

Conversation Stems for Grades 6-8<sup>1</sup>

**If you want to express your ideas clearly...**

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about ____?</li> <li>• How did you answer __[the question]__?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the most important idea you are communicating?</li> <li>• What is your main point?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall what I'm trying to say is ____.</li> <li>• My whole point in one sentence is ____.</li> </ul>

**If you want to make sure you are listening carefully and clearly understand the ideas presented...**

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You said _____. Did I hear you correctly?</li> <li>• I heard you say _____. Is that correct?</li> <li>• Put another way, are you saying _____?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes/no. I said _____.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me more about _____. or Say more about _____.</li> <li>• I'm confused when you say ___. Say more about that.</li> <li>• Give me an example.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sure. I said __[restate what was said and add further explanation or examples]__.</li> <li>• An example is _____ because __[explain why]__.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who can rephrase what X said?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X said _____.</li> </ul>

**If you want to dig deeper and provide evidence to support your claims...**

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What in the text makes you think so?</li> <li>• How do you know? Why do you think that?</li> <li>• Explain how you came to your idea.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the text _____. This means _____.</li> <li>• If you look at _____, it says _____. This means _____.</li> <li>• I think _____ because _____.</li> </ul>

**If you want to establish new ways of thinking by elaborating on or challenging the thinking of others...**

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who can add to what X said?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding to what X said, _____.</li> <li>• I agree, and I want to add _____.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who agrees/disagrees with X?</li> <li>• Who wants to challenge what X said? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What X said supports what I am saying because _____.</li> <li>• I agree/disagree with X because _____.</li> <li>• I see it similarly/differently because _____.</li> <li>• I agree/disagree with X's view that _____ because in the text, _____.</li> <li>• I agree that _____, but we also have to consider _____.</li> <li>• On one hand I agree with X that _____. But on the other hand, I insist that _____.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does that idea compare with X's idea?</li> <li>• What do you think about X's idea?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X's point _____ is important/flawed because _____.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whose thinking has changed as a result of this conversation? How and why has it changed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before I thought __, but now I think __ because __.</li> <li>• My new thinking is _____ because _____.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Michaels, S., & O'Connor, C. (2012). *Talk Science Primer* [PDF]. Cambridge, MA: TERC. Retrieved from [https://inquiryproject.terc.edu/shared/pd/TalkScience\\_Primer.pdf](https://inquiryproject.terc.edu/shared/pd/TalkScience_Primer.pdf)

- Now that you've heard \_\_[summarize the conversation so far]\_\_, what are you thinking? What are you still wondering about?

- I still think \_\_\_\_, but now I wonder \_\_\_\_.