

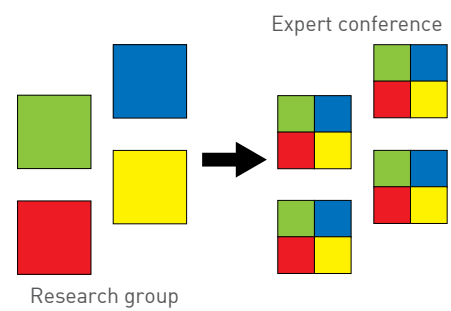
## Discussion formats

Choosing the right format for a discussion can help provide a secure framework for the participants, so that they feel comfortable expressing their opinions and exploring the topic. The choice of format will depend on the nature and size of the group, and the topic and aim of the discussion.

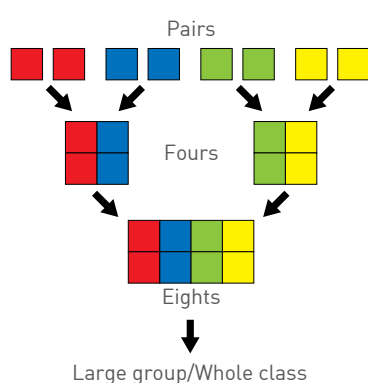
### Marketplace/Envoy

The 'Marketplace' or 'Envoy' is a good format to use when there are several different angles or ideas to be explored.

- The class is divided into 4–6 research groups.
- Each research group is given information about the topic, from a specific subtopic or viewpoint, e.g. different cloning methods.
- Each group's members research and discuss their allocated area and become 'experts' on their topic.
- The groups are rearranged to create new groups with one representative from the original groups, forming an expert conference.
- The 'experts' share and discuss their research with each other so that by the end everybody has information from all topic areas.
- If there is time, an open discussion can take place to involve the whole class.



### Snowball



'Snowball' is a good format to help quieter students voice their opinions in smaller groups and build up to a whole-class discussion.

- To start, individuals should think about the topic before joining someone else to make a pair.
- The pair then join another pair to make a four, and so on until the whole class is back together.
- Students can summarise their points as the groups grow.

## Role-play/performance

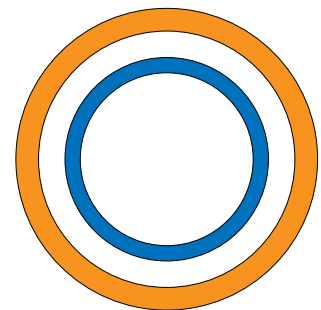
Role-play is a good format to use if the whole class agrees on a topic, to direct students away from controversial opinions, or to encourage quieter students to participate.

Role-play can be as broad or as narrow as you like, or as you and your students can make it. Students may act out a scenario about the topic or can adopt a specific point of view based on a character. For example, around the topic of climate change, roles could include an executive from industry, a green activist, a teenager and an older person, all of whom might have different opinions. Using scripts or their own research students could present many different viewpoints. This approach can also borrow TV formats that the participants will recognise such as *Dragons' Den*, *Judge Judy*, etc.

## Socratic seminar

A Socratic seminar is based on the Socratic theory that questioning and exploration of a topic will lead to deeper understanding. Every member of the group is able to participate and make a contribution.

- The whole group is given information on the topic: a common piece of text, short film or some other stimulus.
- The class is divided into two groups. One group form an inner discussion circle (blue) and discuss the topic in response to questions asked and facilitated by the leader.
- The second group sit in a circle around the outside of the discussion circle (orange). It is their job to observe the discussion and assess the participants.
- After a set amount of time the two circles swap positions and discussion continues with the new inner circle.



## Games

Games are a good way to incorporate cultural formats in the classroom and to capitalise on discussion between team members whilst they play a game. The games can focus on specific topics, raising questions and encouraging groups/teams to solve problems through discussion. Competition and prizes are also good for group motivation.

Game formats could include:

- Blind Date
- Top Trumps
- Articulate
- Deal or No Deal
- Cluedo
- Speed debating

## Open discussion

A discussion open to the whole class can be very effective and rewarding. This is a particularly good format if the class is small, there aren't any particularly dominating characters and if the class is good at discussions already. This is also a good way to end a class when a different format has been used for the majority of the lesson.