

## 10 Discussions from Different Perspectives

Placing oneself in the past and taking on the persona of a character from history assists students to understand events in the context in which they took place and view events through multiple perspectives.

### **Instructions:**

1. Have students read an article or view a DVD about a topic or an event that they have been studying. Example: The integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, after the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision.
2. Present students with a list of characters involved in the event and assign them roles to play. For example, the characters at Central High School might include:
  - a. Central High student
  - b. One of the nine Negro students
  - c. Governor Faubus
  - d. President Eisenhower
  - e. Representatives of the media
  - f. Outside agitators
3. Present students with a chronology of events connected to the topic:
  - In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in Brown vs. Board of Education that school integration should happen “with all deliberate speed.”
  - The Little Rock school board announced plans to send nine Negro students to Central High School.
  - Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus called out the state national guard to prevent Negro students from entering Central High School.
  - Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Negro students, was confronted by a mob.
4. Have the students reread the article (or watch the dvd) and record their character’s thoughts, feelings, motivations, concerns, or questions as each event occurs.
5. Have students meet in “character-alike” groups and together write two questions on 3x5 cards that their character would like to ask each of the other characters. Two different questions are written for each character.
6. Redistribute the 3x5 cards to the character groups responsible for answering them so they can discuss possible responses. The 3x5 cards are then returned to the original group prior to beginning the discussion.
7. Facilitate the class discussion by calling on a character group to use one of their 3x5 cards to ask a question of another character group. Any student(s) in the character group may respond to the question. After responding, that character group chooses one of its 3x5 cards to ask a question of another character group. Continue the process until all questions have been asked and responded to.
8. Debrief the discussion by asking students which responses they thought were the most appropriate (and why) and also how they might have responded differently.