouraged to allow students space to critique the survey considering their own lived experiences. (See Box 5)

| FINDINGS FROM THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, GLOBAL SHAPERS SURVEY (2017) | BOX 5 |
|---|---|

**GLOBAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**  Young people think climate change and the destruction of nature is the most critical issue facing the world.

**GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**  Young people think governments need to favor start-up ecosystems and entrepreneurship to empower their youth.

**TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**  Young people think technology is creating more jobs than it is destroying.

**VALUES AND SOCIETY**  Young people identify as humans (citizens of the world) and want equality for all citizens.

**BUSINESS AND WORKPLACE**  Young people want to contribute to the vision and strategy of their future workplaces.

## Research-Based Conversation: Supplemental Exercises

Hosting in a community conversation requires students and teachers engage in reflective practices to consider the topics around which they will structure the conversations.  The exercises below support students' in conducting research to become more informed on the issues facing their communities.

**SELECTING A TOPIC**  Teachers may provide guidance as to the conversations' topics, including those listed above. However, if the topic will be generated by students, care must be given to the selection process. To help scaffold students' thinking, they can complete a graphic organizer that asks for a possible topic, the importance of the topic, and why they chose it. The graphic organizer has space for multiple topics, allowing students to compare different options. Teachers are encouraged to add additional questions or parameters for using the graphic organizer. (See Appendix A for Topic Selection Handout).

**UNDERSTAND THE TOPIC**  If the conversation is to be informed and/or research-based, students should have some familiarity with different perspectives on the issue. Reflecting the *understand* portion of a Taking Informed Action exercise, these questions were designed to help students understand different facets of the topic in order

to prepare them for the subsequent supporting questions. Students will answer questions to help them understand the chosen topic of the oral history inquiry. Though possible questions are provided below, students should be given ample time to ask their own questions to supplement those provided. (See Box 6). Likewise, teachers are encouraged to add content-specific questions to the question series. A sample graphic organizer is included. (See Appendix B).

| UNDERSTAND QUESTION SERIES | BOX 6 |
|---|---|

What do I need to know?  /  What do others need to know?
- What is the topic?
  - Do I want to explore an abstract idea or more concrete event/person?
- Why is it important?
- Who is affected?  (See stakeholders flowchart on the How can I take informed action? document)
  - How are different stakeholders affected?
  - How are people affected differently?
- What caused the event/idea/issue/topic?
- What resulted from the event/idea/issue/topic?
- How does it impact people of the past? People today?
  - Does it impact the same people? Why?/How

| Supporting Question 1 | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting Question** | What is a conversation? |
| **Formative Performance Task** | Compare the characteristics of a conversation, deliberation, and a debate. |
| **Featured Sources** | **Source A** David Bridges, *Education, Democracy, and Discussion,* 1979, p. 50 <br> **Source B** Walter Parker, *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life*, 2003, p. 128. <br> **Source C** *Deliberation for Global Perspective in Teaching and Learning*, "Deliberation vs. Debate." <br> **Source D** d'Alembert, Jean-Baptiste le Rond. "Conversation, discussion." |

## Supporting Question 1

To complete this step in preparation of a conversation, students will address the supporting question— "What is a conversation? By answering the question, students will consider the purpose, outcome, and structure needed to have a conversation with others.

## Formative Performance Task

To unwrap the meaning of a conversation, students will compare the characteristics of a conversation/discussion, deliberation, and debate. This task may take the form of a T-chart or other graphic organizer. A sample graphic organizer is included in the appendix, tasking students to organize information about the different communication styles in terms of their purpose, structure, and desired outcome. (See Appendix C)

## Featured Sources

The featured sources are excerpts to help explain the different purposes, structures, and outcomes of different communication styles. Students may also conduct independent research to see other perspectives about how to define these terms. Just as in any research opportunity, teachers should review source analysis procedures and/or expectations regarding sourcework, reflecting digital literacy.

**FEATURED SOURCE A**   David Bridges, *Education, Democracy, and Discussion,* 1979, p.50

"The distinctive and peculiar contribution which discussion has to play in the development of one's knowledge or understanding...is to set alongside one perception of the matter under discussion the several perceptions of other participants...challenging our own view of things with those of others.

**FEATURED SOURCE B**   Walter Parker, *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life*, 2003, p. 128.

"Discussion results in what could be called shared understanding of the object of discussion by building into that understanding the interpretations and life experiences of other discussants."

**FEATURED SOURCE C**   *Deliberation for Global Perspective in Teaching and Learning*, "Deliberation vs. Debate," Indiana University. Originally accessed here.

Access the handout here or here.

**FEATURED SOURCE D**   d'Alembert, Jean-Baptiste le Rond. "Conversation, discussion." *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project.* Translated by Malcolm Eden. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2008.

- *For the purpose of students' understanding, we use the terms conversation and discussion interchangeably. However, if teachers would like to have students ponder the difference, we encourage they use this source.*

Conversation, discussion; these two words generally indicate a mutual exchange between two or more people; with this difference, that *conversation* is commonly used for all talk between two individuals, whereas *discussion* is for talk concerning a precise subject. ...

The word *discussion* is also used when the talk concerns an important subject. It is said, for instance, that two kings have talks or a *discussion* concerning the way for them to make peace. …

When a number of people, especially more than two, gather and speak together informally, we say they are having a *conversation* and not a *discussion*.

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| Supporting Question 2 | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting Question** | What role will I play in the conversation? |
| **Formative Performance Task** | Compare the different roles of participating in a community conversation and select which role you would like to play. |
| **Featured Sources** | **Source A**  Description of different roles: facilitator, note-taker, table participant, presenter. |

## Supporting Question 2

For the second supporting question—"What role will I play in the conversation?"—students will reflect upon the different roles individuals play within a structured conversation. This step connects to the previous task, where students considered the purpose, structure, and desired outcomes of a conversation. By comparing the different roles and responsibilities, students are able to connect the structure of conversations to the individuals involved, as well as the role they want to play.

## Formative Performance Task

The formative performance task asks students to compare the different roles of participating in a community conversation and select the role they would like to play. This task can take the form of a written assessment or as a classroom discussion. To deepen students' assessment of each role, teachers should ask questions about the characteristics and potential challenges in each role.  These questions are included below (Box 7). A sample graphic organizer is included in the appendix to help students organize their information about the different roles, if desired. (See Appendix D)

| CONVERSATION ROLES: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS | BOX 7 |
|---|---|
| **ACTIONS**   What tasks or actions does each role perform? What should each role be careful *not* to do? **STRENGTHS**   What strengths or characteristics should each person possess? **CHALLENGES**   What challenges may each role encounter? How should these challenges be addressed? | |

## Featured Source

The featured source is a description of each role in a community conversation. This source was created using materials from OTT 2022,  the Global Human Project's Big Table, and Walter Parker's article (2010) "Listening to

Strangers." Teachers are encouraged to revise materials to best serve their students. Likewise, students may want to add additional information based upon their class discussion about the different roles. This source also serves as instructions for individuals participating in the community conversation. (See Appendix F)

| Supporting Question 3 | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting Question** | How will we encourage all voices to be heard? |
| **Formative Performance Task** | Construct an evidence-based claim, or series of claims, about how your role can encourage participation. |
| **Featured Sources** | *Sources from previous supporting questions.*<br>Susan Cain, *Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverted Kids*, 2017. Excerpt. |

## Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—"How will we encourage all voices to be heard?"—students deepen their understanding of the purpose of a community conversation, as well as the ways in which individuals and the class can support participation from everyone at the table. This question can also be interpreted as whose voices should be brought to the table, allowing students to consider growing conversations beyond their particular classroom.

## Formative Performance Task

This task helps support the conversation, as well as how students reflect upon the conversation's results. Students deepen their understanding of the role and responsibilities of different participants by reflecting upon what they can do to encourage all voices to participate. Likewise, considering the importance of different voices contextualizes the results, positioning students to consider how their voices were one of many contributing to a larger picture.

To scaffold students' work, teachers may choose to provide sentence starters. (See Box 8) Using sentence starters should result in claims reflecting actionable steps students can take to foster inclusive dialogue at their tables.

| SAMPLE CLAIM SENTENCE STARTERS | BOX 8 |
|---|---|
| **FACILITATOR**  The facilitator can encourage all voices to participate by:<br>**PARTICIPANT**  Each participant can encourage all voices to participate by:<br>**NOTE-TAKER**  The note-taker can ensure all voices are heard by:<br>**PRESENTER**  The presenter can ensure all voices are heard by: | |

## Featured Source

In addition to the sources from the previous supporting questions, the featured source are two excerpts from Susan Cain's book on introversion and extroversion, *Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverted Kids.* Teachers are encouraged to modify the excerpts or have students read longer sections from the book. The first excerpt considers instructional techniques for supporting student processing time during discussions. The second excerpt discusses

some reasons why individuals might feel uncomfortable participating in class discussions.

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**FEATURED SOURCE A**   Susan Cain, *Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverted Kids*, 2017.

**EXCERPT 1**

Group discussion in class makes sense for a few reasons. It allows students to hear others' ideas, and it reveals to teachers whether students are doing their work and whether they find it challenging. A strong class discussion can be a great way to keep students engage with the material. But they key word is engaged. A quiet student who says little to nothing could be just as engaged as an outgoing one who tosses out responses effortlessly.

A research named Mary Budd Rowe once studied how long teachers wait between asking a question and calling on a student who has raised his or her hand. She made video recordings of classroom discussions, studied the results, and found that teachers wait, on average, about one second before calling on someone. One second!

Some educators are trying to improve class discussions by introducing a concept called "think time," or as Rowe called it, "wait time." It goes like this: After the teacher asks a question, he or she allows students a silent minute or two to think before continuing the discussion.

A similar technique is "Think/Pair/Share," in which students first sit quietly and think, then express their ideas to one peer or to a small group. Only then do they return to a whole-class discussion. This is a way to slowly expand your audience and ease you into feeling comfortable sharing. It also allows you time to reflect and to develop your thoughts. (p. 37-8)

**EXCERPT 2**

If you're  a reluctant class participator, it may be helpful to understand *why* you feel so much discomfort speaking in class. This knowledge can make it easier to develop strategies...for sharing yoru ideas on your own terms.

Why does speaking up feel so unnatural? Here are a few of the common reasons we've heard:
 I don't want to be wrong.
 I don't want to say something meaningless.
 I'm too busy listening to talk.
 I don't have enough time to think up a response.
 I'm afraid I'll get tongue-tied once I open my mouth.
 I just hate having all those eyes on me. I've never lied to be the center of attention.

Some of these comments have to do with social anxiety—the fear of doing the wrong thing and feeling embarrassed in a social situation. Social anxiety is nothing to be ashamed of … When social anxiety gets the better of you, just know that you're not alone, and give yourself small little pushes through your fear.

| Community Conversation | |
|---|---|
| **Discuss** | Conduct the conversation in your classroom, school, or other public space. |
| **Understand** | Document the issues discussed at your table conversation, identifying main ideas and themes. |

## Conduct the Conversation

Using the resources provided, conduct a conversation in your classroom, school, or other public space. The note-taker (and/or others) should document the issues discussed at the table conversation, identifying main ideas and themes, while also being thoughtful in documenting participants' perspectives fairly.

The main role of the teacher is to ensure that students' conversations are staying on topic, students are respecting one another (per the conversation role guidelines), and all students are able to participate. Flexibility is key! Though conversation starters are provided, the most important outcome of the conversation is that students are (generally) staying on topic and fostering belonging. See teacher guide and OTT Hosts page for more information.

| Taking Informed Action | |
|---|---|
| **ASSESS** | Reflect upon the results of the conversation. Research one or multiple issues discussed and evaluate what is being done (or not being done) about the issue(s). |
| **ACT** | Contact a stakeholder about the issue, sharing the results of your conversation and research. |

## Taking Informed Action

At this point, students have examined the purpose of a community conversation, as well as conducted their conversation with others. Students will *take informed action* by reflecting upon the conversation, conducting research to better understand the topic, then contacting a stakeholder to share the results of the conversation and research.

NOTE: This portion can build upon the information shared by the presenter. The presenters' role is to share with other tables the results of the discussion and/or a stakeholder if one is present. Developing a *taking informed action* exercise allows *all* students to build upon the conversation and take action.

**ASSESS**   In order to process the conversation and prepare for a civic action task, teachers should provide students space to reflect upon the conversation and its results. After reflection, students should research one or multiple issues discussed and evaluate what is being done (or not being done) about the issue(s). For initial reflections, teachers may use one or several of the post-conversation reflection prompts (Box 9).  To support students' research and organization of evidence, teachers can provide a graphic organizer that asks students to assess what is being done and what else is needed to address the issue (Appendix E). Depending on the chosen topic, students can refer back to their resources for the staging task, where they identified important topics/issues.

| POST-CONVERSATION REFLECTION PROMPTS | BOX 9 |
|---|---|
| How did it feel to participate in the conversation?<br>What did the conversation make you think about? If there are ideas you did not have a chance to share during the conversation, share them here.<br>Would you want to participate in a conversation like that again? Explain.<br>If you had to choose one issue that was discussed in your conversation to address, what would it be and why?<br>What actions could the class or group take to address this issue?<br>What can you commit to do (big or small) in the next three to six months to take action on the issues discussed at your table? (city, community, neighborhood, school, state) | |

**ACT**   After assessing the issue, determining what is being done about the issue, students can take action by contacting a stakeholder to share the results of the conversation, their research, and suggestions for addressing the issue.  Students can use the Civic Action Project Guide (p. 7-11) to plan who and how to share their work.

## SELECTING A TOPIC

*Instructions: Create a list of issues/problems that are of interest to you. Choose the one you want to focus on for your project.*

| WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO ME? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **TOPIC** | **IMPORTANCE** | **WHY YOU CHOSE IT** |
| *Example:* <br><br> *Making sure that everyone can have healthy foods* | *It is important that everyone can have healthy food. You need healthy foods to have a healthy body. If healthy foods are too expensive, then people could be unhealthy. They could get sick more often.* | *This is important to me because I want everyone to be healthy. I want kids to be able to be healthy because they are still growing.* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## UNDERSTAND: COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

*Instructions: Using the graphic organizer, create a list of things people should know about your topic. Each box may contain multiple items.*

| WHAT DO PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW? | |
|---|---|
| **1. What is the topic?** | **2. Who is affected / involved? How?** |
| | |
| **3. What was the cause?** | **4. What resulted?** |
| | |

## COMPARING COMMUNICATION

*Instructions: Using the graphic organizer, compare the characteristics of discussions/conversations, deliberations, and debates. Though some characteristics may fit in different categories, use the following definitions to guide your organization: Purpose: the reason for doing something or what will be learned; Structure: the way in which individuals interact with one another; Outcome: the end result or goal. Each box may contain multiple items.*

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| WHAT IS A CONVERSATION? | | |
|---|---|---|
| | CONVERSATION/DISCUSSION | DELIBERATION | DEBATE |
| PURPOSE | | | |
| STRUCTURE | | | |
| OUTCOME | | | |

## ROLES IN A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

APPENDIX D

*Instructions: Using the graphic organizer, describe the different roles within a structured conversation. Each box may contain multiple items.*

| WHAT ROLE WILL I PLAY IN THE CONVERSATION? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FACILITATOR | NOTE-TAKER | PRESENTER | PARTICIPANT |

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| What tasks or actions does each role perform? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| What strengths or characteristics should each person possess? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| What challenges may each role encounter? How should these challenges be addressed? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

## ASSESS: TAKING INFORMED ACTION

*Instructions: Using the graphic organizer, assess the different ways in which people can address the issue. Note: considering "who else can help" has students begin to consider stakeholders to whom they may contact on behalf of their issue, such as a political representative. Each box may contain multiple items.*

| WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT MY ISSUE? | |
|---|---|
| **What is needed to help?** | **What are people doing about the issue / problem?** |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| **What struggles / challenges can occur when addressing the issue?** | **Who else can help?** |
| | |

# PARTICIPANTS

At the beginning of the conversation, **all participants should share** their name, neighborhood, and what brought them to the table (in one sentence).

## WHAT DO YOU **NEED TO DO**?

- **Share** your experiences.
- **Encourage** everyone to equally participate.
- Support **inclusive** and **diverse voices**.
- Keep **phones and tablets in pockets** or purses during the conversation.
- If you don't understand something, **ask** for clarification.

**PARTICIPATE**

[pahr-**tis**-*uh*-peyt]     *verb*

to take or have a part or share, with others

partake

share

Source: dictionary.com

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## WHAT KIND OF **ENVIRONMENT** SHOULD YOU HELP CREATE?

- Commit to creating a **safe/safer space** while recognizing it is impossible to guarantee absolute emotional safety for this conversation.
- **Do not dominate** the conversation.
- Support **inclusive** and **diverse voices**.
  - Remember that individuals from marginalized communities frequently assume greater risk and responsibility in conversations about discrimination.
- Practice reciprocity, humility, and caution
  - *Reciprocity*: exchange ideas for mutual benefit; listen to the speaker and acknowledge that the speaker is the expert on their own experiences
  - *Humility*: everyone's understandings are incomplete; by listening to one another we can learn
  - *Caution*: engage carefully so you do not dismiss or deny the experiences of others

## HOW SHOULD YOU **LISTEN**?

- Listen with **compassion** and an **open mind**.
- Model **active listening** skills.
  - Be attentive.
  - Show interest.
  - Don't interrupt.
- Be **respectful** in both verbal and body language.
- **Avoid dismissing** any person's comments.
- Ensure that everyone has **equal space** to share insights.
  - If someone has not spoken, **encourage** (but do not force) them to share.

## WHAT OTHER **RULES** OR **GUIDELINES** SHOULD PARTICIPANTS HAVE?

*Individually or as a class, determine if there are any additional rules or guidelines you would like to have for your conversations.  These rules/guidelines can add to, or elaborate upon, the guidelines above.*

_____

# FACILITATORS

In addition to the rules and guidelines for participants (above), facilitators need to consider the following questions.

## WHAT DO YOU **NEED TO DO**?

- Use the conversation starters to **guide** the conversation.
- Be a **participating member** of the group.
- At the end of the conversation, allow enough time for groups to begin to think about and **discuss actions** they could take to address some of the issues raised during discussions.

**FACILITATE**

[f*uh*-**sil**-i-teyt]          *verb*

to make easier or less difficult; help forward (an action, a process, etc.)

to assist the progress of (a person)

Source: dictionary.com

## HOW SHOULD YOU **STRUCTURE** THE CONVERSATION?

- Keep the group **focused** and **on task**.
  - *You do not need to answer every question*. However, you want to foster a **productive conversation**.

- **Avoid micromanaging** the conversation.
- **Avoid dismissing** any person's comments.
- Make sure **everyone can participate** and has **time to talk**.
- Make sure **no single student is dominating** the conversation.

## HOW WILL YOU **SUPPORT** THE CONVERSATION?
- Create a friendly and welcoming environment.
- Model **active listening** skills.
- **Intervene** if arguments arise or unproductive debate arises, but also allow enough space for discomfort.

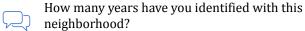## WHAT OTHER **RULES** OR **GUIDELINES** SHOULD <u>FACILITATORS</u> HAVE?

*Individually or as a class, determine if there are any additional rules or guidelines you would like to have for your conversations.  These rules/guidelines can add to, or elaborate upon, the guidelines above.*

_____

_____

_____

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

| | |
|---|---|
| 💬 What neighborhood/community do you live in? | 💬 What negative changes are you seeing in your neighborhood? |
| 💬 How many years have you identified with this neighborhood? | 💬 What do you think could be done to make your neighborhood better? |
| 💬 What positive changes are you seeing in your neighborhood? | |

# NOTE-TAKER

In addition to the rules and guidelines for participants (above), note-takers need to consider the following questions.

## WHAT DO YOU **NEED TO DO**?
- **Actively take notes** on the conversation.
- **Summarize** the main points that arise.
- **Participate** in the discussion.

## HOW WILL YOU CAPTURE THE **WHOLE CONVERSATION**?
- Share the **conversation as a whole**, rather than just the ideas you prefer.
  - *You will not be able to write down every word*.
  - Be mindful of what you do write down.
- **Avoid dismissing** any person's comments.
- Practice **compassion** and have an open mind.
- **Be respectful** and **mindful of others** in both verbal and body language.
  - Remember that individuals from marginalized communities frequently assume greater risk and

**NOTE**
[noht]    *noun*

a brief record of something written down to assist the memory or for future reference

a record or outline of one's impressions of something

a brief written or printed statement giving particulars or information

Source: dictionary.com

responsibility in conversations about discrimination.

## WHAT OTHER **RULES** OR **GUIDELINES** SHOULD <u>NOTE-TAKERS</u> HAVE?

*Individually or as a class, determine if there are any additional rules or guidelines you would like to have for your conversations.  These rules/guidelines can add to, or elaborate upon, the guidelines above.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

# NOTES

*Use this page for ideas you want to share from your table.*

**CONVERSATION NOTES:**

_____

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_____

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_____

_____

_____

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_____

**WHAT ARE YOUR GROUP'S BIG IDEAS:**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**WHAT ARE YOUR GROUP'S BIG QUESTIONS:**

_____

_____

_____

# PRESENTER

In addition to the rules and guidelines for participants (above), presenters need to consider the following questions.

## WHAT DO YOU **NEED TO DO**?

- **Summarize** the main points of the conversation using your experience in the group and the notes.
- **Share** the conversation with a stakeholder (teacher, school administrator, local representative, organization) or the larger group.

## HOW WILL YOU PRESENT THE **CONVERSATION**?

- Share the **conversation as a whole**, not just the ideas you prefer.
- Commit to maintaining a safe space.
    - Do not single out or criticize others.
- **Avoid dismissing** any person's comments.
- Practice **compassion** and have an open mind.
- **Be respectful** and **mindful of others** in both verbal and body language.
    - Remember that individuals from marginalized communities frequently assume greater risk and responsibility in conversations about discrimination.

**PRESENT**

[pri-zent]       *verb*

to bring to one's attention

to bring (something) before the public

to bring or introduce into the presence of someone especially of superior rank or status

Source: Merriam-Webster

## WHAT OTHER **RULES** OR **GUIDELINES** SHOULD <u>PRESENTERS</u> HAVE?

*Individually or as a class, determine if there are any additional rules or guidelines you would like to have for your conversations.  These rules/guidelines can add to, or elaborate upon, the guidelines above.*

_____

_____

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_____

# TEACHER PROCEDURES

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of this lesson is to **facilitate a group discussion** where students **generate ideas** about the **issues facing their communities** in order to develop an **action plan**, as well as fostering greater inclusion and belonging in communities across Kentucky.

## OBJECTIVES

- **Share experiences** about issues facing the community
- **Foster dialogue** in order to develop students' sense of belonging.
- **Collaborate** with peers in a civil discourse resulting in personal action steps for issues facing their communities

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Provide an opportunity for students to model respectful and courageous conversation.

Deepen students' knowledge of local issues.

Explore ways to take action on causes they care about.

Enhance commitment to school, community, and peers.

Allow students to engage and learn together.

Source: Bluegrass Community Foundation

## PREPARATION

- Seat students at tables that seat 8 to 10. If possible, mix up ages, grade levels, and schools.
- Get conversations going among youths who don't usually have a chance to talk.
- Try to have at least one adult at each table, but do not require that an adult act as the facilitator.
- Adults may act as participants with a student facilitating. However, the conversations should be driven by students.
- Prepare students to facilitate discussions prior to the event using the resources provided in this guide.

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Ask all participants to share their name, neighborhood, and what brought them to the table in one sentence.
- Encourage participants to keep phones and tablets in pockets or purses during the conversation.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Determine a note taker, a facilitator, presenter, and a timekeeper (see resources concerning selection and roles/responsibilities).

## HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Student facilitators should use the conversation starters to guide the conversation.
- Note takers should capture main ideas using the template provided in this toolkit.
- Timekeepers should monitor the clock.

## WRAPPING UP THE CONVERSATION

- Allow enough time for groups to begin to think about and discuss actions they could take to address some of the issues raised during discussions.
- Invite each student presenters to share the main ideas from his or her group discussion.
- Encourage students to share the conversation with others: on social media, in school or non-school groups, and at home.