

DISCUSSION MAP

The Discussion Map is a useful structure for instructors to use to encourage learners to construct their own conceptual understandings, unpack their ideas, and generally stimulate discussion.

- **Ask a broad question.** Examples:
 - *What happens to the mass of a log as it decomposes?*
 - *What might have happened to this deer?*
 - *Why might lizards lose their tails?*
 - *Should wolves be reintroduced to this ecosystem?*
- **Listen to learner responses. Accept responses neutrally—don't imply that responses are good or bad, correct or incorrect.**
- **Ask for evidence and probe learner thinking.** Examples:
 - *Can you say more about that?*
 - *What makes you think that?*
 - *Can you show us what you mean?*
- **Ask for agreement/disagreement from other learners.** Examples:
 - *Does anyone have a different idea?*
 - *What are some other possible explanations?*
 - *That's an interesting idea. Let's all Turn & Talk about that idea.*
 - *Can someone else explain that idea in a different way?*
- **Add content to give learners more evidence or ask a question leading back to the main topic.** Examples:
 - *Check out this key and see how many different types of lichen you can find.*
 - *What else should we consider to figure out where the mass of this log is going?*
 - *Are there any other parts of this deer that might offer clues about what happened to it?*
 - *Try thinking about it from a predator's perspective; can you think of another possible adaptation?*
 - *What other organisms in this ecosystem might wolves affect?*
- **When you are ready to end the discussion, briefly summarize the main points of what has been said and/or ask learners to summarize for you.**

DISCUSSION MAP (continued)

Cut out this pocket-sized version to carry with you in the field.



Discussion Map

- Ask a broad question.
- Listen to learner responses. Accept responses neutrally—don't evaluate!
- Ask for evidence and probe learner thinking.
- Ask for agreement/disagreement from other learners.
- Add content to give learners more evidence.
- Ask a question leading back to the main topic.

- At the end of the discussion, briefly summarize the main points.

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