Discussion Roles

Discussion roles help students to manage talk and encourage the development of certain speaking and listening skills.

Instigator

Starts the discussion or opens up a new topic for discussion

Will say:

I would like to start by saying …
I think we should consider …
We haven't yet talked about …
Let's also think about …

Prober

Digs deeper into the argument, asks for evidence or justification of ideas

Will say:

What do you think would be the effect of …?
Why do you think …?
Can you provide an example to support what you are saying?

Challenger

Gives reasons to disagree or presents an alternative argument

Will say:

I disagree with you because …
You mentioned X but what about …
To challenge you X, I think …
I understand your point of view, but have you thought about …?

Clarifier

Simplifies and makes things clearer by asking questions

Will say:

What do you mean when you say …?
Can you explain a bit more about …?
Does that mean …?
Please can you clarify what you meant by …?

Summariser

Identifies the main ideas from the discussion. This might be during the discussion, to help move the conversation forward, or at the end of the discussion.

Will say:

Overall, the main points were …
The main ideas raised today were …
Our discussion focused on …
The three main things we talked about were …

Builder

Develops, adds to or runs with an idea

Will say:

I agree, and would like to add…
Building on that idea, I think …
Linking to what X said, I think..

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