

REASONATE

<https://productivedialogue.org/reasonate/>

ORDINARY CONVERSATIONS about controversial issues often involve each party defending their own positions and undermining the positions advanced by others.

- **Advantage:** These conversations encourage people to share their reasoning.
- **Disadvantage:** These conversations can be adversarial, focused on “winning” instead of shared understanding, the pursuit of truth, decision-making, or problem-solving.

INTENTIONAL APPROACHES TO DIALOGUE emphasize telling personal stories, and encourage active listening instead of critical response.

- **Advantage:** These conversations build connection through mutual understanding.
- **Disadvantage:** Because reasoning isn’t addressed, these conversations risk discouraging real engagement with the issues.

REASONATE steers a middle path.

- Like ordinary conversations, Reasonate encourages people to share their reasoning.
 - Like intentional approaches to dialogue, Reasonate provides a structure that encourages collaboration and mutual understanding.
- It works like a collaborative table top game.

MATERIALS

THREE DIFFERENT COLORS OF STICKY NOTES.

- One color for question notes.
- One color for PRO notes.
- One color for CON notes.

WRITING INSTRUMENTS.

- One pencil or pen per player.

DIRECTIONS

1. SET THE WIN CONDITION.

- Because this is a collaborative game, winning happens as a group—and the group decides what winning looks like.

2. IDENTIFY A QUESTION.

- Participants choose or formulate a question and write it on a question-colored sticky note.

3. SELECT AN ANSWER.

- Players select a specific answer to that question for evaluation.
- Players write the answer on a PRO-colored sticky note and place it below the question.

4. ASSIGN ROLES.

- Players divide into PRO and CON roles. PRO will defend the answer; CON will challenge it.

5. EXCHANGE REASONING MOVES.

Reasoning moves lay out the claims made and show how they connect to one another.

- PRO makes one or more Reasoning Moves to support the answer, using PRO-colored sticky notes.
- CON makes one or more Reasoning Moves in response to PRO, using CON-colored sticky notes.
- Turns alternate between PRO and CON, and PRO and CON may collaborate during any turn.

6. ALLOW REQUESTS AND REFLECTIONS THROUGHOUT.

Requests deepen understanding of the reasoning. Reflections highlight points of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty.

- At any point, a player may make a Request or Reflection.

7. CONTINUE UNTIL THE WIN CONDITION IS MET.

THE WIN CONDITION

TYPES OF WIN CONDITIONS

TRANSFORMATION – “We improved the inquiry.”

- The players win if a claim or question is substantially revised in light of the dialogue.

UNDERSTANDING – “We learned something about the reasoning.”

- The players win if all players can articulate something they learned about the reasoning that supports or opposes the position under discussion.
- The players win if the central points of agreement and disagreement have been surfaced.

CONVERGENCE – “We found meaningful agreement.”

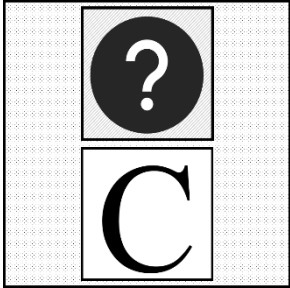
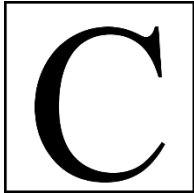
- The players win if the points of agreement and uncertainty outnumber the points of disagreement.
- The players win if they agree about a claim that they both PRO and CON identify as significant.

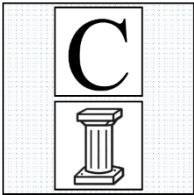
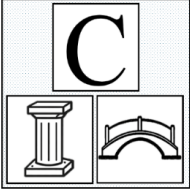
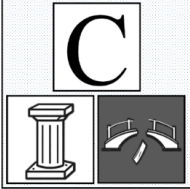
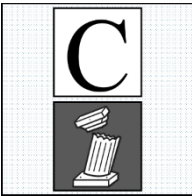
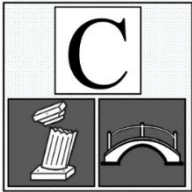
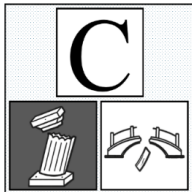
ACTION – “We decided what to do.”

- The players win if they agree upon a course of action to take as a result of the dialogue.

The Win Condition can change as the dialogue progresses.

REASONING MOVES

ASKING QUESTIONS & MAKING CLAIMS	QUESTIONS	CLAIMS
 Players write questions and claims on sticky notes.	 Good questions are open rather than closed (i.e., they have more than one defensible answer.) Good questions are unloaded rather than loaded (i.e., they don't make false assumptions.)	 A claim is a complete sentence that is either true or false (although we might not know which it is). Each note should contain only one claim, so compound sentences may need to be divided into multiple notes.

RELVANCE (Right) TRUTH (Below)	BUILD BRIDGE A same color note placed to the right of a note shows why the support or objection succeeds .	BREAK BRIDGE A different color note placed to the right of a note shows why the support or objection fails .
SUPPORT  A same color note placed below a note gives us reason to think that the claim above it is true .	BUILD SUPPORT BRIDGE  A same color note placed to the right of a supporting claim gives us reason to think “If [claim to the left], then probably [claim above].” (If necessary, it can just be “If [claim to the left], then probably [claim above]” or the corresponding general principle.)	BREAK SUPPORT BRIDGE  A different color note placed to the right of a supporting claim gives us reason to think “It’s possible that [claim to the left] and not [claim above].” (If necessary, it can just be “It’s possible that [claim to the left] and not [claim above]” or the corresponding general principle.)
OBJECTION  A different color note placed below a note gives us reason to think that the claim above it is false .	BUILD OBJECTION BRIDGE  A same color note placed to the right of an objecting claim gives us reason to think “If [claim to the left], then probably not [claim above].” (If necessary, it can just be “If [claim to the left], then probably not [claim above]” or the corresponding general principle.)	BREAK OBJECTION BRIDGE  A different color note placed to the right of an objecting claim gives us reason to think “It’s possible that [claim to the left] and [claim above].” (If necessary, it can just be “It’s possible that [claim to the left] and [claim above]” or the corresponding general principle.)

REASONING MOVES HELP US TO

1. GENERATE CLAIMS if we're not sure what to say.

The moves encourage us to ask

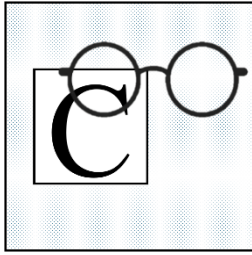
- ✓ “How can I support this?”
- ✓ “How can I object to this?”
- ✓ “How can I build a bridge?”
- ✓ “How can I break a bridge?”

2. ORGANIZE CLAIMS that we naturally make.

The moves allow us to see how these claims are related to each other, and they can help us to fill in claims that we didn't think to state.

REQUESTING

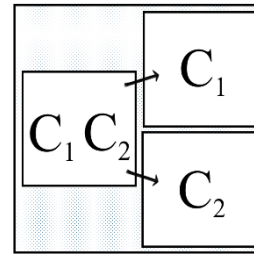
REFOCUS



If the dialogue is straying from the topic or focusing on personalities or groups, a participant can request that the dialogue refocus on the claims.

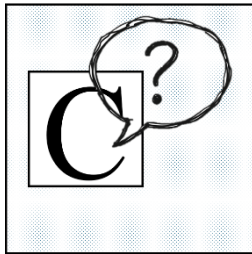
Motto: Positions, not People.

BREAK DOWN



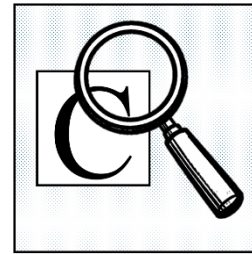
If a note contains more than one claim, a participant can request that the content of that note be divided over multiple notes.

REVISE



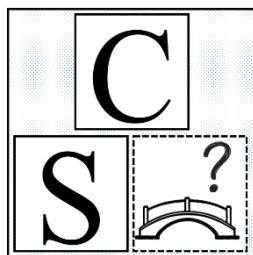
If a claim or question is unclear, a participant can request that the claim or question be revised.

REVIEW



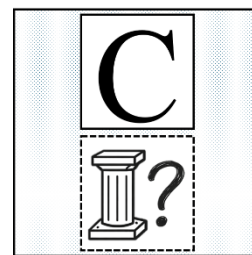
If a participant questions the truth of a claim, they can request that participants work collaboratively to identify the facts or note that the facts will need to be checked later.

BRIDGE



If a participant is curious about how another participant would connect two claims, they can request that the connection be provided.

SUPPORT



If a participant wonders how another participant would support one of their claims, they can request that the support be provided.

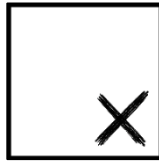
REFLECTING

AGREEMENT



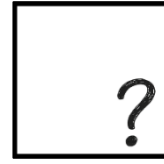
If all participants agree that a claim is true, they can mark that claim with a check.

DISAGREEMENT



If participants disagree about the truth of a claim, they can mark that claim with an X.

UNCERTAINTY



If participants aren't sure about the truth of a claim, they can mark that claim with a question mark.