



Peabody Institute Library

Conversation Circles

Volunteer Leader Guidelines

- While not required, we suggest that you call new Circle members **before** their first visit to your Circle to introduce yourself and remind them of schedule and meeting time.
- Be aware of ethnic sensitivities.
- Remind members to be respectful and civil to other members.
- At first meeting:
 - Ask attendees if there are topics they want to include – such as sports, food, hobbies, news, fun questions, famous quotes, etc. Artifacts can be used. Put out the Topics Box for their ideas.
 - Review Ground Rules with the group:
 - Arrive on time.
 - Speak in English only.
 - Contribute to the conversation. Opting-out of conversation should be kept to a minimum.
 - Give other members the chance to speak.
 - Listen and pay attention to other speakers.
 - Be respectful and civil to other members.
 - Call your Volunteer Leader if you have to cancel.
 - Add topic ideas to the Topics Box. Topics can be facts, news, fun questions, favorite quotes, sports, travel, etc.
- Plan each week's session 1 week in advance so that you can hand out any exercises at the end of each session.
- Focus on a specific topic each week. Start the conversation, and keep it moving by posing questions to the group when needed. For less skilled speakers, consider incorporating a more structured segment into each meeting, such as grammar rules, vocabulary, usage tips, etc.
- Ask 1 person to speak at a time.
- Give all members the opportunity to speak. Point out to the group if the conversation is being monopolized.
- Remind attendees that groups are formed based on speaking skill. If they ask to bring friends or family into the group, they should first call Gerri to do a brief Intake Interview to assess their English speaking skill level.

Handouts for all New Learners:

Black Folder – to store work sheets, class handouts, etc.

Composition Notebook

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Ask all Learners to use the Composition Notebook as a Journal to track their progress on what they are learning, keep notes on what they would like to discuss at future Circles, and comment on how the program is helping them improve their English speaking skills (or not) and their lives.