

Food Fight: Difficult Conversations in the Classroom

Speaking and Listening

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Grade Level	9th – 10th Grade	**Time Frame**	200
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	4-5

Essential Question

What do productive discussions about difficult topics look like, sound like, and feel like?

Summary

Participating in difficult conversations in a classroom setting gives students a chance to learn how to express ideas and opinions safely. In this lesson, students build trust and respect for each other, building their confidence to speak on difficult topics without fear. Students will engage with complex topics during in-class discussions, explore a build-your-own-adventure style Twine game, take part in developing classroom discussion norms, practice using their classroom norms during a Socratic Seminar, and create their own Twine story.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a discussion using the Window and Mirrors strategy, considering the lenses by which they observe others.

Explore

Students analyze the question "Is a hot dog a sandwich?" and play through an interactive Twine story on the topic.

Explain

Students discuss their own results from the Twine and work together to develop difficult conversation classroom norms.

Extend

Students consider the question "Should governments limit the number of children families are allowed to have?," discuss the topic in small groups, and engage in a Socratic Seminar to practice and observe classroom discussion norms.

Evaluate

Students choose a difficult topic from create their own Twine with a partner.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.1.R.1: Students will actively listen and speak clearly using appropriate discussion rules with control of verbal and nonverbal cues.
9.1.R.2: Students will actively listen and interpret a speaker's messages (both verbal and nonverbal) and ask questions to clarify the speaker's purpose and perspective.
9.1.W.2: Students will work effectively and respectfully within diverse groups, show willingness to make necessary compromises to accomplish a goal, share responsibility for collaborative work, and value individual contributions made by each group member.

Attachments

- How to Twine—Food Fight.docx
- How to Twine—Food Fight.pdf
- I Think We Think—Food Fight.docx
- I Think We Think—Food Fight.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Food Fight.pptx
- Teacher's Guide to Difficult Conversations—Food Fight.docx
- Teacher's Guide to Difficult Conversations—Food Fight.pdf
- Three Case Studies on Family Planning Policy—Food Fight.docx
- Three Case Studies on Family Planning Policy—Food Fight.pdf
- Twine Project Rubric—Food Fight.docx
- Twine Project Rubric—Food Fight.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- I Think/We Think (attached; one per student)
- Computers with internet access
- Food Fight Twine (https://k20center.ou.edu/e-learning/food-fight/)
- Sticky notes (several per student)
- Anchor Chart paper (four pages)
- Three Cast Studies on Family Planning Policy (attached; one per student)
- Highlighters (one per student)
- Twine Project Rubric (attached; one per student)
- How to Twine guide (attached; optional; one per student)
- How to Twine digital walkthrough link (https://ior.ad/7RX6)
- Teacher’s Guide to Difficult Conversations (attached; optional)

20 minutes

Engage

Using the attached **Lesson Slides,** display **slide 2** as the students enter the room. Read the essential question for the lesson.

Display **slide 3**, and without any context, play the video on the slide: Simone Biles stumbles on vault before pulling out of team final | Tokyo Live | NBC Sports

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=nO-vMUApyJQ

Display **slide 4** and pass out a copy of the attached **I Think/We Think** handout to each student. Share the I Think/We Think instructional strategy with your students and instruct them to use this handout to record their responses to the following questions:

- What is happening in this photo?
- What happened just before this photo was taken?
- What happened immediately after this photo was taken?
- What theme or main idea can you take from this?

Discuss their answers as a class. Go back to the I Think, We Think handout and have your students record any observations their peers brought up that they hadn't thought of in the We Think section. Encourage your students to notice if their peers had different perspectives.

Display **slide 5** and share the instructional strategy Windows and Mirrors with your students. Provide the following definitions:

Window: What you observe in the image does not reflect your experiences or identities. It is a "window" into experiences and identities that are different from your own.

Mirror: What you observe reflects some of your experiences and identities. It is a "mirror" of some aspects of your own life.

Display **slide 6.** Instruct your students to look at the image on the screen again and consider if it is a **window** into an experience or identity that is different from their own or a **mirror** into their own experiences or identity. Instruct your students to write a reflective statement describing their connection with the image as a window or mirror on their handout. Remind them that a reflective statement includes why they chose a mirror or a window.

Display **slide 7.** In the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the four-time Olympic gold medalist, Simone Biles was going for her first of a possible six gold medals when she suffered what is known as the "twisties" on the vault. She later withdrew from the competitions. Take this moment to remind your students that every situation they witness is one in which they might be viewing through a mirror or a window.

Display **slide 8** and review the objectives for the lesson.

60 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 9**. Pose the following question to your students: *Is a hot dog a sandwich?*

Pass out a pad of sticky notes (or several sticky notes apiece) to each student. Instruct your students to answer and justify their responses on a sticky note. Students should write as many reasons and rationales as they have for the question, using a new sticky note for each reason. Encourage them to come up with several reasons for this activity.

Sample Student Response

A hot dog is not a sandwich because sandwiches have two pieces of bread, and buns are just one piece of bread.

Display **slide 10** and share the Affinity Process instructional strategy with your students. Have students pair up. Instruct partners to read through their shared sticky notes and group any that are similar together into categories. Once the partners have completed this, instruct them to label each category with another sticky note in larger or bolder writing.

Sample Student Response

Students might come up with categories like:

- Types of bread
- Types of meat
- Fillings
- Sauces

Display **slide 11** and share the Gallery Walk instructional strategy with your students. Instruct your students to take more blank sticky notes and walk around the room, looking at how other pairs categorized their notes. Have students use their sticky notes to leave written comments or questions beside their peers' categories.

When students return to their seats, ask each pair to share a question or comment they received. Ask students: *Did anyone disagree with your decision? Did anyone agree with you?*

Display **slide 12**. Pass out another two sticky notes to each student. Share the instructional strategy How Am I Feeling? What Am I Thinking and have students use the strategy to respond to the following questions on a sticky note, one question per note:

1. *If someone offered you a hot dog and gave you a sandwich, how would you feel? What would you think?*
2. *If someone offered you a sandwich and gave you a hot dog, how would you feel? What would you think?*

Hang a piece of chart paper to create an Anchor Chart at the front of the room. Have the students place their answers on the Anchor Chart. Read and discuss the results, focusing on the emotions present in students' answers.

Tech Integration: Twine

For the below activity, students will be using Twine. Twine is an interactive tool used to create games and interactive stories. In the activity, students will play through the Twine to explore a series of scenarios designed to engage their thinking about the topic. This is intended to help students determine their rationale in answering the question, "is a hot dog a sandwich?"

Prepare the following link (also on slide 13) to distribute to students: Food Fight Twine.

Display **slide 13**. Distribute the link to the Food Fight Twine to students. Tell students to go through the Food Fight scenario once. Remind them that their ending will change based on their choices as they play. Give them a few minutes to do so.

After your students played through the Twine once, display **slide 14**. Ask students to reflect on the guiding questions on the slide:

1. What did you notice about the choices you made?
2. What promoted positive conversation?
3. What did you notice that was negative?
4. How could you take what was negative and approach it differently?

Explain

Teacher's Note: Setup

Prior to beginning this portion of the lesson, label four pieces of chart paper with the following headings, one per chart paper:

1. Sentence Stems
2. Nonverbal Cues
3. Positive Conversation Cues
4. Other Ideas

Hang these conversation element posters around your room.

Optional: Teacher's Guide

For more information on facilitating difficult conversations among students, see the attached **Teacher's Guide to Difficult Conversations.**

Display **slide 15**. Ask your students what type of communicators they are based on the ending they received from the Twine.

Share with your students that there are eight different endings they could have reached in the Twine, with eight different communication styles. Each of these eight communication styles fall into one of three broader categories: **amiable**, **expressive**, and **driver**. Each of these categories is broadly considered either **ask-oriented** or **tell-oriented**; and either **task-directed** or **people-directed**. Proceed through the next several slides as follows to shed more light on what these terms mean and how students can understand their own communication styles.

Display **slide 16** and share the difference between ask-oriented and tell-oriented individuals.

- **Ask-Oriented:** Indirect and discussion-oriented in their approach; asks many questions; might speak more quietly; takes more time to communicate and listen.
- **Tell-Oriented:** Direct in their approach; asks fewer questions; might speak loudly; responds more quickly.

Based on these two definitions, ask your students which orientation they think their communication style matches most.

Display **slide 17** and share the difference between task-directed and people-directed individuals.

- **Task-Directed:** Talks about tasks first, then considers relationships later; shares few feelings; tries to be more objective in decision-making; tries to rely on logic.
- **People-Directed:** Considers relationships first, then moves to tasks; shares feelings to support the discussion; subjective approach to decision-making; relies on intuition.

Based on these two definitions, ask your students which orientation they think their communication style matches most.

Display **slide 18**, and share the **amiable** communication style with your students, including its specific indicators and strategies to approaching conversations with amiable communicators. Ask students who identify as amiable communicators whether they correctly predicted themselves to be people-directed and ask-oriented.

Display **slide 19**, and share the **expressive** communication style with your students, including its specific indicators and strategies to approaching conversations with expressive communicators. Ask students who identify as expressive communicators whether they correctly predicted themselves to be people-directed and tell-oriented.

Display **slide 20**, and share the **driver** communication style with your students, including its specific indicators and strategies to approaching conversations with driver communicators. Ask students who identify as driver communicators whether they correctly predicted themselves to be task-directed and tell-oriented.

Display **slide 21** and ask your students to think back to the question, "Is a hot dog a sandwich?" Have students think about what made for productive conversation in real life and in the Twine. Use the question on the slide and additional questions below to help guide the discussion:

- How did the conversation with your partner go?
- Did you agree or disagree?
- In the Twine, what did you notice about the direction of the conversation based on your responses?
- How did the characters talk to each other?

Based on the class conversation and the varying communication styles in the class, instruct your students to take out a sheet of paper and list the ways they should speak to each other when discussing a topic where people might disagree. Students should consider the following categories of conversation norms: sentence stems, nonverbal cues, positive conversation cues, and any other ideas they might have to contribute.

Display **slide 22** and point out the conversation element posters hanging around the room. Instruct your students take four sticky notes and write down one idea from their brainstorming for each category (one idea per sticky note).

Sample Student Responses

- Sentence Stem: I hear what you are saying, but I wonder if you have thought about...
- Nonverbal Cues: Making eye contact while the other person is speaking.
- Positive Conversation Cues: Repeat what you heard to clarify that you understood the person.

Read the answers posted in each category. Remind the students of the essential question: *"What do productive discussions about difficult topics look like, sound like, and feel like?"* Discuss this question. If new ideas come up, add them to the conversation element posters.

Display **slide 23** and ask your students to choose the top three ideas from each poster to create classroom discussion norms. You can write these answers in the slide itself or add them to a new Anchor Chart.

Teacher's Note: Longevity

Consider displaying and using these classroom norms throughout the year when a difficult conversation arises or is planned for a classroom discussion.

Extend

Display **slide 24** and share the following guiding question with your students: *"Should governments control the number of children families are allowed to have?"*

Display **slide 25**. Pass out a copy of the attached **Three Case Studies on Family Planning Policy** article to each student along with a highlighter. Share the Why-Lighting instructional strategy with your students, and ask them to read the article and highlight areas of the text they feel are important or relevant to the guiding question.

Once students have finished reading, have students form groups of 4-5. Ask groups to organize the discussion by having students express their opinions in a round-robin fashion, answering the guiding question: "*Should governments limit the number of children families are allowed to have?*" Remind students to use the norms they created as they speak and listen.

Let the discussion continue long enough for students to express their opinions and likely disagree on some points.

Display **slide 26**. Ask students, after reading the article, what some of their lingering questions are about the topic of government involvement in family planning. Have students to return to class prepared to ask those questions during a Socratic Seminar.

During the next class period, display **slide 27**. Share the Socratic Seminar instructional strategy with your students. Divide the class in half. Have one half form an inner circle, with students facing each other, and have the other half form an outer circle, with students looking in on the inner circle. Tell students in the inner circle that they will be asking and discussing the questions they brought. Have students in the outer circle observe students in the inner circle and record their observations on how their inner circle students use classroom discussion norms. Outer circle observers should look for positive and negative ways students speak to each other, paying attention to nonverbal cues as well.

Let the discussion commence. Give students about 10 minutes. Then have the inner and outer circles switch roles. Give students another 10 minutes to discuss and observe.

Display **slide 28.** Come together in a whole-group discussion to debrief. Review the classroom norms and how the Socratic Seminar went.

Optional: Individual Responses

If you prefer not to discuss as a class or want students to answer privately, have each student write their response as an Exit Ticket or use Flipgrid to turn in their answers.

Evaluate

Display **slide 29.** Pass out a copy of the attached **Twine Project Rubric** to each student. Have students look over the rubric and choose a topic of their own. They can look to the topics on the slide for inspiration or use one of the prompts shown if needed.

Instruct each student to create their own Twine based on their prompt. Students should partner up if possible, but they can work independently if they prefer it. Pass out a copy of the attached **How to Twine** guide to each student or have them navigate to the link (https://ior.ad/7RX6) on the slide and the rubric to access the digital version of the how-to walkthrough. Students should also reference the difficult conversation norms they came up with as a class.

Display **slide 30**. Navigate to the How to Twine guide on a smartboard or similar display. Have students navigate to twinery.org. Have students follow along on the Twine website as you work through the steps in the digital how-to.

Give students time to work on and finish their Twine stories.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.b.). Affinity process. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/87
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Establishing norms. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/188
- K20 Center. (2021). Flipgrid. External apps tutorials. https://k20center.ou.edu/externalapps/flipgrid/
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk / carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). How am I feeling? What am I thinking?. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/187
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Socratic seminar. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/781
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Windows and mirrors. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/948
- NBC Sports. (2021, July 27). Simone Biles stumbles on vault before pulling out of team final | Tokyo Live | NBC Sports. YouTube. https://youtu.be/nO-vMUApyJQ