



Introduction to Civil Discourse Notes

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These mini-lessons are designed to be coordinated with 3 sets of memory-circles lessons and slide decks, which are intended to be used over 3 days of instruction. Teachers can begin class by engaging students in note-taking or memory circles. The choice should be based on what works best for the flow of the classroom.

Note-taking can occur in many forms, and teachers need to establish which method of note-taking works best for their students to record and organize notes. For instance, some students may need to organize notes electronically on their learning management system (Google Classroom, Teams, or Canvas), and other students may work better with a physical notebook.

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the part of speech, related words, and synonyms for vocabulary related to civil discourse
- Record, revise, and edit notes in small groups to develop a student-friendly definition of civil discourse
- Apply principles of civil discourse to an informal whole-class discussion about quotations related to civil discourse

Essential Questions

- What is civil discourse, and how does it apply to this class?
- How can we share our opinions with our classmates?

Materials

- Civil Discourse slide decks (there are 3 total)
- Student notebooks or electronic devices

Learning Activities

PART ONE: NOTE-TAKING

- To begin, teachers will share definitions of civil discourse, rhetoric, and author's purpose to introduce the concepts.
- Then, students will be placed into small groups that have 6 members. In these groups, students will collaborate to record notes for 6 vocabulary words related to these terms in their notebooks.
- Before students begin working, remind them that they will need lots of space in the notebooks to add synonyms, related words, the part of speech, and a definition for each word. Tell them that they will determine synonyms, related words, parts of speech, and definitions for vocabulary words. The slides model a web format, but students may use any form of organization they wish.
- Begin by assigning 1 word to each student. If students are numbered 1–6, all students numbered 1 would work on the first vocabulary word, all students numbered 2 would work on the second word, and so on, until all 6 words are assigned. Students may work individually or with a partner to complete the analysis of their assigned word. Set a short time limit for the individual work because students can combine answers in the next step.
- Students then work with the rest of the members of their jigsaw group to complete the rest of the words.

PART TWO: APPLICATION

- Ask students to give a verbal definition of civil discourse based on the notes they took and the vocabulary words they analyzed.
- The last slide of each Introduction to Civil Discourse deck has quotations related to civil discourse. Tell students they are going to practice what they learned about civil discourse by responding to the quotations.
- Conduct an informal class discussion over the 2 quotations on the last slide of the Civil Discourse Vocabulary slide deck. Ask students how what they learned about civil discourse connects to the quotations.
- As an extension after the last day of notes, students can create a social media post, poster, or slide defining civil discourse for a group of peers. One option is for students to adapt the information from their civil discourse notes for a younger audience. Brainstorm with the class different ways to organize the information and incorporate visuals, such as steps, a flow chart, or a meme.

Closing

Students write an exit ticket to answer the essential questions: What is civil discourse, and how does it apply to this class?

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.b: Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4.d: Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).