



HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION

Lesson Plan for Grades 4-12

Teacher Resource: Example of Chart Good v. Poor Conversation

What Makes a Conversation....	
Good?	Poor?
Active listening – listen fully before responding, seek to understand the other person’s point of view	Passive listening – lack of attention to what is being said, waiting for your turn to speak rather than hearing what is said
Respectful – treat other viewpoints or opinions with dignity, even in disagreement	Disrespectful – dismiss or mock other viewpoints or opinions
Evidence and Reasoning – use facts, logic, and examples to support ideas.	Anecdotal and Bias – rely on emotion, rumor, or personal attacks.
Curiosity – ask thoughtful questions and show genuine interest in other perspectives	Closed off – make assumptions; show no interest in understanding others
Goal – seek mutual understanding, fairness, and truth.	Goal – try to “win” or prove others “wrong”.
Creates civic connection by modeling the kind of dialogue essential in a democracy: open, honest, and respectful.	Undermines civic connection by fostering distrust and division in a community.
Speak calmly and kindly	Use sarcasm and insults or angry language
Stick to the topic and ideas being discussed	Bring up unrelated points or make it personal.