



SKILLS

## What goes into a R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> Discussion?

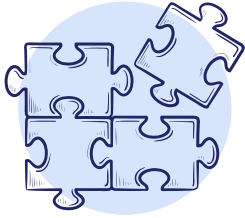
R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> Discussion is a system that breaks conversation down into skills you can name and practice through routines. This makes discussion — which can feel overwhelming, intimidating, or mysterious — much more doable. Most students say R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> makes discussion less scary!

It's similar to when you are learning to play a game or a sport like soccer. First, you practice dribbling, defending, passing, and controlling the ball. Then once you start to scrimmage, your coach is able to offer specific feedback about each of these skills.

## SKILLS

# What does R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup> stand for?

---



## R IS FOR RELATE

R1: Relate text to self, world, and other texts

R★: Relate your point to your classmates' ideas

---



## E IS FOR EXCERPT

E1: Excerpt with efficiency

E★: Excerpt with editorial

---



## A IS FOR ASK

A1: Ask questions about the text

A★: Ask questions of your classmates

---



## L IS FOR LISTEN

L1: Listen with your body

L★: Listen to facilitate

## R IS FOR RELATE

# R1: Relate text to self, world, and other texts

"The lesson I take away from this scene reminds me of what my music teacher always says...scales first!"

## Make connections to find meaning in a text.



### Text to self (TTS)

Relating the text to self should connect a part of the text to a specific experience, story, or emotion from your life. TTS takes courage and reflection!

"When I think about \_\_\_\_\_ it makes me think of \_\_\_\_\_ ."



### Text to world (TTW)

Relating the text to the world is when you connect an idea in the text to a world event, historical or present.

"The way this article talks about technology reminds me of how people were nervous about electricity when Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb ..."



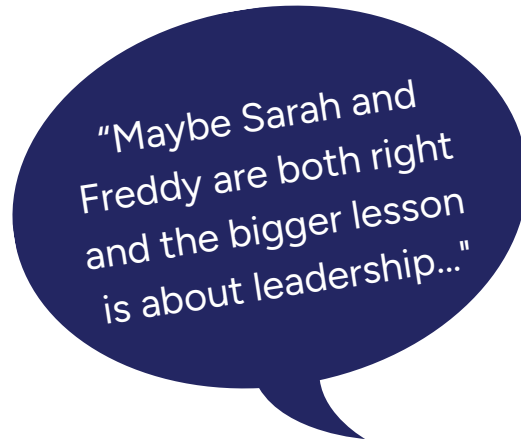
### Text to other texts (TTT)

Relating the text to other texts connects current reading to another text, potentially even from a different unit!

"This reminds me of that time we talked about the theme of power in the book \_\_\_\_\_ ."

## R IS FOR RELATE

# R☆: Relate your point to your classmates' ideas

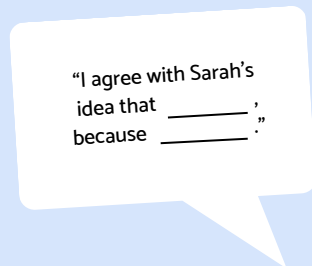


## Think about how your ideas fit in with others' ideas.



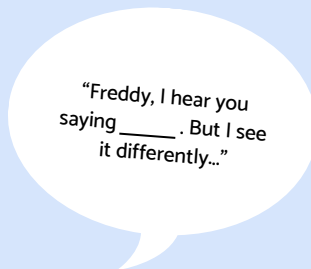
### Agree

Summarize their idea and then add more evidence to further develop the point. Do NOT just say, "Yeah, I agree with Susan!"



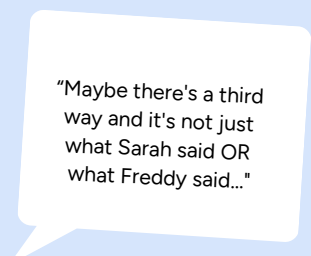
### Disagree

To disagree well, focus on the idea (not person!) you don't agree with. Begin by re-stating it; then add your perspective. Disagreeing in discussion doesn't mean you don't like someone!



### Compromise

Compromise to offer a middle way between opposing ideas. Just like agreeing or disagreeing, it's a good idea to begin by quickly summarizing each person's point.



## E IS FOR EXCERPT

# E1: Excerpt with efficiency

"I think we can tell that the first source is from the 1930s. One clue is when the author mentions the 'dust storms' in the second paragraph..."

## Make excerpts (evidence from the text) easy to follow.



### Tell everyone where

When you reference a text, include the source/page number AND the location (e.g. third paragraph).

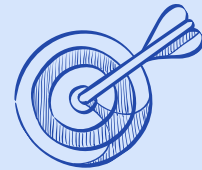
Your DQ Prep should make this easy.



### Let them get there

Before reading your evidence, count to SEVEN (or spell E-X-C-E-R-P-T) on your fingers so that your classmates get on the same page. This feels awkward at first.

It is also a good habit to mark the quotes that your peers excerpt in discussion in your own text. They will become useful later, especially if you have to write a paper.



### Help them care

If your quote is too long, people will zone out and not care! If you want to use a quote longer than three sentences, try using phrases like "dot dot dot" or "and then a few lines later" to connect different parts of it.

## E IS FOR EXCERPT

# E☆: Excerpt with editorial

"Lines 1-2 in the poem —  
'so much / depends upon' felt  
choppy at first but then I realized  
it makes you read slowly so you  
digest every word."

**Avoid "quote dropping." Everyone wants to hear your unique perspective, not just what the author said!**



### Avoid quote-dropping

It can be tempting to "quote-drop" ... to find an excerpt, read it out loud, and then pass off. However, if everyone has done the reading, that adds no value!

If you are struggling to come up with what to say about a quote, remember that EVERY SINGLE WORD in a text has been chosen by somebody (usually the author).

"I think this quote is important because..."



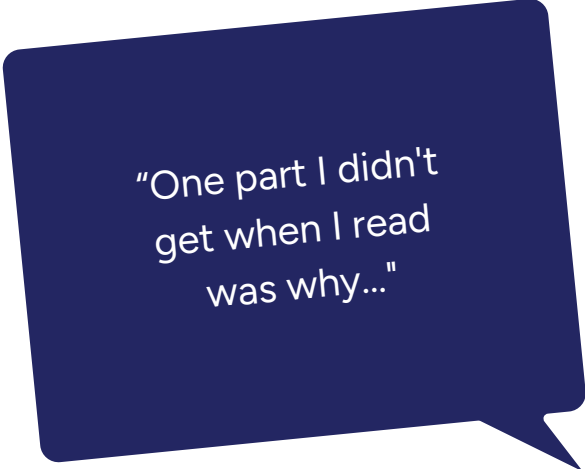
### Find something interesting about your quote

Remember that your classmates can't read your mind, so when you Excerpt, you need to help them see HOW the quote supports what you are saying. You might "zoom in" on a particular word or phrase in a quote and connect it back to the DQ or to someone else's point.

"In this quote I think the phrase \_\_\_\_\_ means that \_\_\_\_\_."

## A IS FOR ASK

# A1: Ask questions about the text



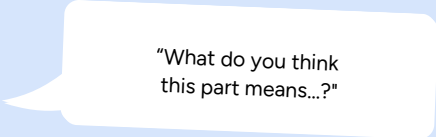
"One part I didn't get when I read was why..."

**Ask questions that help everyone learn together.**



### Ask about the text

It can be hard or even scary to admit that you don't understand something that happened in the reading, or what the figurative language actually means, even why the text is part of the course it is assigned to! But many times, you aren't the only one with the question, and verbalizing it helps you to learn from your classmates and open new avenues for depth in the conversation.

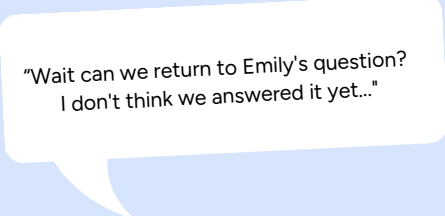


"What do you think this part means...?"



### Don't let questions fizzle

It takes a lot of courage to ask questions - so don't let them fizzle! There's nothing worse than mustering up the courage to ask, only for the whole group to ignore it. You'd be surprised how often that happens, usually because people are so focused on what they want to say, they aren't open to new directions for the conversation.



"Wait can we return to Emily's question? I don't think we answered it yet..."

## A IS FOR ASK

# A☆: Ask questions of your classmates

"So, Mike, do you mean to say that..."

**If you don't understand someone's point, just ask.**



### Use clarifying questions

In just about every discussion, someone says something that someone else doesn't understand. Often, nobody acknowledges the disconnect, and the person who made the comment feels silly that no one builds on it, and the person who didn't understand it feels silly for not understanding it! So, to avoid these scenarios, practice asking CLARIFYING QUESTIONS.

"Madison, is your idea that...?  
Did I get that right?"



### Remember to be respectful

Remember that sometimes, people get defensive when asked a question because it implies that their comment might not have been correct or clear. So, it's important to be specific and respectful when you ask a clarifying question; your goal should be to help your classmate express themselves better, NOT make yourself look smarter than them!

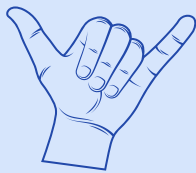
"Matt, I think you might be onto something.  
Can you explain more about how your  
idea connects to the DQ?"

## L IS FOR LISTEN

# L1: Listen with your body (i.e. non-verbal communication)

[looks around room]  
"Oh, Carlos, I see your fist. You go!"

**Use non-verbal communication strategies to show engagement and make everyone feel heard.**



### Use the 'I-Agree!' Hand Signal

When someone says something you agree with, use this hand signal to show your agreement — think of it as a visual "like" button.

This makes your engagement visible, and it is also a confidence booster for the speaker!



### Look at the Person Speaking

You don't always have to make direct eye contact — in some cultures that's not appropriate — but you should turn your body towards the speaker.

This is true in the real world too — many adults won't know you're listening if you don't look at them.



### Use the Pass-Off System

In R.E.A.L.<sup>®</sup>, students are responsible for 'calling on each other' and deciding who will speak next. You should call on the person who has spoken the least so far.

If you want to talk, put up your hand and hold up a finger for every comment you have already made. Haven't talked yet? Use a fist!

## L IS FOR LISTEN

# L★: Listen to facilitate (i.e. the Three T's)

"We only have one more minute!  
Should we stop and do our final  
IRT notes?"

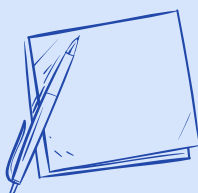
## Use the Three T's to help you transition smoothly.



### Time Check

You are responsible for keeping track of your time and making sure you cover all of the questions in the allotted timeframe. Sometimes a group needs a reminder!

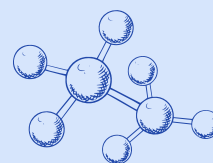
"It's already 15 minutes in and we've only gotten through #1; let's keep that in mind!"



### Time Out

Help your group take a time out for notes (which we call In-R.E.A.L.® -Time Notes). The trick to doing this well is to not cut anyone off! Make sure to ask if anyone has anything else to say about the DQ before suggesting a break.

"Ok, are we ready to take IRT notes on this? Let's do it."



### Transitioning

After you and your classmates take a break in the middle of discussion to write down notes (In-R.E.A.L.® -Time Notes), you'll reopen the conversation about a new question. Read the question first then let someone else answer it!

"Are we ready to do DQ2?  
Great. So as a reminder, the  
question is \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Who wants to start?"