



Classroom Contract for Civil Discourse: Rule and Expectations

The following are rules and expectations for holding a discussion about political issues. The goal of this contract is to make all participants feel comfortable in expressing their views. Those who do not follow these rules may be asked to leave the discussion. It is recommended that a pen and paper are nearby to write down questions and thoughts.

1. Listen to each person's opinions in their entirety before making a comment.
2. Keep an open mind.
3. Ask for elaboration if you feel you don't know enough about what was said.
4. Look for areas of agreement with the speaker.
5. Look for areas of disagreement so that you may address those after he/she is finished speaking.
6. Identify ways that you might compromise with the speaker if you don't agree with them.
7. Present your criticism positively. Refrain from using terms such as:
 - You're wrong.
 - That's stupid.
 - Who thinks like that?
 - Anyone who thinks that way is....Instead try:
 - I don't feel that way, can you explain your position?
 - How did you come to that conclusion?
8. Remember, we are all in this to make our country better.
9. If you don't know- ask. If there are terms or ideas you don't understand do some research to find answers to your questions.
10. Accept all ideas as possibilities and don't instantly dismiss them.

Student Signature

Teacher Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date