Make Sense of Problems and Persevere

Reason, Explain, and Critique

Questions and Sentence Starters to encourage peer and whole class conversations

Reflect and Connect

Sentence Starters

Curriculum Associates

©Curriculum Associates, LLC
These questions and sentence starters provide a way to engage all students in meaningful mathematical conversations. Post the cards around the classroom or hand them out to help students initiate and deepen conversations with partners, small groups, or the whole class.
Using the Ready Mathematics Discourse Cards

These questions and sentence starters provide a way to engage all students in meaningful mathematical conversations. These cards will help students initiate, deepen, and extend conversations with partners, small groups, or the whole class.

Each card has two questions or sentence starters on it, one on the front and one on the back.

With each question, be sure to have students explain their reasoning for their response.

Some possible uses:

• Post the cards around the room and refer to them when solving problems as a class.
• Give each student a card to use during the “share” portion of the Ready Think-Share-Compare routine, or other discourse-based problem solving routine.
• Choose a few cards to focus on each week, based on the content of your lesson.

Tell us how you use the cards in your classroom at www.readymathematics.com/myidea
What strategy did you use?
Do you agree with the strategy, answer, or explanation?
Do you disagree with the strategy, answer, or explanation?
What question do you have for your partner or the class?
How would you explain your strategy to others?
Can you convince your partner or others that your answer makes sense?
What do you think about what another student said?
Can you explain another student’s explanation?
Did you work together? In what way?
What would you add to what was said?
Did anyone get a different answer?
Did everybody get a fair chance to talk or use the manipulatives?
How could you help another student without telling them the answer?
How would you explain how to solve this problem to someone who missed class today?
What is this problem about? What can you tell me about it?
Is there something in the problem that can be eliminated or that is missing?
Could you explain what the problem is asking?
What does this problem tell you?
Which words in the problem are most important? Why?
Have you tried making a guess?
What other ideas have you tried?
Would another method work as well or better?
Is there another way to draw, explain, or say that?
What is another related problem?
Is there an easier way to do the problem?
How would you explain what you know right now?
Is this a reasonable answer?
Does your partner’s strategy make sense?
Can you draw a picture or make a model to show how to solve the problem?
How did you get your answer?
Do you want to revise your strategy or answer?
How can you be sure your answer is right?
How did you begin to think about this problem?
What is another way you could solve this problem?
How is your strategy different from or the same as another strategy?
Break the problem into parts. What would the parts be?
What part of another person's solution do you want them to explain more specifically?
Does that strategy always work?
Can you think of a case where that strategy wouldn’t work?
How did you organize your information? Your thinking?
Was your group participation appropriate and helpful?
Do you see any patterns?
Where could you get more information?
How would you check your steps or your answer?
What did not work?
How is your solution method the same as or different from another student’s method?
Other than retracing your steps, how can you determine if your answers are appropriate?
How did you organize the information?
Reason, Explain, and Critique

How could you solve this using tables, lists, pictures, or diagrams?
What ways have you tried?
What steps did you take?
How would your solution look if you used another model?
How would you draw a diagram or make a sketch to solve the problem?
Is there another possible answer?
Is there another way to solve the problem?
Is there another model you could use to solve the problem?
Is there anything you may have forgotten?
What was your estimate or prediction?
How did you think about the problem?
How confident are you in your answer?
What else would you like to know about solving this problem?
Is the solution reasonable, considering the context?
What patterns do you see?
What picture could you draw to show the problem?
What strategy did you use?
Explain your partner’s solution to him or her. Are there any steps you need to ask about?
What is the relationship between ___ and ____?
How is this problem like one we solved before? How is it different?
What is the same about your strategy and your partner’s?
What is different about your strategy and your partner’s?
Which skills or concepts did you use?
What ideas did you use to solve this problem?
Do you see any patterns?
Where else would this strategy be useful?
How does this relate to ____?
Is there a general rule you could use?
Is there a real-life situation where this could be used?
How would your method work with other problems?
What other questions do you have about this topic?
What are some things you learned?
What mathematics topics did you use?
Did you use any tools? If so, describe them.
What were the mathematical ideas in this problem?
What math did you use in this problem that was different from others you have done?
Are there any advantages to using one strategy over another?
I started solving the problem by...
The strategy that makes the most sense to me is...
A place where I got stuck was...
I need help understanding...
One thing I like about my strategy is...
One thing I like about my partner’s strategy is...
Something new that I learned today was...
I still am not sure about...
I noticed a connection between...
Something that is important to remember is...
I was really surprised when...
This is similar to...
I agree with...
I disagree with...