

Four Corners Discussion Lesson Template

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The goal of this instructional template is to give teachers effective strategies they can use with AVID Weekly articles. This template is organized in the following way:

1. Instructional Steps
2. Elements of Four Corners Discussion
3. Additional Resources

Instructional Steps

Select an AVID Weekly article and follow the steps.

1. Prepare for the Lesson

- First, sign in to AVID Weekly and **select a text** from the AVID Weekly Matrix.
- Second, click "Teacher Resources" in the top navigation. Then, click "Teacher Preparation." These questions will help you **understand how you want your students to read the text**.
- Third, click on "Setting Expectations." This page will help you set high expectations for student work.
- Fourth, click on "Preparing to Read" to help you **develop a pre-reading plan** from the list of teacher strategies and student activities.
- Fifth, **provide a purpose for reading**.

2. Interact with the Text

- Go to AVID Weekly's Matrix and download the strategies that are selected for the article.
- Teach the strategies and have your students apply them while reading. You may need to model and scaffold this work along the way. Refer to the AVID Weekly "Instructional Model" for guidance on how to support the reading process.

3. Set Up a Four Corners Discussion

- This discussion activity challenges students to take a position on a topic and defend that position. At the same time, it requires them to listen to the opinions of others and be willing to change their position.

Four Corners Discussion Instructions

A good seminar consists of four interdependent elements:

1. Ask students to identify the author's main idea or central claim.
2. Ask them, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the author's position?" While they think about their response, label the four corners of the room as follows.
 - I strongly agree
 - I somewhat agree
 - I somewhat disagree
 - I strongly disagree

3. Ask students to go to the corner of the room where the label matching their response is located. (Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree)
 4. Once in the appropriate corner, students in that corner share their opinions and come up with a position statement to present to the entire class. One person in the group records that position statement.
 5. Each corner's position statement is shared with the entire class, without comments. Students are then allowed to change corners if their opinion has been changed.
 6. Facilitate a discussion between the different corners allowing students to question and debate one another. Students may move to a different corner any time their opinion changes.
 7. Debrief both the content and process of the discussion.
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Elements of the Four Corners Discussion

A good discussion consists of four interdependent elements:

1. The text
2. The arguments and evidence given
3. The participants

The Text

Use an AVID Weekly text to engage students in a Socratic Seminar. The AVID Weekly articles are rich in ideas, issues, and values and stimulate extended, thoughtful dialogue.

The Arguments and Evidence Given

A good Four Corners Discussion begins with clear arguments and strong evidence. Students need to consider facts and reasoning to synthesize convincing arguments. Consider using the following questions to help focus the discussion.

- What is the main argument in the text? Do I dis/agree?
- What evidence does the author use? What evidence do I have to support my position?

The Participants

Good discussions occur when students study the text closely in advance, listen actively, share their ideas and questions in response to the ideas and questions of others, and search for evidence in the text to support their ideas.

Additional Resources

To learn more about Socratic Seminar or to learn how to support this work, refer AVID's *The Write Path History and Social Science*.