



LESSON 4

Creating a Classroom Contract

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can a group of individuals with different identities work together to build a community identity that fosters learning?
- How can we create an environment in which everyone feels like they can take risks, test ideas, and ask questions?

ACTIVITIES

1. Reflect on Past Experiences at School

- Project the following questions and have students respond in their journals [Slide 3].
 - » When have you felt comfortable sharing your ideas and questions in a class? What happened in those moments to help you feel comfortable?
 - » When have you had ideas or questions in a class but did not share them? What was happening at those moments that made you not want to share?
- Then have students turn and talk with a partner.

2. Brainstorm Expectations for How Students Will Work Together This Year

- Remind students that they will be learning about complex histories and engaging in challenging discussions that might spark debate and disagreement. To prepare, they will need to establish a classroom contract for behavior that will allow everyone to feel like they can voice their ideas, pose questions without fear of ridicule, and be heard by others.
- Define *contract* and *norm* [Slide 4].
- Divide students into small groups. Have them decide on three norms that they feel are important for everyone in the class to follow, record their ideas on paper, and then hang them on the wall [Slide 5].

3. Choose Classroom Norms and Expectations

- Have each group present their norms to the class. Then look for places to consolidate ideas. Write this new list on the board.
- Discuss whether or not the group has captured the norms and expectations that they feel are important to uphold in this class.
- Finalize the list by asking students to write their initials alongside norms and expectations that they think are important (or use sticky notes).

4. Create and Sign the Classroom Contract

- Record the information on a large paper and have everyone sign their names. Hang the contract on the wall. Let students know that they will revisit and reflect on the contract over the course of the year.

5. Reflect on the Process of Creating the Contract

- Sit in a circle for a closing discussion that draws from the following questions [Slide 6]:
 - » What process did your small group use to come up with your norms? What do you think worked well in your small group? How do you think you could do better the next time you work in a small group?
 - » What process did our whole group use to come up with our contract? What do you think worked well in the process? How do you think we could do better the next time we work on a project in a whole group?

6. Set Personal Goals for Behavior

- Ask each student to complete the following sentence starters in their journals [Slide 7]:
 - » For the next month, I am going to work on _____
(choose a norm from the class contract).
 - » One way that I will work on it is by . . .
- Then have each student share their completed sentence starters in a **Wraparound** [Slide 8].