

Make Virtual Group Work Accessible

If you are unable to join your group face to face, host a virtual meet up by web conferencing. If you are unable to meet at the same time, here are other options to collaborate as a group:

- group chat
- discussion board
- shared drive documents
- email

Set up a plan with times and dates to meet. Determine which of the steps you will work on together as a team, and which you will each complete individually.

Work with a file-sharing software that enables your team to create a folder and share work, or work on a document simultaneously. If you are not able to work at the same time, be sure to use a software that permits comments to be left on the document. This is a great resource for making peer revisions and sharing constructive feedback.

Purpose

Write a response that evaluates a collaborative discussion.

Summary

In this assignment, you will have a discussion with at least two peers. Your discussion will be planned on a topic that all participants have read about and researched. You will then write an evaluation to reflect on your experiences with planning, speaking, and listening. You will complete the assignment by submitting your response.

Assignment instructions

Step 1: Work collaboratively to set discussion rules and guidelines.

- Meet with other participants before the discussion to develop a plan.
- Confirm that the team knows the topic and text(s) that will be the basis of the discussion.
- Set clear goals with the team that include deadlines for preparation, the schedule of the discussion, the length of the discussion, and the roles of each discussion member.
- Decide, with the aid of a teacher or other adult, how the role of the moderator will function.
- Determine the audience and the purpose of the discussion.
- Decide on the formality of the discussion and rules for consensus, vote-taking, and presentation of alternate viewpoints.

Step 2: Prepare your evidence.

Student Guide (continued)

- a) Read the text and research from additional sources so that you thoroughly understand the topic.
- b) Gather facts, examples, and anecdotes about the topic, making sure to cite your sources.
- c) Determine your viewpoint based on your opinion of the facts you have gathered.
- d) Take notes to organize your viewpoint with evidence that supports each main idea.
- e) Research definitions for any terms and concepts you plan to present during the discussion.

Step 3: Participate in a collaborative discussion.

- a) Come to the discussion prepared.
- b) Takes turns listening and speaking.
- c) Use notes from your research to present your viewpoint.
- d) Use evidence to support each point you make.
- e) Listen to questions raised by the moderator and other participants. Respond thoughtfully.
- f) Take notes as you listen. Reflect on points made, summarize perspectives, and build on ideas.
- g) Acknowledge where you agree and disagree with others, and, when you need to, justify your views based on the reasoning presented.
- h) Ask questions that require a response that uses evidence.
- i) Make sure that all positions and perspectives get a chance to be heard.
- j) Clarify, support, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- k) Consider different ways to think about the issue while still helping the group stay focused on the topic.
- l) Speak clearly, using formal language and an appropriate volume and rate of speech.
- m) Keep eye contact as you speak and listen.
- n) Use body language to show that you are engaged and interacting as part of a team.

Step 4: Reflect on the collaborative discussion.

- a) Think about how you acted as a speaker in presenting your views.
- b) Consider how well you listened and followed the ground rules of the discussion.
- c) Reflect on how other participants made their points and provided evidence.
- d) Take notes on your overall impressions of how effectively the group discussed the topic.

Step 5: Prepare a written response that evaluates the collaborative discussion.

- a) Using a word-processing program, write a two- to three-paragraph evaluation of the discussion.
- b) Include responses to these questions in your evaluation.
 - ☐ What did you do in advance to prepare for the discussion? How well prepared were you?
 - ☐ What rules were created for the discussion? Were they followed?
 - ☐ How well did you present your viewpoint?
 - ☐ How did your own background knowledge, experiences, values, or beliefs affect the way

Student Guide (continued)

- you presented your views? Explain.
- ☐ How successful were you at listening and responding to other group members?
 - ☐ How did you use evidence to explain and defend your views, including when someone disagreed with you?
 - ☐ In what ways did other participants use reasoning and evidence to make their points?
 - ☐ Were there any times when someone did not use evidence or the evidence did not match the viewpoint presented? Did a participant exaggerate or distort information? Explain.
 - ☐ Was there a time when someone's viewpoint differed from your own? What might have influenced his or her opposing viewpoint? Explain.
 - ☐ How did the group respond to the different perspectives of its members?
 - ☐ How was your language grammatically correct and appropriate to the topic, purpose, and audience? Give an example.
 - ☐ What kinds of hand gestures and facial expressions did you and other people use to match what was being said?
 - ☐ How did you use eye contact, the volume of your voice, or other means to connect with others during the discussion?
 - ☐ How well did the group solve problems and come to a consensus?
 - ☐ Overall, how effective was the discussion?

Step 6: Revise and submit your written response.

- a) Read over your response to make sure that you have answered each question completely.
- b) Revise, edit, and save your written response.
- c) Submit your response. Congratulations on completing your evaluation!