



## Civil Discourse: What is Civil Discourse? (2)

### Common Core State Standards

#### **CCSS.SL.11-12.1**

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

#### **CCSS.SL.11-12.3**

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

#### **CCSS.SL.11-12.6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## Learning Objectives

- Create a foundation from which to communicate ideas while giving space for others
- Engage in conversations with people with whom we may disagree

## Essential Question

What is civil discourse? How can we voice our opinions in productive and civil discussions in public social media arenas like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram? What makes opinions worth sharing with the public?

## Media

Examples Choose a video (such as: [How to Have Better Political Conversations](#)) for this lesson on how to have courageous and civil conversations. Note: even if the video is dated and uses words or concepts that are no longer in fashion, it can still be used to have a dynamic and rich conversation.

## Warm-Up

Before starting, review norms from the 1st lesson in this unit or use that lesson to discuss and create norms before proceeding.

Some norm examples, although it is important to note that students should create these norms as a class.

- Respect other people's opinions.
- Try to understand other people's point of view; listen to understand not to respond.
- Participate, participate, participate.
- Respect all opinions.
- Be rational in my response; attack ideas, not people.

Create a Venn Diagram. On the left side write words YOU would use to describe you. On the right side write words OTHERS would use to describe you. Where do you think the two meet? Write those words in the middle.

Discuss with a partner. Why did you choose the words you chose for both sides? Why did you choose the words for the middle? How are the words similar and different? How do the words create a vivid picture of who you are? Are all the words you?

ASK: Why is it important that we start today's work with this activity?

## Part I: Developing definitions for discussion

On the board or screen should be the following:

**Cato Civil Discourse Statement:**

When I engage in discussions on controversial topics with other people, I will allow them to state their own views and treat them with respect and dignity, even if I disagree with them. I will share my own views and make my own case, but I will not attack others personally, insult them, call them names, or otherwise impugn their character.

**Ask students the following:**

Journal Prompt: What words do we need to define to be able to understand this statement fully? What does this statement mean to you?

As a class, discuss the statement focusing on what definitions the class comes up. This can be done by creating a word web on a large pieces of paper or using technology (like [Padlet](#)) to create class definitions of some of the key concepts such as controversial topics, own views, respect, dignity, disagree, insult, impugn. These class definitions will be used for the rest of the lessons and need to be easily accessed or displayed.

Use the answers the students give for the 2nd question (What does this statement mean to you?) to segue into listening and/or viewing the media.

## Part II: Viewing and Discussing the Media

### CLASS ACTIVITY 1

While viewing the media students can fill out a premade activity sheet ([like these](#)) or just take notes under the following topics:

- What you want to share with the class after viewing.
- What you like about the video.
- What you dislike about the video.

ASK: (to start the discussion) What do you want to discuss after viewing? What did you like/dislike?

To keep the conversation going questions can center around the standards, some examples include:

- What evidence did you find in the video to support your viewpoint? Cite several examples.
- What can you infer about the speaker and audience? Why do you think that?
- What questions do you still have? What questions do you have for the speaker and their claim?
- What is revealed about communication through this video?
- What is the speaker's motivation?
- How does the speaker craft their argument?

- What are some basic concepts you have to already know to understand this video?
- How might a different point of view alter the speaker's use of (literary term)?

Throughout the discussion you will need to have the norms displayed and remind them of the discussion the class had around civil discourse and what the statement means.

## Closing the Lesson

These can be used at the end of class to bring the topics of today's lessons together:

- Why is it important to know how we see ourselves and how others see us before we can practice civil discourse?
- Why is it important to practice having civil conversations?