



USE WITH:

Individual students, small group, or whole class



GRADE LEVEL:

Upper elementary, middle school, or high school



CONTEXT:

Remote friendly

EDUCATOR PRACTICE

Engage in Conversations About Current Events

Learn how to engage students in conversations about current events that may be difficult or uncomfortable.

Created by [Search Institute](#)

Description:

This resource can support you to productively engage students in conversations about current events (e.g., politics, school shootings) that may be difficult or uncomfortable.

Est. time to complete:
20 minutes

Steps:

1. Educational Leadership published an article detailing different ways to have courageous conversations about current events with students. Read the article, ["Courageous Conversations for Equity and Agency,"](#) to learn more about how to navigate conversations about current events with your students.
2. Common Sense Media recently published the article, ["How to Talk About Difficult Topics With Your Children: An Age-by-Age Guide,"](#) about how to talk about difficult topics with different ages of students. Read the section of the article that shares information on the age of students you serve.
3. Based on these articles, identify at least three strategies you could implement in your classroom to engage students in conversations about current events that may be difficult or uncomfortable.

Tips for Educators:

- Talking about current events and having difficult conversations about topics such as police violence against Black people, anti-Asian hate, transphobia, and other challenging topics is often difficult for adults as well as youth. As you plan to engage your students in conversations on current topics, take time to reflect on your own feelings about talking about uncomfortable topics.
- Think about how you can manage your own discomfort when discussing these topics. Is that discomfort something you feel comfortable revealing a portion of to your students? If so, it may help them feel more comfortable opening up also.
- As you are thinking about and planning on engaging your students in difficult conversations, consider how particular topics might impact particular groups of students. For example, if you are talking about a recent immigration bill, consider whether this might impact students in your classroom personally, and how you want to handle discussing it.

Inspired by:

1. Knorr, C. (2021). *How to talk about difficult topics with your children: An age-by-age guide*. Common Sense Media. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-difficult-subjects>
2. Vilen, A., & Berger, R. (2020). *Courageous conversations for equity and agency*. *Educational Leadership*, 77(7), 39-44. <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/courageous-conversations-for-equity-and-agency>

Related Materials:

Resources for Talking to Students About Politics, Civic Engagement, and Uncertainty from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum

<https://inservice.ascd.org/resources-for-talking-to-students-about-politics-civic-engagement-and-uncertainty/>