

Quotes to Spark Discussion



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Ready, Set, Discuss!

Ignite interaction and discussion with intriguing quotes! The 55 quotes in this book are specifically chosen to instigate dialogue among students on interesting ideas and possibilities. The collection includes wise, witty, inspiring, curious, and insightful quotes. Each one challenges students to reflect and respond, listen to the responses of others, debate and discuss, agree or disagree, brainstorm, and relate the ideas to their own experience. Use the quotes in any setting and time period where you'd like to light a spark for students and get them working through ideas together.



As You Use the Quotes . . .

- Introduce students to the idea of aphorisms, adages, and proverbs. Ask them to find definitions of these words and share examples.
- Focus on engaging students with the quote and with each other. Before you use a quote, decide on a plan for grouping students.
- Every page includes at least one group discussion task. Prepare your students ahead of time by discussing procedures for working in groups.
- Allow students to express fear, opposition, delight, sadness, joy, or humor that is triggered by these quotes. We know from brain research that emotions drive attention, meaning, and memory.
- Be assured that the noisy interaction of a lively discussion enhances students' learning. One of the brain-mind principles of brain-compatible learning states that the brain is social. Brains learn best in concert with other brains.
- Consult the Teacher Notes on pages 62 through 64 to find additional information or activities for each quote.
- When possible, give students an opportunity to learn more about the speakers (or writers) of the quotes.
- Many quotes, particularly those from the past, use masculine pronouns or the word "man" or "men." Remind students that the idea applies to all humans.
- Don't forget about a quote after the activity is done. Keep quotes posted on the wall for a while. Review, refer to, and reflect on them over time.
- Build a class notebook with your own collection of good quotes.

Different Ways to Use the Quotes

Read each quote aloud to students, introducing it so that all words are understood before students begin other engagement with the quote. You may also wish to project the quote or write the quote on the board or on a poster.

- Use a quote as a short inspiration. Read it aloud, show it to students, and give students a brief time for a group task.
- Use the quote and the activity page as a short warm-up activity. Students can do one, some, or all of the tasks on the page.
- Use the quote as a springboard for a longer lesson on the topic of the quote, the related historical era or event, or the quote's speaker or writer.

Topics Covered in the Quotes

Topics	Quotes	Topics	Quotes	Topics	Quotes
Adolescence	2	Goals	26, 45, 53	Priorities	23
Apathy	40	Humor	6	Race relations, civil rights	11, 22
Attitude	34, 39	Imagination, innovation	13, 16, 40, 42, 50, 54	Reading, writing	3, 7, 12, 27, 29
Care for others	9, 50	Initiative, risk-taking	13, 16	Relationships	4, 7, 11, 30, 31, 36
Caution	25	Liberty	49	Resilience	47
Changing the world	17	Listening	10	Secrets, gossip	19, 41, 44, 55
Character	15	Love	36, 46	Self-awareness	19, 34, 50
Choices	32, 48, 54	Nonviolence	12	Self-improvement	27
Community	4, 51	Open-mindedness	41	Success	26, 28, 40, 52
Courage	1, 16	Perseverance	18	Tolerance	11, 22
Cowardice	43	Pessimism	54	Tongue	41
Environment	24	Poetry	29	Truth	54
Forgiveness	20, 31	Possibilities	35, 37, 38, 42, 52, 53	War	33
Friendship	8, 14, 21, 30	Power	15	Women's rights	5

Name: _____



**“It is easy to be brave
from a safe distance.”**

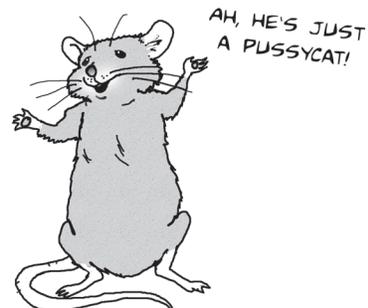
– From Aesop’s fable
“The Lion and the Mouse”

- What do you think it means to “be brave from a safe distance”? Share your answer with two or three other students.
- As a group, think of some examples of bravery “from a safe distance” that you have observed, participated in, or read about. List three of your best examples.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- Now think of a time when it would have been easier to be “brave from a safe distance,” but you chose to be brave in a more direct way. Write your example below. Then share it with your group.

Aesop (about 620–564 B.C.) was a Greek slave who wrote over 600 witty fables—simple animal tales with a moral ending. Children around the world have grown up hearing such Aesop fables as “The Lion and the Mouse,” “The Shepherd’s Boy and the Wolf” (otherwise known as “The Boy Who Cried Wolf”), “The Tortoise and the Hare,” and “The Ant and the Grasshopper.”





Name: _____

“Adolescence is the period when children are certain they will never be as stupid as their parents.”

– Unknown

“You don’t have to suffer to be a poet; adolescence is enough suffering for anyone.”

– John Ciardi

NEWS FLASH!
MY PARENTS JUST
DONT GET ME!



- Read the two quotes with a partner or small group. Try to come to a consensus about whether or not each statement is true.

What did your group decide about the first quote?

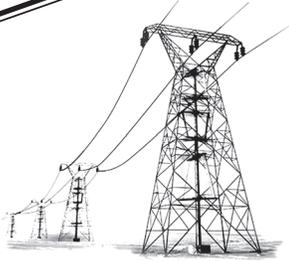
What did your group decide about the second quote?

Briefly explain one of the group’s decisions.

- When you were in elementary school, what did you think about middle school or high school students? Discuss your answer with your group. Then write a brief description of how being an adolescent (or a near adolescent) is different from your earlier impressions.

John Ciardi (1916–1986) wrote many wonderful children’s poems (including nonsense poetry) and collections of poems for adults. He was also a translator and etymologist. Millions of teachers and poetry fans of all ages have learned how to read, write, enjoy, and teach poetry from his book, **How Does a Poem Mean?**

Name: _____



**“I could live without electricity
but not without stories.”**

– Barbara Kingsolver

- For centuries, people lived without electricity. (Many still live without it today.) But there have always been stories.

Is Kingsolver’s quote true for you? _____

Explain your answer: _____

- Write your own comparisons. Fill in each blank below with something that is important to you.

I could live without _____, but not without stories.

I could live without electricity, but not without _____.

- Share and discuss your comparisons with your group. What is the most interesting comparison you heard from a classmate? Write it below.



Barbara Kingsolver (1955–) has always been a storyteller. She began keeping a journal at the age of eight, and even though she got a college degree in biology, today she is a novelist, short-story writer, poet, and nonfiction writer. Her many popular and prize-winning books include ***The Bean Trees***, ***Animal Dreams***, ***Pigs in Heaven***, and ***The Poisonwood Bible***. Kingsolver fills her work with themes of inspiration, love, strength, and endurance.