

Conversations

Burke/Fall 2002

Overview Follow these steps to prepare for and contribute to a conversation about an idea, event, or person. “Conversations” involve talking not only to yourself, but others both past and present, people similar to and different than yourself.

Objectives The goal of this assignment is to improve your ability to:

- Generate ideas
- Use strategies (e.g., questions, tools, etc.) to help you think
- Write for various purposes: to understand, to think, to inform
- Participate in and contribute to a thoughtful discussion of an idea or text
- Listen to others’ ideas in order to understand what they are saying and why they think as they do
- Give you the opportunity to think about and better understand yourself and the world in which you live

Directions Complete each of the following steps:

1. *Brainstorm ideas* (list, cluster, Main Idea Organizer) about, responses to, or examples of the subject. These examples can come from your own observations, personal experiences, or subject you have studied at school.

	Subject			
Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stories• Details• Examples				
Main Idea What are you <i>saying</i> about the subject?				

2. *Read the text* I gave you. This might be a page of quotations, a poem, or a longer piece of prose. Unless I say otherwise, *please* mark it up: underline ideas or quotations you think are interesting or important.
3. *Write a paragraph* about your subject, using your ideas from the reading and your text to guide you. Get as much down as you can in the time provided.
4. *Write down two or three questions* about your subject. These should be questions about things you did not understand or about which you simply wondered.
5. *Gather in small groups* (unless I tell you otherwise) and share your ideas, questions, and quotations. *Make sure everyone shares their ideas.*
6. *Discuss the subject as a class*, sharing ideas from your writing or discussion. This is also a perfect time to ask questions you think will help us have a great conversation.
7. *Write a final reflection* on the day’s conversation. You might focus on any of the following:
 - ✓ Did your thoughts about this subject change after all this work?
 - ✓ What surprised you the most today?
 - ✓ What did you learn about this subject that you did not know before?
 - ✓ How does today’s subject connect to your own life?