

Collaborative Discussions

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

In a strong Grade 7 collaborative discussion, students (1) come PREPARED with ideas drawn from the reading, (2) FOLLOW agreed-upon rules and track progress, (3) POSE specific QUESTIONS that elicit elaboration and RESPOND to others' questions and comments with relevant observations, and (4) ACKNOWLEDGE new information and modify their views when warranted. Off-topic comments and silent agreement slow the group down.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.



Transcript: Discussion in Ms. Rivera's class - Wednesday, after reading the article 'Should Cities Require Green Roofs on New Buildings?'

MS. RIVERA: Today we're discussing 'Should Cities Require Green Roofs on New Buildings?' Who wants to begin with the strongest claim from the article?

ELIAS: The article's strongest claim was the stormwater one. It said a single green roof of 10,000 square feet can absorb up to 50 percent of a typical summer rainstorm - that is a measurable benefit cities can actually use to reduce flooding.

NOOR: I want to build on Elias's point. The article also said that the rainwater a green roof absorbs is rainwater the city's sewer system does NOT have to handle - so the same roofs save cities money on stormwater infrastructure. So Elias's flooding point connects directly to a cost point.

MARCUS: Can you say more about that 50 percent number? Was it measured over a single storm, an average summer, or a whole year? I want to make sure we're all using the figure the same way.

JAY: My grandma has plants on her balcony and the tomatoes were really good last summer.

ELIAS: Marcus, good question. The article said the 50 percent figure was the AVERAGE absorption across one summer of storms in a Chicago pilot study - not a single storm, not a whole year. So bringing Noor in: half of that summer's stormwater never reached the sewer at all.

MS. RIVERA: Anyone want to RESPECTFULLY disagree or add a different angle?

NOOR: I see Elias's point, but the article also mentioned that green roofs cost about 30 percent more to install than conventional roofs. So one missing piece is what cities do for SMALL building owners who might not be able to afford the upfront cost.

MARCUS: Noor, that's a good point. I want to MODIFY my earlier view a little - I came in thinking a mandate sounded simple, but the cost-to-small-owners issue means the policy probably needs a tiered rule or a subsidy, not a flat requirement.

MS. RIVERA: Good. Jay, do you want to bring your example back to the article?

JAY: Yeah - what I noticed on my grandma's balcony is that even a tiny patch of plants stayed cooler in the sun than the bare concrete next to it, which actually matches what the article said about how green roofs lower building temperatures. So small-scale plantings might be a real bridge for the small-owner problem Noor raised.

MS. RIVERA: Who wants to draw the discussion together?

MARCUS: Based on what Elias, Noor, Jay, and I discussed, the article is making one connected argument: green roofs deliver measurable stormwater AND temperature benefits, but the cost issue means a real-world city policy probably needs tiered requirements - and even small plantings, like Jay's grandma's balcony, might count toward the cooling part of that policy.

PART 2 — PRACTICE



Read the discussion transcript and answer the items. Five seventh graders are discussing the article 'Should Cities Require Green Roofs on New Buildings?'

1. Which student response BEST shows the speaker came PREPARED based on the reading?
 - A. Jay's first comment about the tomatoes on his grandma's balcony.
 - B. Ms. Rivera's question, *Who wants to begin?*
 - C. Elias's opening, which names a SPECIFIC measurable claim from the article (the 50 percent stormwater figure).
 - D. Marcus's request to clarify the 50 percent figure.
2. Which response is the clearest example of POSING A QUESTION that ELICITS ELABORATION?
 - A. Jay's tomato comment.
 - B. Marcus's question, *Can you say more about that 50 percent number? Was it measured over a single storm, an average summer, or a whole year?*
 - C. Ms. Rivera asking who wants to begin.
 - D. Noor saying she wants to build on Elias's point.
3. Which sentence shows a student MODIFYING HIS VIEW based on new information?
 - A. Elias's response that the 50 percent was the summer average.
 - B. Marcus saying, *I want to MODIFY my earlier view a little - I came in thinking a mandate sounded simple, but the cost-to-small-owners issue means the policy probably needs a tiered rule or a subsidy.*
 - C. Jay's first comment about the tomatoes.
 - D. Ms. Rivera asking who wants to draw the discussion together.
4. Which sentence shows Noor RESPECTFULLY DISAGREEING by adding a NEW angle from the article?
 - A. Noor saying she wants to build on Elias's point.
 - B. Noor saying, *I see Elias's point, but the article also mentioned green roofs cost about 30 percent more to install, so one missing piece is what cities do for small building owners.*
 - C. Noor repeating Elias's claim word for word.
 - D. Noor remaining silent for the rest of the discussion.
5. Why is Jay's FIRST comment (the tomatoes) a WEAK contribution?
 - A. The comment is too short.
 - B. The comment uses the wrong tone for a class discussion.
 - C. The comment is OFF TOPIC - it doesn't connect to the article's argument about green roofs and stormwater or cost.
 - D. The comment contradicts what Elias said.



6. When Jay RETURNS to the discussion (after Ms. Rivera's prompt), why is his SECOND comment effective?
- A. He raises his voice the highest in the class.
 - B. He gives up his original example and switches to a new topic entirely.
 - C. He brings his PERSONAL example back to the article's actual claim (plants lowering temperature) AND ties it to a problem another student raised (small-owner costs).
 - D. He repeats everything Elias and Noor said word for word.
7. Which student DRAWS THE DISCUSSION TOGETHER by REVIEWING the key ideas?
- A. Elias at the start, when he names the stormwater claim.
 - B. Marcus at the end, when he names what each contributor said and pulls the points into one connected argument about tiered policy.
 - C. Jay when he tells the tomato story.
 - D. Ms. Rivera when she asks who wants to begin.
8. Which is the BEST way to POSE A CLARIFYING QUESTION in a Grade 7 discussion?
- A. That's wrong, and you obviously didn't read the article.
 - B. Whatever, I don't even care anymore.
 - C. Can you say more about that 50 percent number? Was it measured over a single storm, an average summer, or a whole year?
 - D. I already knew that, so let's just move on.
9. Imagine you join the discussion AFTER Marcus's closing synthesis. Which response BEST BUILDS on his points AND adds a NEW idea from the article?
- A. You're all wrong, and we should completely restart this discussion.
 - B. I'm bored, can we change topics?
 - C. Building on Marcus's synthesis, the article also said cities like Toronto give tax credits to building owners who install green roofs, which could be the kind of tiered support he's describing.
 - D. Anyway, my dog learned a new trick yesterday.
10. Which sentence BEST shows ACTIVE LISTENING - the speaker actually addressing the previous speaker's question?
- A. Elias's later response, which DIRECTLY answers Marcus's clarifying question with specific information from the article.
 - B. A student saying, *Anyway, here is my new idea about something else.*
 - C. A student saying, *I already knew that, so let's move on.*
 - D. A student saying, *You don't make any sense.*



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10 A B C D

Explanations

1. C	Coming prepared means having a specific idea drawn from the reading. Elias cites a measurable claim from the article. A is off-topic personal experience. B is a teacher prompt, not student preparation. D is a strong follow-up but isn't the prepared opening.
2. B	B does exactly what a strong question does: names the SPECIFIC point that needs clarification (the 50 percent figure) AND asks for a particular kind of elaboration (over what time scale). A is off-topic. C is a general opener. D is building, not asking.
3. B	B uses the textbook MODIFY-MY-VIEW pattern: it acknowledges the previous position, names the new information that shifted it (cost to small owners), and states the new position. A is clarification. C is off-topic. D is a teacher prompt.
4. B	B uses the I-see-your-point-but-also pattern: it acknowledges the partner's idea, ADDS NEW evidence from the article, and proposes a different angle. A is building. C is repetition. D is non-participation.
5. C	The problem is RELEVANCE - balcony tomatoes are not the article's argument about citywide policy. A is wrong (length isn't the issue). B is wrong (the tone is fine). D is wrong (it doesn't contradict anything).
6. C	C names the move: a peer who started off-topic can REJOIN the discussion by linking their example to an article claim AND to another student's point. A is irrelevant. B abandons useful material. D is repetition.
7. B	Drawing together means SYNTHESIZING contributions into a bigger picture. Marcus names the contributors and ties their points into the connected argument. A opens. C is off-topic. D is a teacher prompt.
8. C	A strong clarifying question (a) NAMES the specific item that needs clarification and (b) asks for the SPECIFIC kind of elaboration - exactly what Marcus does. A attacks the speaker. B disengages. D dismisses.
9. C	C does exactly what a strong build does: NAMES Marcus's synthesis, ADDS a new on-topic idea from the article (Toronto's tax credits), and CONNECTS the new idea to his point. A attacks. B disengages. D is off-topic.
10. A	Active listening shows up when a speaker actually answers the previous speaker's question with relevant information. A does this. B changes the subject. C dismisses. D insults.



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