Productive Discussions

Having a productive science discussion doesn't just happen. It requires many people to participate and be thoughtful about how they participate. These sentence starters can help you have a productive discussion.

Gathering ideas

- Does anyone have an idea to share?
- My idea is _____ .
- I'm wondering about _____ .
- What if we tried _____ ?

Building on ideas

- Is that like _____ ?
- Can you say more about that?
- I can add to that idea: _____ .
- That idea reminds me of _____ .

Clarifying ideas

- Can you say that in a different way?
- I have a question about _____ .
- I think what you mean is _____ .
- Tell me more about _____ .

Supporting ideas

- Why do you think that?
- Is there evidence to support that idea?
- I agree because _____ .

Arguing ideas

- Does anyone have a different idea?
- I disagree because _____ .
- I agree, except _____ .
- Is _____ possible?

Making Sense of SCIENCE

Goals for Exploratory Discourse

1. Notice and wonder

• Look at this!

• I have an idea. I think _____ .

• I have a question. I wonder if _____ .

• What if we tried _____ ?

• How does that part work?

• What does that symbol mean?

• What does that word mean?

2. Build off each other's ideas

• Can you do that again? I want to see it one more time.

• What were you trying to do?

• Can we do that a different way?

• Is that like _____ ?

• Can you say that again?

• That reminds me of _____ .

• Is that like when _____ ?

• What could we do to test your idea?

• What else can we do?

Making Sense of SCIENCE

Goals for Explanatory Discourse

1. Connect your ideas

- I agree with you and I have another piece of evidence.

- I agree with some of what you said because _____ .

- I don't agree because _____ .

- I think about it a different way. I think _____ .

2. Make thinking visible

- When did you see that happen?

- Which of our evidence supports that idea?

- Will you make a diagram that shows what you mean?

- Will you write out the math you're using?

- How did you figure that out?

- Will you share why you're thinking that way?

3. Deepen your investigation

- What could we do to test your idea?

- This data doesn't fit. What do we make of that?

- Where else can we find information?

- If our idea is right, then we should be able to _____ .

Making Sense of SCIENCE

1. I see a pattern. I notice _____ .

2. I see an anomaly. I notice _____ .

3. I'm surprised by _____ .

4. I wonder if there is an error _____ .

5. I notice there are differences _____ .

6. I notice there are similarities _____ .

7. I wonder if _____ .

8. I wonder why _____ .

9. I wonder how _____ .

10. Based on the patterns I see, I predict _____ .

11. This is the highest _____ . This is the lowest _____ .

12. I have an idea about _____ .

13. Based on the data, I think _____ .

14. What do you think explains _____ .

Making Sense of SCIENCE