

# Effective Strategies

## to Support English Learners in Discussions



*Discussions4Learning* promotes academically productive talk and a classroom culture of listening respectfully. The emphasis is on students listening to and assessing each other’s comments, rather than on right or wrong answers. The strategies below increase the time students are “discussing” by having these discussions in partner and group activities.

To Interact in Meaningful Ways	Description	Purpose
<b>Brainstorming</b>	Students work in small groups to state ideas on a topic or question while a recorder writes them down. All ideas count, everything is recorded. More ideas can be built on the ideas of others.	Students work collaboratively to exchange information, and offer and support opinions.
<b>Think-Pair-Share</b>	Students think about a topic or question posed by the teacher. Pairs discuss the topic or question. Students can share out their own ideas, or share (re-tell) their partner’s ideas.	Students have an opportunity to formulate their ideas during the think time, then express their ideas in a partner-discussion, which enhances understanding.
<b>Tea Party</b>	Students individually prepare a response, i.e., create a vocabulary study card, on an index card. Students stand and mingle in order to find another student with whom to share their vocabulary study card, and to listen to the other student’s vocabulary study card, then mingle again to find another student to repeat the process. This can repeat 3-5 times.	Students have an opportunity to express their ideas, selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary to effectively convey ideas. Students practice both speaking and listening actively.
<b>Double Line-Up (or Inside-Outside Circle)</b>	Students stand in two lines, facing each other. With their partner across from them, the students discuss a question posed by the teacher. Then the teacher moves one of the lines by having 2-3 students come off the end of their line and go the other end, while the line shifts and students move to a new partner. The teacher can move the line numerous times, each time posing a new question.	Students have an opportunity to express their ideas, selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary to effectively convey ideas. Students practice both speaking and listening actively.
<b>Round Robin</b>	Students work in groups to share ideas verbally. Students share in order, without interruption, comment, discussion, or question from other members of the group so everyone has an opportunity to share.	Students have an opportunity to express their ideas, selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary to effectively convey ideas. Students practice both speaking and listening actively.
<b>Talking Chips</b>	Students work in groups to share ideas verbally. Each student has a “chip” that when put on the table, gives him/her a turn to talk. When everyone has had an opportunity to share, the chips can be picked up, and the process can continue.	Students have an opportunity to express their ideas, selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary to effectively convey ideas. Students practice both speaking and listening actively.

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To Learn about how English Works	Description	Purpose
<b>Vocabulary Notebook</b>	Each student has a vocabulary notebook where information is recorded about the vocabulary and the discussion around the vocabulary. Students may record sentence frames, graphic organizers, graphics or pictures, etc.	Students have a space to “keep” the robust vocabulary words they are learning. Notebooks give students multiple exposures to the words as they record their work.
<b>4-Square Vocabulary</b>	Students prepare a 4-quadrant figure, and for each word, generate any of the following in each of the 4 squares: word, picture, word in context sentence, my definition, dictionary definition, my sentence.	Students develop word consciousness, expanding their knowledge of the meaning and usage of new words.
<b>Graphic Organizers</b>	Students fill in Graphic Organizers with information about the robust vocabulary. These include word maps, semantic webs, word sorts, and vocabulary charts (word, synonym, definition, sentence or picture).	Students develop word consciousness, expanding their knowledge of the meaning and usage of new words. Graphic organizers provide a rich array of experiences with the word that helps students develop deep word knowledge.
<b>Word Wall</b>	Reserve a space on a bulletin board to display vocabulary words. The words can be shown in graphic organizers, by themselves, or with visuals or diagrams that help clarify their meanings.	Word walls present a visual reminder of the important vocabulary throughout the themes or lessons. Word walls contribute to the multiple exposures students need to master vocabulary words.
<b>Vocabulary Study Card</b>	On an index card, students write the word on the front of the card. On the back of the card, students may write its definition, a synonym or antonym, and an example sentence. Students can take turns quizzing each other on the words.	Vocabulary Study Cards give students multiple exposures to the words in the preparation of the cards, and then in the sharing of their ideas about the words. Cards can be stored in their Vocabulary Notebooks.