



Memory Circles

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These mini-lessons are designed to be coordinated with 3 sets of civil discourse note-taking 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.

Learning Objectives

- Learn the AWARE framework for discussion and classmates' names
- Verbally express opinions in small groups and actively listen to peers' responses

Essential Questions

- How do place, others, and society contribute to our identity?
- What topics are important to the people in this classroom?
- How can we show respect for other people's ideas using the AWARE framework?

Part One: Introduce

STEP 1

- Place students into small groups that have 5 members. In these groups, students will engage in semi-formal academic conversations that will allow them to practice using the AWARE framework in discussions with peers.
- Then, introduce and set a purpose for the lesson.

SAY

- Using each other's names is how we show respect. We should correct our classmates (and teacher!) if our name is not pronounced correctly.

- I care about your ideas, so I'm going to take notes during your discussions so we can revisit the topics that interest you.

STEP 2

Share the day's objectives using the AWARE framework outlined in the table below.

| | Action | Learning target |
|-----------|---|--|
| Assert | State opinions. | Answer questions completely. |
| Wonder | Be open to other perspectives. | Learn about your classmates. |
| Accept | Understand reasons behind points of conflict. | Ask: Why might we prefer different things? |
| Respect | Embrace viewpoint diversity. | Recognize and honestly consider your peers' responses. |
| Establish | Set goals for the conversation. | Remember each other's names and maintain civility. |

Part Two: Engage

To begin the lesson, project the memory-circles slides. The memory-circles exercise introduces the unit topics and gives students an opportunity to participate in semi-formal academic conversation. Memory-circles slides include prompts and a timer for each question. However, teachers should say the question out loud and provide a hard copy of the questions to students. The questions are as follows:

- Memory Circles About Place
 - What's your name and your favorite city you've visited?
 - Share your name and the best vacation spot you've been to.
 - What's your name and a place you learned about recently?
 - Please tell us your name and a place you'd love to visit?
 - If you could visit a place in the past, where would you go?
- Memory Circles About Others
 - What's your name and the name of a friend who has made a difference in your life?
 - Please say your name and a person you're thankful for.
 - Share your name and a person who has taught you something important.
 - Please tell us your name and a person from history you find inspiring.

- Tell us your name and someone you look up to.
- Memory Circles About Society
 - What's your name and a social issue you care about?
 - Please share your name and a historical event that interests you.
 - What's your name and an invention that has changed society?
 - Please state your name and a global issue you wish more people knew about.
 - Please share your name and a change you'd like to see in society.

Facilitate small group discussions as needed; students often need to be reminded to use each other's names and state their own names when they answer.

CONSIDERATIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS

- *All students* can participate in civil discourse!
- Students with auditory processing difficulties may need a copy of the questions in front of them.
- Students can make name tents before the discussion so that it is easier for peers to address them by name.
- English as a second language students, special education students, and students with processing difficulties should have an extra 1–2 minutes to think (for each question) before starting the timer for discussion.
- Some students need time to write light notes before they are comfortable sharing.
- Slide decks like PowerPoint allow you to present with captions in other languages for multilingual learners.
- Questions about place may be difficult for students with limited experience traveling.
- Questions about society are less personal for students and easier for them to answer.

Closing

Any of the following activities could be used to close the lesson.

- Students could reflect verbally or in writing what they have in common with their classmates.
- The teacher can share some of the topics overheard during memory circles. Students feel like their ideas are valued when the teacher writes them down.
- Consider finding TED Talks related to the topics addressed by the students for more practice with the AWARE framework in future lessons.

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.6

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