



How to Choose a Topic and a Person You Disagree With

Created by Samantha Hedges

How to choose a topic?

Choose a topic you care deeply about and that has consequences for people other than you. The topic does not need to personally affect you, but you do need to have an opinion on the topic. Try to choose a topic being debated in the news or on social media, or a topic recently debated in the news or on social media – look at news headlines and trending hashtags if you want to research current topics.

Types of topics that are not well-suited for this activity:

Personal preferences, such as food, music, video games, movies, etc. – You are to focus on topics with societal consequences. Topics like food and music preferences are trivial and do not have wider implications for society.

Gossip – Your topic should be accessible to the public – no hearsay. The topic should be currently being debated or have been debated among members of your community, government officials, journalists, etc. Rumors among friends or family are not enough.

Related to specific people – Don't make it personal. Choose a topic about an idea or issue, not one related to a specific person. For example, your topic can be whether NFL players should stand during the national anthem, but not whether Colin Kaepernick should have taken the knee.

How to choose a person with whom I disagree?

Once you have identified your topic, choose a classmate or family member who disagrees with you on this topic or has a different perspective on the topic. The person does not have to 100% disagree with you – the person could agree with you on part of your argument but not all of it. For example, both you and your interviewee may agree about the need for affirmative action policies for college admissions, but you think they should be based on race and your interviewee thinks they should be based on socio-economic status (the income of your family).

Don't be shy – if you are unsure of a classmate's or family member's opinion, ask around. Start by asking, "what do you think about [such and such topic]?" and be open to having a conversation. Have a few topics in mind so it is easier to find someone who disagrees with you.