



## Feeling Words

Affectionate

Afraid

Agreeable

Alarmed

Amused

Angry

Annoyed

Anxious

Bored

Calm

Cheerful

Concerned

Confused

Contented

Courageous

Delighted

Devastated

Disappointed

Down

Eager

Ecstatic

Embarrassed

Energetic

Excited

Fantastic

Fearful

Focused

Friendly

Frightened

Frustrated

Fulfilled

Glum

Guilty

Happy

Hopeful

Hurt

Impatient

Inquisitive

Jealous

Loving

Miserable

Nervous

Optimistic

Overwhelmed

Peaceful

Pensive

Powerless

Proud

Quiet

Sad

Sassy

Scared

Sensitive

Shy

Tense

Thoughtful

Timid

Uncomfortable

Uneasy

Unhappy

Weird

Worried



Lesson 18.11: Perspectives in a Democracy

**Discuss**

**Debate**



**Discuss:** to talk about something with another person or group of people.

**Goal:** to share information, review options, and perhaps decide on an issue.

**Debate:** to argue about an issue.

**Goal:** to defend your perspective and win the argument.



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Match the correct situation with the goal.

## Goals

1. To discuss and come to agreement about an issue.
2. To discuss and share different perspectives.
3. To debate and convince another person your side is right.

## Situations

- A. Two neighbors don't agree about politics.
- B. People on a committee disagree about an event and need to plan it together.
- C. A lawyer is presenting a case in court, defending their client from being accused of stealing a car.



## Civil Discourse

To be **civil** is to be polite.  
**Discourse** is a discussion.

**Civil discourse** is polite discussion.

How do you have a conversation with someone about an issue when you know you disagree? You will be happier and build a stronger community when you speak politely with them and show respect. It takes a lot of practice to have a civil conversation when people disagree about something important, but here are some guidelines.

1. **Decide on the goal of the conversation.**

If you aim to convince the other person of your point of view, you are debating. Debate is a win-lose conversation. Aim instead for a discussion where your goal is **to learn about the other person's point of view**.

2. **Reflect on what you know and don't know about the issue.**

Is your information from good sources? Seek out information **against** your position and fact check everything. Don't engage in the conversation to convince someone else your point of view is right, but have the conversation in order to **teach yourself about the issue**. This is something you can control.

3. **Be careful of defensiveness.**

Defensiveness is when you feel like you have to protect your point of view. It's when you can't hear anything critical about it. See if you can figure out why you're feeling defensive. Instead of protecting your point of view, **turn it into curiosity about someone else's point of view**. Ask questions to help you understand and assume positive intentions in the conversation.

4. **Practice empathy in listening.**

Empathy is understanding how other people feel. **Listen to understand their point of view** rather than just waiting for your turn to reply. Ask open-ended questions like "Will you tell me more about ...?" or "What experiences have led you to that belief?"

**The more you practice these skills, the more they grow.**

**Remember to focus on what you have control over:  
your reactions, your beliefs, and your understanding.**



## Mediation

Mediation is when a neutral person talks with individuals having a conflict and tries to help them come to an agreement about a solution.

These are instructions for the mediator, or the person who is not on anyone's side and tries to help people having a disagreement. You want to help them settle their issue, but what do you say? Once they agree to talk with you, remind them that you are not on anyone's side and begin.

### 1. **Gather information.**

Collect information about what happened and how people are feeling. Try not to blame anyone. Ask open-ended questions like "What happened?" "Why did you ...?" "How did you feel when...?" Have people taking turns telling their side. If they interrupt each other, ask them not to and remind them they will have their own turn to talk.

### 2. **Say the problem.**

When both people have finished telling their side of the story, state the problem clearly. Make sure to include both perspectives and be factual and neutral. Ask if they both agree about the problem.

### 3. **Talk about solutions.**

Invite them to brainstorm ideas for solutions. Try to get as many ideas as possible. Don't worry about whether they are workable. Write them down if you don't think you'll remember them. Encourage different kinds of ideas. Avoid criticizing ideas during brainstorming.

### 4. **Find a workable solution.**

Look at the ideas together. Ask them what they think a solution that works for both people would look like. Think about the result of each idea. Will it help? Who will it help? Is it a win-win solution or does it benefit one person? Consider how possible solutions might be changed to make them acceptable.

### 5. **Make a plan.**

Ask for a decision and help people plan. List the workable ideas, ask participants for a decision. Help them plan how to make the decision happen. What will each person do? Write down the final solution and how it will happen.



## Summary of Scenarios

Situation	Side A	Side B	Educator Notes
1. The Zuri family and the Feder family live next to one another. The Feder family keeps chickens and one rooster.	The Zuri family is upset because the rooster makes noise at very early hours. Also, the chickens sometimes wander into their yard. They have two dogs who bark when the chickens are in the yard and disturb the household.	The Feder family keeps chickens to sell and eat eggs and to sell chicks, a business run by the teens in the family. The rooster is necessary for their business and they feel free-roam chickens are healthiest.	
2. The school board is recommending a new playground for the town park. At issue is whether the town should spend 15% more to make the playground sensory friendly for children who are on the spectrum.	Roberto is a teacher at the elementary school and several of his students are on the spectrum. He wants to spend the extra money on the sensory friendly playground to expand their opportunities for learning.	Dawn feels that the elementary school playground, which is somewhat sensory friendly, is enough for children on the spectrum. She does not want to spend the extra money and have her taxes increase.	
3. A warrant has been added to the town meeting agenda to see if the town will approve snow mobile trails running through the town forest.	Mateo supports the snow mobile trails. They will bring more people to the town and expand the town's winter offerings.	Kapil does not support the new trails. He is concerned about the environmental impact on wildlife and the land as well as noise levels.	



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Situation	Side A	Side B	Educator Notes
4. Mike and Tom are working on the 250th town birthday celebration committee together. The committee is behind schedule.	Tom says Mike is too bossy. Tom is happy to do the work needed but Mike isn't allowing him to have input.	Mike says he is doing all the work. They are behind schedule because Tom isn't helping enough.	
5. An Eagle Scout is building a town nature trail. The trail runs mostly through public land but through private property at two parts. One land owner has given permission for the trail, one has not.	The D'Harville family has given permission for the trail on their land. They like that the land will be used and want to encourage people to get out in nature. They request signs be put up to keep people on the trail.	The Howard family does not give permission for the trail. They paid for their land and would like it to stay private. They are concerned about dogs running over their property and about the public not respecting rules on their property.	
6. The town is deciding whether to move their half-day kindergarten to full-day. It has been proposed two years in a row but has failed. The budget for kindergarten would have to be increased 35%.	Some families without kids in the school feel that the town has always provided half-day kindergarten and it has been fine. At age five, children should not be in school full-time and the budget increase is too expensive.	The kindergarten teachers and young families say that the research is clear that full-day kindergarten is better for students' education. It is also easier for working families.	





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**Situation 1: The Zuri family and the Feder family live next to one another. The Feder family keeps chickens and one rooster.**

**Side A: The Zuri family is upset because the rooster makes noise at very early hours. Also, the chickens sometimes wander into their yard. They have two dogs who bark when the chickens are in the yard and disturb the household.**

**CUT HERE Situation 1 CUT HERE**

**Situation 1: The Zuri family and the Feder family live next to one another. The Feder family keeps chickens and one rooster.**

**Side B: The Feder family keeps chickens to sell and eat eggs and to sell chicks, a business run by the teens in the family. The rooster is necessary for their business and they feel free-roam chickens are healthiest.**



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**Situation 2:** The school board is recommending a new playground for the town park. At issue is whether the town should spend 15% more to make the playground sensory friendly for children who are on the spectrum.

**Side A:** Roberto is a teacher at the elementary school and several of his students are on the spectrum. He wants to spend the extra money on the sensory friendly playground to expand their opportunities for learning.

CUT HERE Situation 2 CUT HERE

**Situation 2:** The school board is recommending a new playground for the town park. At issue is whether the town should spend 15% more to make the playground sensory friendly for children who are on the spectrum.

**Side B:** Dawn feels that the elementary school playground, which is somewhat sensory friendly, is enough for children on the spectrum. She does not want to spend the extra money and have her taxes increase.



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**Situation 3: A warrant has been added to the town meeting agenda to see if the town will approve snow mobile trails running through the town forest.**

**Side A: Kapil does not support the new trails. He is concerned about the environmental impact on wildlife and the land as well as noise levels.**

**CUT HERE Situation 3 CUT HERE**

**Situation 3: A warrant has been added to the town meeting agenda to see if the town will approve snow mobile trails running through the town forest.**

**Side B: Emilia supports the snow mobile trails. They will bring more people to the town and expand the town's winter offerings.**



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**Situation 4: Mike and Tom are working on the 250th town birthday celebration committee together. The committee is behind schedule.**

**Side A: Tom says Mike is too bossy. Tom is happy to do the work needed but Mike isn't allowing him to have input.**

**CUT HERE Situation 4 CUT HERE**

**Situation 4: Mike and Tom are working on the 250th town birthday celebration committee together. The committee is behind schedule.**

**Side B: Mike says he is doing all the work. They are behind schedule because Tom isn't helping enough.**



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**Situation 5: An Eagle Scout is building a town nature trail. The trail runs mostly through public land but through private property at two parts. One land owner has given permission for the trail, one has not.**

**Side A: The D’Harville family has given permission for the trail on their land. They like that the land will be used and want to encourage people to get out in nature. They request signs be put up to keep people on the trail.**

**CUT HERE Situation 5 CUT HERE**

**Situation 5: An Eagle Scout is building a town nature trail. The trail runs mostly through public land but through private property at two parts. One land owner has given permission for the trail, one has not.**

**Side B: The Howard family does not give permission for the trail. They paid for their land and would like it to stay private. They are concerned about dogs running over their property and about the public not respecting rules on their property.**



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**Situation 6:** The town is deciding whether to move their half-day kindergarten to full-day. It has been proposed two years in a row but has failed. The budget for kindergarten would have to be increased 35%.

**Side A:** Some families without kids in the school feel that the town has always provided half-day kindergarten and it has been fine. At age five, children should not be in school full-time and the budget increase is too expensive.

**CUT HERE Situation 6 CUT HERE**

**Situation 6:** The town is deciding whether to move their half-day kindergarten to full-day. It has been proposed two years in a row but has failed. The budget for kindergarten would have to be increased 35%.

**Side B:** The kindergarten teachers and young families say that the research is clear that full-day kindergarten is better for students' education. It is also easier for working families.



Lesson 18.11: Perspectives in a Democracy

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Benefits of Difference

1. For you, what is the hardest part of disagreeing with someone?
2. For you, what is the most important part of discussing different opinions successfully?
3. Although disagreement can be difficult, what are the benefits to you when you discuss problems in a civil manner?
4. What are the benefits to our communities when we have people who disagree constructively?



## Benefits of Difference

1. For you, what is the hardest part of disagreeing with someone?

**The hardest part of disagreeing with someone for me is when they think I'm wrong and I don't think I am. It makes me feel like I did something wrong.**

2. For you, what is the most important part of discussing different opinions successfully?

**I think that the most important part of discussing different opinions successfully is controlling what you can control. It made me think when the handout said that I can only control how much I know about the situation, not what someone else thinks. I can ask them why they think something and how they came to think it, but I can only really control my reactions and beliefs.**

3. Although disagreement can be difficult, what are the benefits to you when you discuss problems in a civil manner?

**I think a benefit to me is that I may learn something. I may even change my mind. And I think being part of making a stronger community is good.**

4. What are the benefits to our communities when we have people who disagree constructively?

**Having people in our community who think different things but disagree respectfully means that we have more ideas about how to solve problems. It is only by practicing civility that we will be able to evaluate ideas to find the best ones. If people are rude to one another, then some people may not be comfortable sharing their ideas. If people are rude to one another, other people may decide not to participate in the democratic process. Being polite to one another and treating each other with kindness and civility also shows that we are all equal.**

**A place where people express lots of different opinions is probably be more creative than one in which everyone believes exactly the same thing. Some ideas will work better than others, but by sharing and discussing ideas, the American people should be able to make good decisions about how they want to be governed in a way that benefits everyone.**