

Supplementary Lesson Plan  
Grabbed: Poets and Writers Responds to Sexual Assault, Empowerment & Healing

Talking About the Hard Stuff: A Class Discussion Guide

When tackling difficult texts and topics, it is vital to provide an environment that promotes a safe space that encourages class discussion and participation. In order to provide all participants with a sense of ease, the following recommendations are key components to an effective discussion.

- ✚ Create an inclusive discussion environment.
- ✚ Positively reinforce student contributions. .
- ✚ Limit your own involvement.
- ✚ Balance students' voices during the discussion.
- ✚ Keep the discussion focused.
- ✚ Repeat the key point of all comments
- ✚ Be alert for signs that the discussion is deteriorating.
- ✚ Prevent the discussion from deteriorating into a heated argument.
- ✚ Bring closure to the discussion.
- ✚ Remember that not all students are comfortable with extended direct eye contact.

The following questions are meant to stimulate discussion and apply higher order thinking to encourage analysis of the text. They can be applied to specific works, or the text as a whole, depending on the focus of the lesson in question. They are highly adaptable to reflect specific course objectives.

- ✚ What makes the poem or essay in question distinctive?
- ✚ Is the author's worldview represented in the piece? Why?
- ✚ Does the historical context of the piece matter to the overall development and understanding of the essay or poem?
- ✚ Is the setting of the piece important to the theme? Why?
- ✚ How does the sequence of events unfold to create the mood of the story? Is it chronological? Written in flashbacks?
- ✚ How does the author employ imagery and symbolism to further the topic and theme of the piece?
- ✚ Are the tone and style of their dialogue authentic? Can you relate to what is being said?
- ✚ How do the writings in the book relate to each other?