

Leading a Discussion

Before you watch

A

Discuss the questions with a partner and then share your answers with the class.

- What types of small group discussions do you participate in at work or at school? Choose or add from this list:
 - study groups
 - brainstorming meetings
 - event planning
 - work improvement
 - organizational meetings
- During discussions, do you prefer to talk a lot and offer your ideas, or do you like to listen most of the time and take notes about everyone else's ideas?
- How important are these qualities for a good discussion leader? Rank the qualities 1 (most important) -5 (least important).
 - ___ does most of the talking
 - ___ asks everyone for their opinion
 - ___ prepares questions to ask the group in advance
 - ___ comes to the discussion with solutions
 - ___ handles disagreements between participants well

Video

A

Watch the video and choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

- A good discussion leader's main job is ...
 - to get the group members to share ideas and find a solution.
 - to resolve conflicts and make a final decision for the group.
- At the beginning of the discussion, the leader should ...
 - outline possible solutions.
 - set objectives about what needs to be discussed.
- Small group discussions are more efficient when ...
 - there are rules and structure in place to give each member a chance to speak.
 - the participants with the best ideas have sufficient time to argue their points.
- A discussion leader can remain neutral in the discussion by ...
 - giving everyone equal time to speak and discussing all possible solutions.
 - letting anyone speak who wants to and deciding who is right when conflicts occur.

B

Match the beginnings of the sentences (1–5) with the endings (a–e) to complete the advice about leading a discussion.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ___ Ask each person in the group to speak by | a. deciding on the next steps the group should take. |
| 2. ___ End arguments by | b. calling on participants individually. |
| 3. ___ Evaluate solutions by | c. providing feedback on participants' ideas. |
| 4. ___ Review the ideas from time to time by | d. summarizing the main points. |
| 5. ___ Finalize ideas and reach a solution by | e. letting participants know they don't have to agree on everything. |

C

Complete the sentences.

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- What are your _____ on the plan so far?
- If I understand you _____, you're _____ you'd like to make a change.
- Let's _____ the ideas we have first, and then think of new ones.
- _____ we don't agree, let's _____ forward with the other details.
- Thanks for that _____. You _____ a good point.

Digital skills focus

A

Complete the tips for leading an online discussion. Choose the correct option.

- If you can't hear a participant, ask the participant to **mute** / **unmute** their microphone.
- If participants want to interrupt, they can **lower** / **raise** their virtual hand.
- Participants can respond to an idea by writing feedback **in the chat** / **on the screen**.
- At the beginning of the meeting, **share** / **display** your screen so everyone can see the objectives you want to accomplish.
- If participants need time to brainstorm ideas, make **chat rooms** / **breakout rooms** where they can have private conversations.

Language focus

A

Complete the conversation with the words in the box.

thoughts	step-by-step	summarize	analyzed	open-ended	call on
	feedback	equal time	remain neutral	resolve	

Erin: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to get your **1** _____ on ways to help people who are working from home. Ted, take us through the issues they're facing **2** _____.

Ted: Thanks, Erin. I have a long report, but let me **3** _____ the main point here. Employees are very productive, but they feel isolated. As we **4** _____ the problem, we realized they needed to connect more.

Erin: So, let me ask an **5** _____ question to start our discussion. How do we include our remote workers more? Sue, I hope you don't mind if I **6** _____ on you first.

Sue: No problem. I have about ten ideas I'd like **7** _____ on.

Erin: Well, let's start with one. I want to give **8** _____ to everyone.

Sue: We could have everyone at home attend a 9 a.m. online meeting with people in the office.

Ted: But some people are in different time zones.

Erin: Let's try to **9** _____ until we hear all the suggestions. We'll **10** _____ conflicts after everyone has a chance to speak.

B

Complete the collocations of verbs and nouns.

call on	follow	keep	move	remain
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1. _____ forward
2. _____ on track
3. _____ a process
4. _____ everyone individually
5. _____ neutral

C

Discuss in pairs or groups. Which statement is an example of language that a good discussion leader would use? Explain your choice.

1. Call on everyone individually
 - a. "Tom, you haven't said much during the discussion. Don't you have an opinion?"
 - b. "We haven't heard from you yet, Tom. I'd like to give you a chance to speak."
2. Give everyone equal time
 - a. "Excuse me, but you've been talking for 20 minutes. Other people would like to speak too."
 - b. "Everyone has ten minutes to present their idea. Your time is almost up, so can you summarize your main points?"
3. Give feedback
 - a. "You make a good point, but I wonder if you have considered any problems this might cause."
 - b. "I don't think your idea will work because it might cause problems."

Digital communicative task

A

Participate in a small group discussion to help remote employees and on-site employees work together.

- Before the meeting, decide how to structure the discussion and create a document to share on screen.

Objective:

By the end of the meeting _____

Structure:

Group discussion with ____ *minutes per person.*

Discuss _____

Open-ended questions:

- Conduct a few minutes of the discussion. Use the screen share feature to share the objective, the structure and the open-ended question. Call on each group member to speak.
- End the discussion with a summary of the ideas and next steps by the discussion leader.

After your discussion, listen to the feedback from students who observed your small group discussion.