

PARTICIPATING *in a* DIALOGUE *on the* RULE *of* LAW

One of the hallmarks of a democracy is its citizens' willingness to express, defend, and perhaps reexamine their own opinions, while being respectful of the views of others. If you plan on leading a Dialogue in a high school classroom, here are some ground rules for ensuring a civil conversation:

- Show respect for the views expressed by others, even if you strongly disagree.
- Be brief in your comments so that all who wish to speak have a chance to express their views.
- Direct your comments to the group as a whole, rather than to any one individual.
- Don't let disagreements or conflicting views become personal. Name-calling and shouting are not acceptable ways of conversing with others.
- Let others express their views without interruption. Your Dialogue leader will try to give everyone a chance to speak or respond to someone else's comments.
- Remember that a frank exchange of views can be fruitful, so long as you observe the rules of civil conversation.

Note to Dialogue Leaders

Before beginning your Dialogue, distribute these ground rules and review them with the students.

The ABA Division for Public Education provides national leadership for law-related and civic education efforts in the United States, stimulating public awareness and dialogue about law and its role in society through our programs and resources and by fostering partnerships among bar associations, educational institutions, civic organizations, and others.

The Dialogue on the Rule of Law is available in PDF format on the ABA Division for Public Education website at <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/features/dialogues.html>.

The views expressed in this document have not been approved by the House of Delegates or the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association and, accordingly, should not be construed as representing the policy of the American Bar Association.

American Bar Association
Division for Public Education
321 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 988-5735
Email: abapubed@abanet.org
www.abanet.org/publiced

