

# Playing a Facilitator and Active Listener Role

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In social argument, the discussants treat each other and each other's positions with respect. Their mutual goal is not necessarily to come to complete agreement or consensus, but to keep the issue open for further discussion and consideration. Discussants stay focused on the issues, represent counter-positions fairly and completely, and establish and maintain common ground even as they disagree with reach other. They are engaged in dialogue, not merely talking at each other but actively responding to one another.

In social argument, in dialogue, your audience is active. They are not just listening to you, but thinking through what you are saying, weighing your arguments, testing your hypotheses. **They can and will respond to what you have said.**

*In your groups, use the assigned roles as guidelines for participation to discuss possible solutions to the scenario below. Be prepared to present the group's ideas to the workshop forum.*

**Scenario:** There are twelve people in your class. The instructor has posed a question related to last week's reading assignment and is expecting a lively discussion. Three people are monopolizing the conversation and the instructor is not facilitating full-group participation. You have something to say and would like to contribute during this class period. How do you break into the conversation and become an active discussant?

YOUR ROLES FOR THIS GROUP EXERCISE INCLUDE:

**Active Listener/Participant:** contribute to group discussion and take an active role in informing and assessing possible solutions to the scenario.

**Facilitator:** direct group discussion to ensure that the scenario is addressed and all participants have the opportunity to contribute to group discussion.

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