

The They Say, You Say, I Say, We Say Framework

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They say...

What are others outside of our class saying about this issue? What has been said historically about this issue? What have others tried to solve the problem? What do special interest groups say about it? What government structures and laws influence this? What have the courts said about it? What are the groups who agree with me and disagree with me saying?

- Assume good will until proven otherwise
- Identify the level of government (federal, state, or local) that has primary responsibility for an issue.
- Identify the specific authorities who have stewardship over the issue.
- Research how courts have interpreted related Constitutional rights and other legal issues.
- Find out how other nations, states, or communities have addressed this problem.
- Research relevant statistics, facts, and ethical issues.
- Find out special interest groups' (representing multiple perspectives) responses.

You say...

What are other students in the class saying about this issue?

- Wait until your turn to speak.
- Listen and think carefully about what the person says.
- Take notes as they speak so you can remember their main ideas and evidence.
- Ask questions and restate their ideas to them to make sure you understand.
- Look for points of agreement between you and them.
- Think about why their ideas make sense from their perspective.
- Acknowledge their evidence and humbly evaluate it with an open mind.
- Try not to be offended, focusing on their ideas and intent rather than specific words.
- Identify how their ideas might improve or even replace your ideas.
- Invite everyone's perspective

I say...

What do I think and how do I feel about this issue?

- Start by sincerely thanking others for sharing their opinions.
- Acknowledge how others' ideas have improved your ideas.
- Explain your opinion even if it is not the same as theirs.
- Respectfully challenge other people's ideas that you think are flawed, but never make personal attacks.
- Remember that others may have strong feelings, and choose words that show sensitivity.
- Give and explain evidence that supports your opinion.
- Talk about points of agreement and disagreement between you and others.
- Respond to others' questions without viewing questions as an attack but by helping others understand your ideas.

We say...

How can we work together for the common good?

- Start the processes with optimism, even if it seems like opinions are very different.
- View others, even those whose ideas are contrary, as moral and intelligent people.
- Seek and acknowledge the common ground, win/win solutions everyone agrees upon.
- Do not view differences of opinion as personal attacks.
- Identify immediate actions that can be taken without seeking outside support.
- Search for ways to compromise.
- Stay humble, willing to change our minds in the face of strong evidence.
- Continue to work together on this and other issues, even if we cannot reach an immediate agreement.