

## Scientific Understanding Is a Partnership

Lesson Title: Science and Policy

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Learning to discuss or debate a scientific question starts with asking productive questions. Productive questions are those that produce helpful information—beyond “yes” and “no”—in the form of detailed data. Asking productive questions is the first step to forming a partnership dedicated to understanding. Listening actively to the answer is the next step.

The more ways you ask for information through clarification, restating a proposition, and checking to see that you’ve accurately

understood it, the more you maximize the likelihood of understanding the speaker.

Below is a list of productive questions. Add to it by creating two sentences of your own in language and sentences that seem natural to your style of thinking and speaking.

1. Please explain your basic idea to me.
2. Can you break it into steps or phases?
3. Let me see if I understand...[summarize the information you’ve just been given]
4. Correct me if I’m wrong, but what I’m hearing is....
5. Can you please slow it down? This is all so new to me.
6. Help me out. My understanding is that XXX, but what you’re saying is XX—where am I misunderstanding you?
7. OK, now I’m going to summarize what you just said. Let’s see how I do.
8. You say that XXX. So far so good; I follow you. Then you say XX—that’s where you lose me. Please help me connect the ideas.
9. What is your evidence for your argument?
10. How can I verify your evidence?
- 11.
- 12.