

Talk It Up!

Discussion Points for Upper Primary Students



By Sally Young

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Teachers' Notes

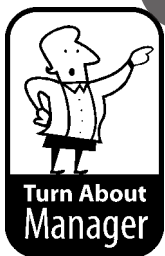
► Structuring Discussions:

The activities in the book assume that children will conduct the bulk of their discussions in small groups. Some children take longer to formulate their own ideas and are intimidated by speaking in front of the whole class. Other children are content to sit back and listen (or do something else!) and not take a viewpoint, whilst others continually dominate.

For these reasons the following guidelines are suggested:

- Before the initial session, take some time to formulate discussion guidelines with the students to use as boundaries for behaviour within the group. Display these guidelines somewhere in the classroom. Alternatively you may like to display the provided discussion guidelines on page 8.
- Read the task cards or scenarios aloud to the whole class first to generate some initial ideas.
- Children then break into pre-determined groups to discuss the issue further.
- Appoint three children within each group a job. Alternate these jobs each session. The job of each group member is briefly revised before the groups break up so that responsibilities are fresh in the students' minds.
- Display the role descriptions and discussion guidelines in the class so that they are within eyesight of the groups.

► Group roles:



The Turn About Manager

The Turn About Manager is the group facilitator. They are responsible for starting the discussion, making sure that everybody has had a turn of speaking, that all opinions are valued and that no one person is dominating the conversation.



The Off Track Manager

The Off Track Manager is responsible for making sure that the conversation doesn't veer away from the topic and become an unrelated chat. The Off Track Manager's duty is to monitor the discussion and politely interrupt and return the group to the topic at hand if it goes off track.

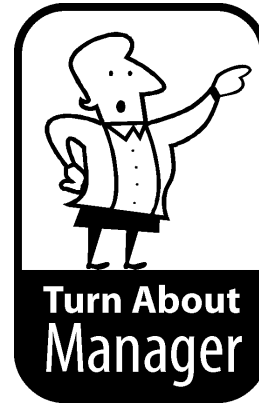


The Scribe (reporter)

This person is responsible for recording the main ideas of the discussion and reporting back to the class. In the case of debates and role plays, the scribe will allocate who will speak first, second, etc. or in which role.

Good Discussions

- **Be respectful:** Listen to and value others' opinions.
- **Be confident:** Your opinion is important.
- **Be polite:** Wait for your turn to speak.
- **Be focused:** Stay on task and keep up with the discussion.



- ▶ Organise the group in a circle.
- ▶ Start the discussion.
- ▶ Make sure everyone has a fair chance to speak.
- ▶ Make sure everybody contributes.



- ▶ Record the discussion: Pick out the important points being made and write notes.
- ▶ Report back to the class on the group's ideas.
- ▶ (Debate and Role Play only): Allocate roles, choose which speaker goes first, second, etc.



- ▶ Make sure that the discussion is on the topic.
- ▶ Remind people who start chatting about other things that they are "OFF TRACK"!

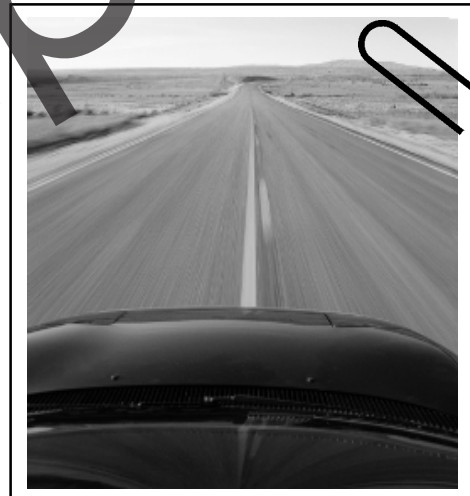


The Accident

John lives on a farm with his father. All the other kids on farms nearby have learnt how to drive in the paddocks, but John, even though he is 15, hasn't been allowed. His father keeps telling him it's still dangerous whether he's on the road or not. John's older brother, Toby and sister, Ella both have their licences. They keep telling their dad to give John some experience but he won't listen. Ella has secretly taken her brother out a few times in the paddock to show him how to change gears because she knows John is so keen to learn.

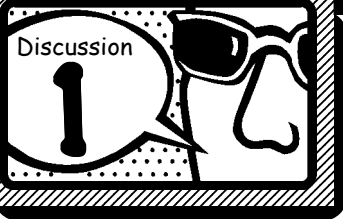
John is at home with his brother Toby one Saturday night. His dad is at a BBQ, his sister is in town and Toby is about to go to a party at a friend's place on a nearby farm. Toby needs a lift. He is going to have a few drinks and stay over at the party and Ella needs the car for work the next day. John suggests that he can drive Toby. He explains that Ella has given him enough practise and that there is only one road to cross - the rest of the time he can just drive across the two farms, crossing through the tractor gates. Toby is unsure but John is insistent and he finally agrees. On the way back from dropping Toby off, John crosses the farm and gets to the main road. He sees a car coming quite fast, but it isn't really close. He is sure he can make it. He moves out, hitting the accelerator hard and stalls the car. The driver of the other car suddenly sees him. She is travelling 10 km over the speed limit. There is no way she can stop in time.

John is taken to hospital along with the driver of the other car. He is in a critical condition. He will survive but may suffer some long time effects as the result of his injuries ...



- **Who is most to blame for this accident?**
John, Ella, Toby, his dad or the other driver?
- **Discuss this situation in your group.**
Rank everybody involved from 1-5 with 1 being the most responsible and 5 the least.

Discussion



Freedom s

What decisions should you be allowed to make for yourself at the age you are now?

- Think carefully through all of the points and come to a consensus in your group as to what decisions you are ready for. Put the following list of freedoms on the “yes, now” or the “not yet” column. Present your answers to the class. Give reasons and examples for each of your answers.

- Decide what clothes to wear on the weekend.
- Decide what time you get home at night.
- Decide what time you go to bed.
- Decide which school and or high school you go to.
- Decide whether you go to school or not.
- Decide what you want to eat.
- Decide how the family income should be spent.
- Decide how you should be punished if you've done something wrong.
- Decide whether you do your homework/assignments or not.
- Decide who you will be friends with.
- Choose what you want to do without adult supervision.
- Decide what you want to do with your hair.
- Decide what music you listen to.
- Decide how long you spend on the internet/Play station/Nintendo?
- Decide whether you have ear/body piercings.
- Decide whether you go to girl/boy parties.

- On a separate piece of paper draw up a table like the one below and record the decisions of the group. The decisions should be based on the group majority.

Yes, Now	Not Yet