

**"LIFE, DEATH, WAR, PEACE, POLITICS, MONEY, SEX, VALUES, FAITH – WHATEVER..."**  
**NOTES ON FACILITATING AT THIS CONFERENCE**

The students (most of them around 17 years old) will be in groups of 8 – 10, and will be from a range of schools and backgrounds.

There will be instructions and reminders on each table to help facilitators, group chairs and participants to complete the various tasks.

One aim of the conference is for **the young people** to have opportunities to **ask questions and raise issues that are important to them and to express their own responses to these issues**, but, as they will not necessarily know each other, they may initially be reluctant to contribute.

Your role as facilitator will depend very much on what each group of students needs, but your main aim should be **to enable the young participants to join in and lead discussions** with as little direction from adults as possible.

Though there will be much scope for “playing it by ear”, we hope that the suggestions below will help you to encourage students to express themselves.

Chairs may have to **stimulate or focus discussion** if it flags or digresses– by **asking a question or reminding the group of the set task and time**.

1. If none of the young participants is willing to act as **chair**, you may take on this role – or you can **assist a student to chair** by offering the occasional hint or reminder.
2. Chairs should begin by asking students to **introduce themselves** briefly – name, school and something about themselves. (You might like to use one of the “**Icebreakers**” which follow.)
3. During the **newspaper** reading session, make sure that students split newspapers between them to speed up this work and that they **skim-read** – looking initially for interesting and **relevant headlines** and only focussing on and reading and discussing those stories **in order to formulate a question** for the panel.
4. Chairs should encourage turn-taking if it does not happen naturally and make sure that **everyone has a chance to contribute** ideas.
5. Facilitators may be required to answer students’ questions or to clarify points. Feel free to pass on queries to other facilitators or to conference organisers or panellists if you do not know the answers.
6. Facilitators or chairs **should keep an eye on the time** to help the group to produce **the following outcomes**:

<b>in the FIRST session</b> <b>(up to 9.35am*):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least <b>one question</b> for the panel</li> <li>• one <b>spokesperson</b> per question</li> </ul>
<b>in the SECOND session</b> <b>(up to 11.40am*):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a brief <b>presentation</b> (in any form they like, e.g. poster, collage, article for magazine, lesson plan, lyrics for song or rap, role play) based on students’ own responses to the issues the morning has raised). Participants may choose to work as a whole group, in sub-groups or pairs or individually.</li> </ul>
<b>in the FINAL session</b> <b>(up to 12.45pm*):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individual responses on <b>post-it notes</b></li> <li>• completed feedback <b>forms</b></li> <li>• a <b>statement</b> and <b>spokesperson</b> for the plenary.</li> </ul>

\* timings may be adjusted on the day

## Nominations for certificates/ prizes

Another of your tasks will be to nominate students that you think deserve a certificate or a prize or for a good or outstanding contribution to the conference, so please **note down the names of students who are particularly helpful or who make particularly good contributions**. Facilitators should change groups after each session, which will give students a range of assistance and will give you the opportunity to meet and evaluate more students. Please find time during the final lunchtime session to discuss nominations for certificates and prizes with other facilitators, the conference co-ordinator, panellists and the Chair.

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## ICE-BREAKERS

Choose **ONE** of the following icebreakers to use after introductions, or if discussion is slow to start after students have had a chance to skim-read the newspapers in the first session.

Don't let them go on too long (**no more than 5 minutes** or so) – they are meant to help students to get to know each other a bit and to start talking, but they are not the purpose of the conference.

### ICEBREAKER 1

- Tell the students that you are going to read out a list and that you are then going to ask them to give a mark out of 10 to each influence depending on how strongly it influences their outlook (1= does not influence me; 10=greatly influences me). Read through the whole list first, so the students see all the choices and then read it out again more slowly so that the students can mark each influence out of 10.

#### What affects your outlook on life?

- Politics
- Hobbies / interests
- Culture / ethnic background
- Family
- Religion
- Nationality
- Friends
- The media
- School
- Heroes: public figures or celebrities
- Where you live
- Government or law
- Other .....

This exercise should help students to understand where some of their opinions come from.

- You can read out the list again, asking students to **raise their hands** for **just one** of the influences, the one they gave the **most marks** to.
  - Do the students see any pattern emerging?
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## **OR ICEBREAKER 2**

- Ask students to complete these two sentences:
  - One thing I have **in common** with everyone else in this group is...
  - One **unique** thing about me is...

(You may need to offer some simple examples to get them going:

“One thing I have in common with everyone else in this group is that we are all at school.”

“One unique thing about me is that I love cabbage.”)

- Then ask a few volunteers to read out their statements.....
- Were they right? - only the rest of the group can judge, and they may then want to join in.

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## **OR ICEBREAKER 3**

- The whole group starts by standing up.
- Individuals can sit down as soon as they agree with a statement you read out
- You can make up your own list of statements but here are some to get you started):
  - I'm really glad this conference started so early in the morning.
  - I think people from different religions get on well in Kingston.
  - My religion is important to me.
  - Youth culture makes it hard to be religious.
  - I think I am completely unprejudiced.
  - I prefer to be friends with people who are as much like me as possible.
  - I have personally experienced discrimination.
  - My values are important to me.
  - Newspapers never focus on good news.

This ice-breaker will help students to learn a little about each other (how much will depend on how many questions you use before everyone is sitting down).