

BIG HISTORY DISCUSSION QUICK GUIDE

Using academic language in the classroom can be really hard! Here's a short guide to remind you of how to participate in a Big History discussion.

1. Use Big History vocab words whenever you can.
2. Ask questions! If someone says something confusing, or if they don't provide evidence for a claim they make, ask them clarifying questions.
3. Be aware of the language you're using. Think about talking like a scientist or a historian rather than using informal, everyday language.
4. When you hear people not being academic in their talk, call it out! Help them restate their thinking in more "academic" terms.
5. Press for justification and reasoning—this basically means if someone makes a claim without providing the evidence for why that claim makes sense, ask them to support their claim! Don't forget that if you make a claim, you should support that claim. It's fair game if your classmates ask you for your justification and reasoning.

Here are some questions you can keep in your back pocket to help you with this process, whether you're speaking or listening:

- Does your answer seem reasonable? Why or why not?
- Are you able to describe how you arrived at your point of view, and explain why it works?
- How would you prove that?
- Do you agree with what you've just seen and heard? Why or why not?
- Do you have a reason why you don't agree?
- Can you convince the rest of us your answer makes sense?