3 Intellectual roles to facilitate discussion about text

Note: This is not the form of the document you would give to students. Rather, you’d modify what is below (including the title) in ways that make sense for your students.

Start here: Before you begin discussing the articles, each person should state what their role is.

Note: The roles below are in addition to other conversational contributions that you would normally make in the discussion, they are not the only kinds of things you say during the discussion.



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| *Prompter* | *Synthesizer* | *Question monitor* |
| • Start off the discussion by stating the questions you are supposed to be working on— or asking someone else in your group to put it into their own words.  *Example of what you might say: “Who would like to read the question?” OR “Can someone say what the task is in their own words?”* | • Makes periodic links between different ideas in the text, or asks peers to.  *Example of what you might say: “This point in the article reminds me of something else that came earlier (or later)…”* | • Asks the group about halfway through if they are really making progress on the task.  *Example of what you might say: “Our original questions is…, what progress have we made in answering it?” OR “What do we need to do now to make progress?”* |
| • Ask your peers if they think they understand what is being asked for.  *Example of what you might say: “What kinds of things would we have to talk about to be able to accomplish this task? ”* | • Asks two peers to make connections between ideas that they have brought up.  *Example of what you might say: “How is what you (peer 1) have said about this topic, similar or different from what you (peer 2) have said?”* | • States what other questions the group has been spending time on, or asks a peer to state it.  *Example of what you might say: “Can you give me a list of other related questions that we’ve been talking about?”* |
| • Throughout the discussion, ask your group members to elaborate on their answers.  *Example of what you might say: “Can you say more about that?” “What do you mean by that?” “Why do you think that?”* | • Makes periodic links between ideas across different texts.  *Example of what you might say: “I think that this idea (in Text #1) relates to this idea (in Text #2), because….”* | • At the end of the discussion, prompts others to summarize what progress was made and helps them out if necessary.  *You might say: “Can you talk about a couple major responses we have to the question or about the task? Were we successful? Why or why not?”* |