

BUILDING A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

LESSON PLAN





Goal: Students will lay the foundations for a virtual community and establish rules for future issue discussions.

Lesson Overview: Students will work together to identify issues impacting their community and the world at large—issues that they care about and would like to discuss with their class. After identifying these issues, students will collaborate to establish an agreed upon set of rules and norms to help keep their future discussions civil, organized, and productive.

Note to Teachers: You may already have a set of classroom rules that students can borrow from. However, it is important to revisit these rules in the virtual classroom as there may be additional rules and procedures specific to online discussions that need to be addressed. (For example: All microphones should be muted when not speaking.)

Procedural Overview:

1. Separate students into breakout rooms, where they will discuss issues that are important to them and record the issues on a shared document.
2. Bring students back together as a whole group and ask them to share the responses that their groups came up with.
3. Explain to students the need to establish a mutually agreed upon set of rules for online discussions.
4. Send students back into breakout rooms to create a set of rules and record them on a shared document.
5. Bring students back to the whole group and ask each breakout room to share the rules they came up with, recording them on a document that all students can view on a shared screen.
6. Once the list is complete, ask students to vote on the rules to approve them.
7. Reflect with students on the lesson and send out a fillable form that each student can complete as an assessment/grade.

Time and Space: This lesson is design to take up one 45-50-minute class period. However, if you are facing shorter time constraints, you can separate the lesson into two parts:

PART 1: Students work together to identify and share issues that concern them.

PART 2: Students collaborate to build, approve, and reflect on a set of rules for discussions.

Materials:

[Building A Virtual Community PowerPoint](#)

[Issue Questions \(Attachment 1\)](#)

[Community Rules Discussion \(Attachment 2\)](#)

[Reflection Questions \(Attachment 3\)](#)

Procedures:

Time	Procedures	Zoom Instructions and Materials
Before class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have all relevant tabs and links open and ready to be shared.• Turn on screen sharing and have SLIDE 1 ready.	Screen sharing on; SLIDE 1
2-3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have all relevant tabs and links open and ready to be shared.• Explain to students the goals of today's lesson.• Share the slides on your screen.• Display SLIDE 2 and review the questions that students will be reviewing in their breakout rooms.• Explain that they should appoint a facilitator in their breakout room and record their group responses on the Issue Questions document (Attachment 1).• Perform a check for understanding (CFU) by asking students to use the "thumbs up" reaction found in the Zoom toolbar.	Screen sharing on; SLIDES 1-2 Issue Questions (Attachment 1) for each breakout room "Thumbs up" reaction tool
6-8 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using the chat, send each breakout room's Issue Questions document or copy the questions directly into the chat so all students can view them.• Send students into breakout rooms of 2-4 students each.• Send students a two-minute reminder.• Click "Close Breakout Rooms" to give students a one-minute warning before all rooms automatically close and students return to the whole group.	Issue Questions for each breakout room Chat window
5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share your screen and display SLIDE 3.• Ask facilitators from each breakout room to share responses they discussed.• Ask students to be as specific as possible in their responses.• (For example: "Climate change" is too broad; ask students to expand on what specific elements of climate change they discussed.)	Screen sharing on; SLIDE 3

2-3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students the need to establish clear rules to govern their online community and the discussions they will have. • Display the brainstorming questions on SLIDE 4 and ask students to take a few moments to consider how they would respond to each question (they will <u>not</u> share these responses with the whole group). • Explain to students that they should keep their responses in mind as they begin drafting rules for the community. 	Screen sharing on; SLIDE 4
8-10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the chat to send each breakout room the Community Rules Discussion document (Attachment 2). • Explain that students will appoint a facilitator/recorder who will guide the group in responding to the following: What should members of this class do, or refrain from doing, in order to make our community successful? • Perform a CFU using the Participant “Yes” and “No” buttons. • Place students in breakout rooms of 2-4 students each (these can be the same or different groups than before). • Give students time to work collaboratively, circulating to each breakout room using the “Join” button to check on progress. • Send out a two-minute warning and “Close All Rooms” at the one-minute mark. 	Screen sharing on; SLIDE 5 Chat Community Rules Discussion (Attachment 2) for each breakout room Participant “Yes” and “No” buttons
6-8 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconvene the whole group. • Ask facilitators/recorders from each breakout room to share their group’s list of rules. • Ask for clarification/elaboration as necessary. (For example: How can we demonstrate “active listening?”) • Record responses on SLIDE 6, “Rules for Discussions.” • Once all responses have been collected, ask students to vote for the rules using reactions on the tool bar, the Participant Yes/No buttons, or the Participant Hands Up button. • Explain that these rules can and will be changed as the class moves forward, but that these rules will serve as a reference point at the start of every discussion to keep conversations productive and civil. 	Screen sharing on; SLIDE 6 Reactions, Participant Yes/No, or Participant Hands Up
1-2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief with students on the important first step to engaging conversations and online community that they have taken. • Explain to students that they will individually fill out a brief form in response to the questions on SLIDE 7. • Using the chat, send students the Reflection Questions (Attachment 3) and ask them to submit it as an exit slip for the day. 	Screen sharing on; SLIDE 7 Reflection Questions (Attachment 3)