

## **STEP ONE: IDENTIFY**

### ***Students identify core values***

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In this section, students will rank values cards, share them with their classmates, and examine the diversity of values within the class. These values will form the framework by which students evaluate and reflect on deliberation topics.

**Time needed**

45 – 60 minutes

**Classroom setup**

Regular seating

**Materials needed**

- Values Cards Worksheet (1 per student)
- Scissors (class set or enough to share)
- Envelopes (1 per student)
- Spiral notebooks for journaling (1 per student)
- Blue, red, and yellow sticky notes (or any 3 colors)
- Chalkboard, whiteboard, or other flat, vertical, visible surface

**Note:** *This activity, identifying core values, can be used beyond this lesson as students relate to a wide variety of curricular topics and issues throughout the semester/year. See Semester/year option note below.*

**Goal**

To have students identify their core values so that they can use those values during the deliberation process.

**Objectives**

Students will think deeply about what they personally value.

Students will recognize that individuals hold differing and sometimes opposing views, most often with solid and valid reasons.

Students will understand that their participation is indispensable and every contribution is important in the deliberation process.

## ACTIVITY:

### Introduction

1. State the goals of the activity.
2. Explain that the students will be engaging in an exercise which will require them to prioritize nine values cards: Competition, Cooperation, Democracy, Equality, Freedom, Justice, Security, Self-Reliance, and Stability.

**Extension:** Use the blank card on the “Values Cards Worksheet” to allow each student to write her/his own value.

### Tasks

1. Pass out one “Values Cards Worksheet” to **each student** with instructions to cut out the 10 cards.
2. Have students individually place the cards in front of them on their desks. Have them think about what each value means.
3. Ask them to individually arrange the cards in order of importance, with their most important value at the top and their least important value at the bottom. Encourage students to keep rearranging the cards as they wrestle with their rank ordering.
4. Have students individually list their rankings in their journals and provide a few sentences justifying their top two value choices and their least important value choice.

**Note:** Writing down justifications helps students think more deeply about their choices, as well as serving as a springboard for the forthcoming class discussion.

5. Hand out one sticky note of each color (blue, red, yellow) to every student. Ask each student to write her/his name on each note and to mark the blue sticky note “#1,” the red “#2,” and the yellow “Last.”
6. While students are doing this, print the nine values (and “other” if you are allowing students to write in their own) on the board, leaving plenty of space for students to place their sticky notes underneath each.
7. Once the class is ready, instruct the students (all together or in small groups) to go up to the board and place their blue sticky notes under the values they ranked highest, their red sticky notes under their second highest values, and the yellow under the values they ranked last.

**Extension:** *Students who wrote in their own value may write it on the board and place their sticky note under it.*

**Note:** *The resulting board of sticky notes provides an easily interpreted visual of how the students in that class ranked the values. You can also use Wordle to create a visual representation: <http://www.wordle.net/>.*

8. Instruct students to look at the visual pattern on the board and formulate at least three questions in their journals for the forthcoming guided discussion (e.g., Given that we live in a democratic society, I wonder why Democracy was not anyone's first choice except mine? Why did so many people rank Freedom as most important; I wonder if they all mean the same thing by Freedom? I ranked Security last; I want to know why someone else ranked it first?).

9. Start a discussion to analyze the board of sticky notes. Based on student questions, turn the discussion over to the class. Impress upon students that there are no right or wrong answers/choices, but justifying their answers/choices is necessary. Students should also be asked to listen for understanding, not to dispute or counter each other.

**Note:** *Encourage each student to talk at least once during the discussion. Discussion helps students to think more deeply about their own value rankings and, by listening to their classmates' rankings and accompanying lines of reasoning, students realize that there is a range of interpretations of these values.*

10. Give students the opportunity to re-evaluate their own rankings and make any changes based on what they learned during the class discussion. Invite a few students who made changes to share what they changed and why they made those changes.

**Note:** *This re-evaluation, based on views and comments shared by other students, is critical. By modifying their views, students are demonstrating that they listened and grew during the discussion. When they share the reasons they switched their rankings, students will often site a classmate by name. This recognition helps cement the idea that each student's contribution to the class dialogue matters because others are listening to it. Not only does this recognition promote future contributions, it builds respect among students. It also demonstrates that adapting one's views based on new insight is reasonable and healthy. Locking oneself into a position without considering alternative perspectives is not productive and does not position one for growth and development of thoughts/ideas.*

**\*\*\* Semester/year option \*\*\***

*Provide each student with an envelope on which to write her/his own name and “Values Cards.” These card sets can be stored for use as needed, as can her/his dated lists of ranked values.*

*Throughout the school semester/year, it is a powerful exercise for students to periodically bring out their values cards and briefly rerank them before, during, or after any relevant class topic (e.g., What is your position on U.S. immigration?).*

*As the semester/year goes on, students should find that they are shuffling fewer and fewer values around in their rankings. By the end of the semester/year, it can be a goal to have each student identify a personal values framework that can be useful when making any decision on difficult issues in the future.*

**Assessment**

None

**Conclusion**

1. Explain to students that what they value can serve as a guide throughout the deliberation process (e.g., If a person’s top value is Justice, s/he may advocate that political positions involve an element of justice).
2. Explain to them that values underlie almost everything people (reporters, politicians, parents, friends, teammates, and themselves, etc.) do or say.

**Handout (reproducible master copy)**

Values Cards Worksheet

**Role of the Teacher**

Beyond providing clear instructions to students and then letting them talk, question, and share with each other, it is important that the teacher allow long periods of wait-time when and if necessary, especially if this is the opening class activity. It is crucial to establish from the beginning a deliberative environment in which the teacher does not become the pivotal member of the discussion. It is vital for students to realize, from the first day, that this is their classroom and an environment is being fostered in which they can safely question and explore their beliefs. For deliberation to be effective, students must be responsible for sharing and questioning.

Early on, it might be necessary to “play devil’s advocate” and argue for a value that no one else has supported (e.g., argue the value of Competition from an economic stand point or ask if competition for business produces better products and services). Eventually, the deliberation process will eliminate this teacher role.

## WORKSHEET: VALUES CARDS

**Directions:** Give each student a “Values Cards Worksheet.” Have them cut out the individual values cards and place the cards in an envelope labeled *Values Cards* and *Student Name*.

Self-reliance	Freedom
Justice	Cooperation
Security	Equality
Competition	Stability
Democracy	Add your own value here

Adapted from The Choices Program ([choices.edu/resources/documents/choices-values-cards.pdf](http://choices.edu/resources/documents/choices-values-cards.pdf))