

## INTERMEDIATE CONVERSATION

Ashline

### TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY DISCUSSION INTRODUCTIONS: THE TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEADER

Students entrusted with the responsibility of setting up and organizing the Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday discussions have a large assignment. The following list should help you to plan your introduction to the discussion.

1. Choose a topic in which you have a significant interest and in which you think the class will be compelled to discuss. This will involve creativity as well as an assessment of class interests. In terms of evaluation, creativity and preparation of materials will be evaluated positively.
2. You should introduce a topic with a brief overview describing the issue, and you may use a very short media stimulus with your overview. The introduction should be fully improvised from notes so that you look as though you are talking “off the cuff,” very naturally, with good eye contact with the class. No reading of the introductory material is permitted. The introductory part should not go longer than five minutes. Students should be given at least 15 minutes for discussing your topic.
3. You may prepare handouts if you wish. If the audience needs a significant amount of background information, prepare a reading for the class and make copies for them in the class prior to the day of your discussion.
4. Set the conditions for the discussion by either submitting a handout of questions and vocabulary to the class or by writing such questions and vocabulary on the board. Be sure to define key terms that the class will need in order to carry out their discussions. Make sure that your questions are interesting, important, and pertinent.
5. Determine how you want to organize the class in order to engage discussions. Do you want a small group discussion or a paired discussion? Depending on either choice, how do you want to arrange the groups or pairs? Accordingly, use your creativity and imagination in order to arrange the class. Students always appreciate surprises. Try to surprise them with your group or pair arrangements.
6. After the groups or pairs are determined, mingle with them and be available to ask and answer questions about your topic. Occasionally, you may need to involve yourself more in groups or pairs that are bogged down and unable to discuss well. Provide stimuli to encourage such groups or pairs.

During the Tuesday discussions, it is the responsibility of the rest of the class to exercise the principle of charity. No matter whether or not we have a direct interest in a topic, we should be charitable to our leaders and do the best we can with what we are given. Being a good conversationalist means making others feel that we are interested in their interests. Showing charity, consideration, and generosity toward our classmates is a means both of

encouraging their creativity and interests and developing our own communicative skills. You will know you have achieved your aims as a conversationalist not so much when you can utter a few vocabulary terms and grammatical expressions correctly, but rather when you leave your conversational partners feeling better about themselves after communicating with you than they did before talking to you. Learning to communicate with others is about learning how to be in control of ourselves and confident in ourselves to help and encourage others, regardless of our own conversational limitations.