

Leading a Discussion

Before you watch

A

This activity introduces the topic of leading a discussion in the context of communication. Students consider which situations call for small group discussion, their preferred style of participation in discussions, and the communication skills a discussion leader needs. Before giving the students the worksheets, elicit the word *leader* from the class.

What words in English to describe a person who manages and guides a small group of students or employees is a discussion? Students might offer: group leader, manager, chair/chairman, or leader.

1-2 Divide students into pairs and ask them to discuss the questions. Use break rooms if your class is online. Monitor and support. Have a quick class feedback when the students are done with pair work.

Video

A

This activity is designed to check students' comprehension of main ideas. Tell students to view the video and focus on the role of the discussion leader should play. Ask students to work individually or in pairs. Monitor and support. Check answers with the class. You can also display answers by typing them into the interactive worksheet.

Key:

1. a
2. b
3. a
4. a

B

For online lessons, before showing students the video, make sure that you are sharing both the visual and the sound. You can do this by playing a few second of the video and asking students to press the hand up button to indicate they can both hear and see. Have students watch the video again and take notes on the step-by-step process for discussion leaders using an outline. Ask students to work individually or in pairs. Monitor and support. Check answers with the class.

Key:

1. b
2. e
3. c
4. d
5. a

C

This activity is designed to check students' comprehension of the example sentences used in the video. Ask students to work individually or in pairs. Monitor and support. Check answers with the class. Use the interactive feature of the worksheet if you're displaying it on screen. To help weaker students, you could pause the video long enough for them to read the example sentences and note the missing words in this activity.

Key:

1. thoughts
2. correctly, saying
3. review
4. Even if, move
5. thought, make

Digital skills focus

A

This activity introduces vocabulary that students will likely encounter in online discussion situations. Emphasize that knowing when to speak and how to interrupt (politely) in online discussions is sometimes difficult. It is important for a discussion leader to make it clear to participants how they can contribute to the discussion via chat or raising a hand to speak.

If the students do not know the vocabulary, open a video conferencing window and share your screen with the class to examine the screen and features your conferencing software offers. You can ask them to compare it to any other software they use at school or work.

Key:

1. unmute
2. raise
3. in the chat
4. share
5. breakout rooms

Language focus

A

This activity has two purposes. The dialogue serves as a model for the student's own discussion in the Digital Communicative Task, and it focuses students' attention on key vocabulary.

Tell the students to fill in the gaps to complete the sentences. Monitor and support. If your class is online, set a time visible to everyone so you know when to bring everyone back together from individual work, without distracting your students by asking if they have finished. Finally, check answers with the class. Encourage discussion if there is disagreement or if students are not sure which is the best word to fill each gap. In an online class setting, remind them to use the tips for participating in online discussions they just discussed.

Key:

1. thoughts
2. step-by-step
3. summarize
4. analyzed
5. open-ended
6. call on
7. feedback
8. equal time
9. remain neutral
10. resolve

B

This activity is designed to focus students' attention on common collocations used in the video.

Key:

1. move
2. keep
3. follow
4. call on
5. remain

C

Explain that the language and tone a discussion leader uses when guiding a discussion is critical for making everyone feel comfortable. The statements in each item convey the same information, but the directness is different. Some statements are direct and can be perceived as rude. Other statements are indirect and may

be perceived as being more polite. Direct and indirect language is perceived differently in different cultures, so encourage students to explain which statement they think a discussion leader should use. Encourage discussion, if there is disagreement.

Key

Student's own answers

Digital communicative task

This activity is designed to give students the opportunity to apply the presentation skill in an online situation.

Divide students into groups of 4-5, with one designated as the discussion leader. Guide students through the prompts to plan an objective, a structure, and an open-ended question for the discussion. Students can do their planning in a breakout room and present their written document to you at the end of the breakout session.

Give students about 15 minutes to do a demo small group discussion while the rest of the class observes. Encourage students to use the model statements from the video and Language Focus activities in their discussion.

Record their small group discussions (if you are able to do this with the video conferencing software you use) to analyze their use of language.