

## SILENT DISCUSSION: IN ACTION

There are many ways to effectively implement a Silent Discussion in your class. Below is a list of suggestions, each with a brief description. Adjust the format as needed to support your learning objectives, meet your students' needs, or make the activity your own.

Regardless of how you chose to implement this strategy, keep in mind that the importance of having students share writing utensils is for them to use that non-writing time to read and think, much like one should listen and think when having a verbal discussion.

### **Graffiti Board (20–30 min.)**

*Consider this option for a whole-class discussion with one prompt.*

Prepare a large, shared space such as a dry-erase board or wall with butcher paper. Here, students focus on a single topic or prompt. Consider having students share markers, approximately 2–3 students per marker. Encourage students to write comments or questions, adding emphasis with the size or shape of their words. Students can add arrows, symbols, or other visual elements to communicate their thinking. If space or class size is a concern, consider multiple, smaller graffiti boards. Have students move around to read and respond to other groups' discussions when they reach a stopping point in their own group's Silent Discussion.

### **Shared Graphic Organizer (20–30 min.)**

*Consider this option for small-group discussions.*

Students silently collaborate to complete a graphic organizer. This could be a T-chart, H-chart, flow chart, Venn diagram, etc. This could also be a concept map with a provided vocabulary word bank. The purpose of collaboration on this shared graphic organizer is to share and communicate the relationship between concepts.

### **Museum Gallery Walk (20–30 min.)**

*Consider this option for a whole-class discussion with multiple prompts.*

Much like a traditional gallery walk or carousel activity, students visit multiple prompts or topics except, they do this silently—as if they are at a museum. Write each prompt on a piece of chart paper and then hang them around the room. Direct students to visit each poster, read what is written, and add a response. Consider using quiet music or a timer to help students not linger too long at any one poster.

### **Notebook Pass (10–15 min.)**

*Consider this option for small-group discussions.*

After completing a reading, direct students to open their notebook to a blank page (or to get out a piece of notebook paper). Have students write a question about the reading and then pass their notebooks. Give everyone approximately two minutes to write a response, then pass the notebooks again. Repeat at least three times, and then direct students to pass the notebooks back to the owners.

*Consider having students write directly on the shared space or write on sticky notes to meet your needs. Consider using the commenting features of Google Slides, Google Docs, or the visual tools of Canva for a digital option.*

#### **Source**

*Spencer, J. (2026, February 24). The power of silent discussions for deeper collaboration. Spencer Education.*  
<https://spencereducation.com/silent-discussions/>