

# TIPS FOR PROFESSORS: FACILITATING EFFECTIVE DISCUSSIONS



## BE EXPLICIT WITH REQUIREMENTS

Make sure students understand your expectations for the discussion and how they will be graded. If you formulate a rubric, consider how formal the discussion is, how long it will be, and how many students will participate in order to create realistic criteria.

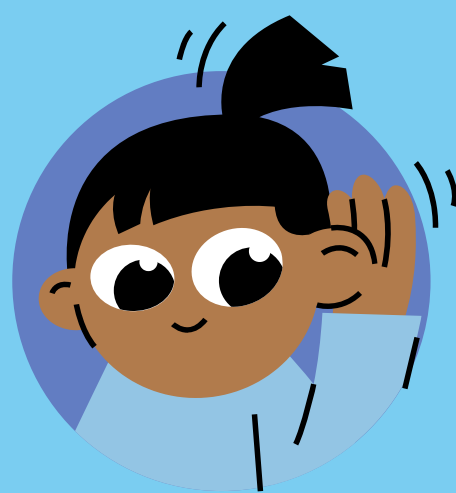


## POSE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

It can be overwhelming for students when they feel they must answer complex questions with multiple parts. To foster a more authentic conversation where students have more autonomy to control the flow and topics covered, stick to one or two open-ended questions to prompt thinking but allow space to go in other directions.

## LISTEN (FROM A DISTANCE)

Some of the most effective discussions start with the professor posing a question, stepping back and giving students space to talk, but jumping back in to answer questions about content if they arise. Students want to discuss without being scrutinized, but they also want to be sure their ideas are not totally incorrect.



## ASK FOR FEEDBACK

After the discussion, give your students a chance to provide feedback regarding their experience. Ask about their own contributions, what they learned from their peers, and what they thought worked well/could be improved for a more effective future conversation.

For more resources for professors, visit The HUB's website:

<https://www.scu.edu/provost/writingcenter/>