

# The five minute rule

##  WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

A stepwise procedure for recognizing diverse perspectives in a classroom discussion, particularly perspectives that a student feels is being overlooked, minimized, or unfairly attacked.

##  HOW DO I USE IT?

Add the rule as a discussion norm in a course with discussion components. For assistance, please [contact CET](http://cet.usc.edu/).

The five-minute rule is a technique that can be used during a challenging classroom discussion when a student has become emotionally upset. In this case, the student is upset because they feel a point of view or opinion is being ignored or trivialized during the discussion. It can also be used if the student feels a perspective is being unfairly attacked. The five-minute rule calls on students to entertain an invisible or marginalized perspective for a short period of time during the discussion.

### The Rule

The established classroom discussion norms from the start of the semester can include the use of the five-minute rule by any student. Any student who feels a particular point of view is being unfairly attacked, not taken seriously, or not given the consideration it deserves has the right to invoke the rule. Once a student calls for the five-minute rule, the instructor facilitates the following exercise.

### Facilitation process

1. A student calls for the five-minute rule and states the perspective they feel is being overlooked or unfairly attacked.
2. Instructor reminds students of their agreed-upon discussion norm to take five minutes to consider the merits of the perspective the student who called for the rule feels is being overlooked/attacked.
3. For the next five minutes, students refrain from criticizing the perspective. Students may only speak in favor of the perspective.
4. Instructor keeps time and monitors comments by using guiding and debrief questions before returning to the discussion.
5. Repeat the process in the event another student invokes the five-minute rule.

### Guiding and debrief questions

* What is interesting or helpful about this point of view?
* What are some features of the perspective that others may not have noticed?
* What would be different if this were your point of view, if you accepted it as true?
* Under what sense or conditions might this idea be true?
* What did you learn?
* What are you curious to know more about?

**Adapted from**

[Difficult Dialogues](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/difficult-dialogues/), Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

Indiana University Bloomington, [Quick Tip: Taking Marginalized Perspectives with the Five-Minute Rule](https://blogs.iu.edu/citl/2021/02/01/qtip-taking-marginalized-perspectives/#.YMp1qS2cawA)

John D. Vogelsang and Sophia McGee, [Handbook for Facilitating Difficult Conversations in the Classroom](https://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Centers/Democratic/Documents/Handbook%20for%20Facilitating%20Difficult%20Conversations2.pdf), 2015