



Participating in a Dialogue on the Separation of Powers

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 as 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.