

Philosophical Chairs Discussion Handouts

Preparing for a REMOTE LEARNING Philosophical Chairs Discussion

Title of Text:

1a. Examine the entire text without stopping to determine what the text is about. Approach the text as if someone you really respected created it.

This text is about:

1b. Philosophical Chairs Controversial Prompt:

1c. Read, annotate and mark the text to identify the main ideas:

- Underline the main/most important points and comment on these points in the margins.
- Circle any points that you wonder about and comment on these points in the margins.

1d. Choosing Sides Chart:

Complete the chart using evidence from the text.

A. Supporting Evidence	B. Opposing Evidence	C. Wonderings

2. Circle your perspective on the prompt:

I agree

I disagree

I am undecided

Participating in a Philosophical Chairs Discussion

3. Relocate and Discuss: Move to the area of the classroom that aligns with your position on the prompt. (yes, no undecided). You will have 10 minutes to discuss the reasons and evidence with peers that share your perspective. Your goal is to engage with each other and the text to gain insight about your own point of view while finding a shared understanding of the topic. Add notes to your Choosing Sides Chart.

4. Listen, Learn & Persuade: You will now engage in a whole class discussion on the prompt. Using your evidence and notes, individually share your perspective on the prompt and attempt to persuade others to join your side. Continue to add notes to your Choosing Sides Chart.

- You should summarize the statements of the previous speaker before presenting your point of view.
- If you are undecided, you should ask questions to other students to clarify their position.
- You will be given opportunities to consider your perspective and determine whether or not you want to move to a different side on the prompt.

What caused you to switch perspectives or what was said that caused you to maintain your perspective?

Rules for Current and Controversial Issues Discussions

- Maintain respect for self, others, the conversation, and the topic.
- Refer to evidence to support ideas.
- Acknowledge what was previously said, use transitions to connect comments, ask clarifying questions.
- One person talks at a time.
- Focus on ideas, not personalities or people.
- Everyone should participate and encourage others to participate in the discussion.

5. After the Discussion Reflection

Did you ...	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	No
Contribute on topic comments, prompts, and evidence throughout the activity?				
Seek to understand alternative points of view, even when you did not agree?				
Deepen your understanding of the topic or change your perspective as a result of the discussion?				

- What did you learn about the topic from participating in the Philosophical Chairs activity?
- What was the most interesting or persuasive evidence? Why?
- What was the best thing you observed?
- What was the most challenging thing you heard?
- What additional questions do you have about this topic?
- How did you improve as a participant? Did you meet the goals you identified at the start of this preparation guide? Please explain.
- How did the class improve as participants? Did the class meet the goals identified at the start of the preparation guide? Please explain.