Conversation Stems for Grades 9-12[1]

If you want to express your ideas clearly...

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
• What do you think about ____? • How did you answer __[the question]__?	
• What is the most important idea you are communicating? • What is your main point?	• Overall what I'm trying to say is ____. • My whole point in one sentence is ____.

If you want to make sure you are listening carefully and clearly understand the ideas presented...

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
• You said ____. Did I hear you correctly? • I heard you say ____. Is that correct? • Put another way, are you saying ____?	• Yes/no. I said ____.
• Tell me more about ___. or Say more about ___. • I'm confused when you say __. Say more about that. • Give me an example.	• Sure. I said __[restate what was said and add further explanation or examples]__. • An example is ____ because __[explain why]__.
• Who can rephrase what X said?	• X said ____.

If you want to dig deeper and provide evidence to support your claims...

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
• What in the text makes you think so? • How do you know? Why do you think that? • Explain how you came to your idea.	• According to the text ____. This means ____. • If you look at ____, it says ____. This means ____. • I think ____ because ____.

If you want to establish new ways of thinking by elaborating on or challenging the thinking of others...

Listener Prompt	Speaker Response
• Who can add to what X said?	• Adding to what X said, ____.
• Who agrees/disagrees with X? • Who wants to challenge what X said? Why?	• I see it similarly/differently because ____. • I agree/disagree with X's view that ____ because in the text, ____. • I agree that ____, but we also have to consider ____. • Although I grant that ____, I still maintain that ____. • While it is true that ____, it does not necessarily follow that ____. • On one hand I agree with X that ____. But on the other hand, I insist that ____. • I agree/disagree with X's view that ____ because in the text, ____. • Certainly ____, but ____. or Perhaps ____, yet ____.
• How does that idea compare with X's idea? • What do you think about X's idea?	• X's point ____ is important/flawed because ____.
• Whose thinking has changed as a result of this conversation? How and why has it changed?	• Before I thought __, but now I think __ because __. • My new thinking is ____ because ____.

[1] Adapted from Michaels, S., & O'Connor, C. (2012). *Talk Science Primer* [PDF]. Cambridge, MA: TERC. Retrieved from https://inquiryproject.terc.edu/shared/pd/TalkScience_Primer.pdf and Graff, G., Birkenstein, C., & Durst, R. K. (2016). *"They Say/I Say": The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (3rd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

• Now that you've heard __[summarize the conversation so far]__, what are you thinking? What are you still wondering about?	• I still think ____, but now I wonder ____.