

Leading a Discussion

GSAs are a place for us to talk openly about things that we usually can't talk about at all.

- Know your topic. Think about the goal of the discussion, and write down questions to guide the discussion. Familiarize yourself with the questions you write down.
- Listen actively. Make eye contact with participants in your discussion. Sit at their level.
- Keep the discussion moving. If people seem disinterested, do something to wake everyone up. For example, have everyone switch places. Cut off rambling speakers gently.
- Don't be afraid of silence. Wait and see what happens. Silence can open up a space for people who are shy to participate.
- Agreement can be boring. If everyone agrees, challenge the view that's being discussed with a counterpoint.
- Decide what you want the participants to take from the discussion, and then try to bring that out by asking questions.
- Try to make it comfortable for people to participate. Prevent people from putting down or laughing at someone's ideas.

