

To gain a better understanding of any subject, one needs to discuss and listen to ideas. In US/AZ Government we will be discussing a variety of topics. Some of the topics you may know a great deal about, others your knowledge may be limited. One thing that is expected of all students is their involvement in discussions. All students will offer insight and ask questions. Here are some guidelines for discussions.

I am critical of ideas, not people. I challenge and refute the ideas...but I do not indicate that I personally reject them.

I focus on coming to the best decision possible, not on winning.

I listen to everyone's idea even if I do not agree.

I restate what someone has said if it is not clear to me.

I first bring out all ideas and facts supporting all sides, and then I try to put them together in a way that makes sense.

I try to understand all sides of the issue.

I change my mind when the evidence clearly indicates that I should do so.

Seek the best answer rather than try to convince other people.

Try not to let your previous ideas or prejudices interfere with your freedom of thinking.

Speak whenever you wish (if you are not interrupting someone else, of course), even though your idea may seem incomplete.

Practice listening by trying to formulate in your own words the point that the previous speaker made before adding your own contribution.

Avoid disrupting the flow of thought by introducing new issues; instead wait until the present topic reaches its natural end; if you wish to introduce a new topic, warn the group that what you are about to say will address a new topic and that you are willing to wait to introduce it until you are finished commenting on the current topic.

Stick to the subject and talk briefly.

Avoid long stories, anecdotes, or examples.

Give encouragement and approval to others.

Seek out differences of opinion; they enrich the discussion.

Be sympathetic and understanding of other people's view.