

Study Guide—Complete Step 3 before beginning the Grade 4 Curriculum

Use the Step 3 “Independent Web Study” and “In Your Classroom” to prepare for a productive study group meeting and discussion.

INDEPENDENT WEB STUDY

Study Talking Point: Characteristics of Productive Talk

Become familiar with the characteristics of productive talk. What do students do when science discussion contribute significantly to their learning? What do you expect of your students during discussions? Are there ways that you’d revise your expectations? How might you communicate changes in expectations to students?

Study Talking Point: Why is Talk Important?

In Step 2 you began to establish norms for productive talk with your students. Modifying how classroom discussions work takes time and persistence. Will the investment be worth it? What changes do you hope to see in your own classroom discussions? How will making these changes contribute to deeper student learning?

IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Characteristics of Discussions in Your Classroom

Following a classroom discussion (preferably a science discussion) reflect on the characteristics of your students’ talk: How many students contributed to the discussion? To what extent did students listen to each other? Did they explain the reasons behind their ideas? Did they connect their ideas to other’s ideas? Raise questions? Ask for clarification? Revise their ideas? Plan to talk about your reflections in the study group. Identify a specific characteristic you want to work on with your students.

Continue Establishing Norms

Changing the expectations for how discussions work will require persistence as conventional patterns of talk are engrained and part of the established classroom culture. Revisit the list of norms each day. How might you involve students in taking stock of how their discussions reflect the norms.

STUDY GROUP MEETING

Learn with Colleagues: Share classroom evidence, successes, and challenges

With your colleagues share the specific characteristic of productive talk that you want to work on. Discuss what you can do to build this characteristic into classroom discussions. Identify steps you will take.

Together, reflect on your progress in establishing discussion norms. Are there strategies you’ve discovered that engage students in building science ideas together through dialogue?