



Discussion Guide

A Step-by-Step Guide for Hosts of
Face the Facts USA Discussions

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Face the Facts USA delivers provocative facts about big issues to help Americans debunk myths, hold better conversations, get involved, and make choices as smarter citizens.

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Dear Face the Facts USA Discussion Host,

Thank you for being part of Face the Facts USA and hosting a civil, fact-based discussion of important issues facing our nation. Amazing things can happen when people come together: facts are clarified, citizens get inspired, issues are brought to light, and public discourse is revitalized.

Face the Facts USA is a national non-partisan initiative from The George Washington University in Washington, DC. It delivers provocative facts about big issues to help Americans debunk myths, hold better conversations, get involved, and make choices as smarter citizens.

Whether you use this discussion guide with your friends, community members, or a group of people who have diverse political views, you are contributing to an important effort to inform Americans and help them find common ground.

This Guide is intended to provide instructions and simple tips for hosting an engaging Face the Facts USA conversation. It is designed to be used with the Issue Fact Sheets and videos available on the Face the Facts USA website.

In this Discussion Guide you will find:

- An overview of how a Face the Facts Discussion works
- Guidance on planning a Face the Facts Discussion, including tips on picking a time and place and inviting participants
- Sample agendas, moderation guidance, and facilitator tips
- Handouts for the Discussion
- Information on what happens after the conversation is over

Thank you for leading this effort. We hope these conversations will resonate with the majority that are fed up with politics as usual— citizens who want to set aside partisan differences and get to work solving our real problems.

Looking For More Help?

This Guide will help you through the steps of planning and conducting your own Face the Facts Discussion. If you have a question that isn't answered here, you can ask the team at Face the Facts USA by emailing admin@facethefactsusa.org, where you can also provide your phone number if you'd like a call back.



Overview

What is Face the Facts USA?

The 2012 election is approaching fast, and the state of public discourse in America is in crisis. Anger, accusation and antipathy dominate. Partisan considerations trump common sense and cooperation. Clear, fact-based discussions of policy alternatives are lost beneath an avalanche of political positioning and negative ads.

What the public needs and should demand is serious, real-world discussion about the problems we face—slow job growth, pervasive long-term unemployment, deficits and debt, income inequality, education, global threats and climate change.

How can we make informed decisions when we don't know – or are deliberately misled about – the facts?

Fortunately, we have new ways to acquire, share and discuss information. There are new technologies that can empower new voices. There are new ways to use digital and social media so content can resonate, go viral and have an impact. There are proven ways to get real people together to discuss the issues reasonably.

Face the Facts USA is a remedy to draw citizens back into the public square. It is a multiplatform, non-partisan initiative that debuted in summer 2012, leading into the November 2012 election, the 2013 Inauguration, the 113th Congress and beyond.

Face the Facts USA is hosted at The George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs (SMPA), and was conceived by philanthropist Ed Scott and veteran journalist and SMPA director Frank Sesno. *AmericaSpeaks* is part of the Face the Facts USA team and responsible for producing this Discussion Guide and a variety of online engagement tools. Additional partners for Face the Facts include Google, YouTube, Atlantic Media, the Arizona State University/Cronkite School, the University of Southern California/Annenberg School, Spreecast, Snagfilms, and distribution partners include Digital First Media, Xbox.com, VOXXI.com, Newsmax, The Huffington Post, and SmartBrief.com.

You can also participate in a live video conference and online discussion with issue experts, the Face the Facts USA team, or other citizens like yourself. To do this, visit our website to register for an upcoming Spreecast or Google Hangout.

www.facethefactsusa.org

Ten Big Issues

Face the Facts USA is exploring ten big issues to help Americans debunk myths, hold better conversations, get involved, and make choices as smarter citizens.

Choose one of these issues to focus your discussion. Issue Fact Sheets are available for some of the following issues and more are coming. For issues without fact sheets, you will still find lots of helpful information on the website. Find out more about each issue and watch related videos at facethefactsusa.org.

Debt and Deficit

The debt hanging over our nation's head is \$16 trillion and the federal government spends far more than we collect in taxes. The problem is bad now, but expected to get even worse as the baby boomer generation ages. Where do we spend our money? What options does the federal government have? How does the debt impact us?

Jobs and the Economy

The unemployment rate is at its highest level since 1982, and has remained high since February 2009. Private employers hire when business is growing and they're optimistic about the future, but don't hire if they don't see consumers ready to spend. And consumers don't spend if they're worried about their jobs. Where have the jobs gone? Can the government stimulate the economy and create more?

Taxes

Federal tax revenue is at its lowest level in 60 years, well below the historical average. However, very few people say they would be willing to pay more in taxes. The tax code in the United States is a complicated system explained in over 70 thousand pages of government documents. Do you know which tax costs you the most? Who takes advantage of tax breaks? Would you favour a simpler tax code?

Education

The average 2012 college graduate accumulated \$28,720 in debt. The U.S. spends \$2,826 more on each elementary and secondary student than the average of other developed countries. However, this higher investment does not translate into significantly better performance on tests in reading, math, and science. Does our public school system work? How do American students compare to students from other parts of the world? What can or should the government do to improve the education system?

Infrastructure

Americans drive nearly twice the miles now than they did in 1980, while miles of public roads have only increased 6%. Simply maintaining roads in their current state would cost \$101 billion a year. Republicans and Democrats both agree that we have an urgent need to repair and expand our highways, ports, and airports, which promote economic growth. What is the difference in their approach to improve infrastructure? What can the government do? Should the private sector be involved in tackling our infrastructure challenges?

National Security

The United States accounted for 41% of defence spending by the top ten military powers in 2011, outspending its nearest competitor, China, 5-to-1. National security in the 21st century is an endlessly complex challenge with the federal government witnessing a 680% increase in cyber security breaches in the last five years. How secure are we against both traditional and new types of threats? Are our borders secured? Is China a competitor to the US militarily? Can the government provide us security without infringing on our personal privacy and individual rights?

Energy and Environment

The U.S. transportation system, the largest in the world, is heavily dependent on petroleum. In fact, 93% of our planes, trains, and automobiles are fuelled by oil. What impact does oil dependence have on our environment and our politics? What does energy independence really mean? What can the government do about energy prices – and should it be acting in response to climate change?

Health Care

The U.S. spends almost three times more on each hospital patient than other industrialized countries. As a nation we are gaining weight by the year and one in five Americans smoke. Why are healthcare costs high? What is healthcare reform and how is it changing American medicine?

Social Security and Medicare

One out of every three Americans over the age of 65 depends on Social Security to live above the poverty line. Without these benefits, the poverty rate among the elderly would rise from 9% to 45%. No matter your age, entitlement programs and benefits impact every American and remain contentious issues during this election. How do these programs work? What does entitlement reform mean and how would it affect us? What is the government's responsibility towards older citizens?

Life in America

Our lives are filled with inconsistencies and contradictions. Our communities are increasingly multi-cultural, focused on health, environment and climate. But we also weigh too much, waste too much, and tend to have a gloomy view about our future. How have changing demographics impacted our understanding of America? How do we understand our own values in our ever-changing cultural landscape?



Five Steps to Hosting a Successful Face the Facts Discussion

To ensure a successful conversation, try following the five steps summarized below. They are described in greater detail throughout this guide.

Step 1: Get Started

What Type of Discussion Will You Hold?

Decide if you are going to host a discussion with an existing group or by bringing a new group of people together. Consider collaborating with a co-host.

Choose a Topic For Your Discussion.

Choose one of the ten big issues described above on page 3 of this guide as the focus of your discussion. Find out more about the issues at facethefactsusa.org.

Determine How Long Your Discussion Will Last.

Decide how long your conversation will last. Most Discussions will last 90-120 minutes, but these conversations can also be done in a shorter amount of time.

Find a Convenient Location.

It could be someone's home, a place of work, or a public space like a library, classroom or community center. Choose a spot that is comfortable and accessible.

Set a Time and Date for Your Discussion.

Pick a time and date convenient for the people who will participate in the conversation.

Step 2: Invite Participants

Invite Participants and Advertise Your Discussion.

Contact your friends, family members, co-workers, community groups, and anyone else who might wish to participate. Consider asking people to let you know they are coming so you know how many to expect and you can send a reminder email.

Consider the Diversity of Participants.

Think about who you might approach to bring greater political, ethnic or income diversity into the conversation.

Step 3: Prepare For Your Discussion

Gather Everything You Need to Support Your Discussion.

Make sure that you have all of the materials that you need to support your Face the Facts USA discussion. See the check-list on page 10 for a full list of materials.

Familiarize Yourself with the Materials.

Carefully read through the agenda for the conversation and Discussion Guide, and make sure you understand your role.

Send a Reminder to Participants.

Call or send an email to participants a few days before the Discussion to remind them about the date and time.

Step 4: Lead Your Discussion

Use the Face the Facts USA Discussion Materials and Agenda to Facilitate Your Discussion.

The agenda on page 12, the handouts at the end of this guide and materials available at facethefactsusa.org should provide you with everything you need to walk your group through each step of the conversation.

Step 5: Report Back and Next Steps

Complete the Discussion Report Form Online.

Within a week after your discussion, please go online and complete the Discussion Report Form to provide information about your discussion and tell us how the session went overall. Online form: facethefactsusa.org/discussions/HostReport

Encourage Participants to Host Their Own Discussions.

Encourage participants stay involved in Face the Facts USA by hosting their own meeting, letting friends know about the initiative, or taking other actions described in the Action Worksheet: Ways to Be an Active and Informed Citizen.

1 Get Started

Determine the Type of Discussion You Will Host

Discussions are designed to be flexible and easily tailored to the needs and interests of your participants and thousands more across the United States.

Who Will Be Invited To Participate?

You could plan a conversation for an existing group like a church group or a class of students. Or you could invite people to come together just for the purpose of this discussion. Participants might be friends, family members, work colleagues or people in the community who see a flyer you post.

How Large Will The Discussion Be?

The agenda for the Face the Facts USA Discussion works well with a group ranging in size from 6 to 25 people. If you plan to host more than 12 people, we recommend breaking the group into multiple small groups with additional facilitators to ensure that everyone has a chance to fully participate.

How Long Will Your Discussion Last?

We recommend spending 90 to 120 minutes for your Face the Facts USA Discussion and most of the materials in this guide are geared towards this length. However, you can also run 30- and 60-minute versions of the Discussion. Some groups might have so much to say they want to go longer.

Will Your Group Meet Once or Will You Meet For Multiple Sessions?

Most groups will probably meet just once to hold their conversation, but some may choose to meet several times over a short period to delve more deeply into the issues. Existing groups – like classes or community organizations – that meet regularly for a short period of time are great examples of those who might be interested in hosting multiple sessions.

Choose a Topic for Your Discussion

Choose one of the ten big issues described on page 3 of this guide as the focus of your discussion. This issue should be something you are interested in and that you think others would like to talk about. Remember that you do not need to be an expert on the chosen issue. Your role is to host a conversation where everyone can explore the issue together.

Find out more about each of the ten issues at facethefactsusa.org.

Pick a Location, Date and Time for Your Discussion

Pick a location that is comfortable, quiet, and easy to access for your participants. The location you use should have room for people to sit in a circle (ideally around a table) and, if possible, should have a computer with internet access, you can run your discussion without a video or request a DVD to be sent to you via admin@facethefactsusa.org. If you can't arrange for a computer with internet access, don't worry; you will be OK.

Examples of locations that you may wish to use are:

- Conference room at a place of work
- Community center
- Meeting room at a local library
- School or university classroom
- Place of worship
- Your home or that of a friend

As you choose your location, make sure it is appropriate for the number of people you expect to attend. If you are expecting more than 12 people, you will need space to break up into smaller discussion groups.

Date and Time

If you are hosting a Discussion for an existing group, we recommend holding the conversation during the regular meeting time. If your Discussion will include your co-workers, then a mid-day, brown bag lunch during the week may be the best time. For meetings outside of work, you might choose an evening or weekend.

Pick a few possible meeting dates and times and test them out with some of the people who you plan to invite.



2 Invite Participants

How Many People Do You Need To Invite?

Busy schedules and competing priorities make it hard to find a time that works for everyone. If you are presenting a program for a regular group meeting then this will not be a problem. However, can be difficult to recruit members of the general public and we recommend that you invite at least twice as many people as you actually hope to have involved in the conversation.

Bringing Diversity to the Meeting

If you are bringing a new group of people together, consider involving people of different ages, backgrounds, and walks of life. Diverse participation promotes higher-quality dialogue in which people learn from each other and are exposed to different perspectives and experiences.

The best way to attract a diverse group is to co-host the session with other individuals or organizations that may know different people or have different networks than you do. Try to bring in as many other perspectives as possible.

Invitation Tips

Get Personal

There is no substitute for a personal invitation. Email, phone calls, and letters are useful, but a face-to-face invitation will always generate the best results.

Go Where People Already Are

Piggyback on existing meetings in your community. Offer to host a Face the Facts USA Discussion as part of a regularly scheduled meeting.

Connect with Different Networks

If you are convening a new group, get together with your co-host(s) and map out your different networks. Set targets for how many people each of you will invite and from where. Think about who can reach out to young people, people of different ethnic groups, people with different political orientations, people with different income levels, etc.

Publicize Your Discussion

Visit the Face the Facts USA website to download a sample flyer and email and newsletter language you can use to advertise your session. If you are bringing together a new group for your conversation, think about publicizing your conversation on local community calendars, Facebook, websites, newsletters or email listservs.



3 Prepare for Your Discussion

Plan Your Event

As you get ready for your Face the Facts USA Discussion, follow these three steps to complete your planning:

1. Check to see that you have gathered all of your materials

Review the materials checklist. Are you missing anything? Download any missing materials at the Face the Facts USA website.

Do you have access to a laptop and LCD projector for your discussion? If so, consider showing your participants the Face the Facts video for that issue, which is available on the website or the Face the Facts USA YouTube channel or by mail request from admin@facethefactsusa.org. Don't worry if you aren't able to show the video, the participant handouts cover similar information.

2. Familiarize yourself with the materials

Read through this Discussion Guide to help you better understand your role during the discussion. If you haven't yet chosen one of the ten big issues described on page 3, choose one to focus your discussion. Take some time to read the Issue Fact Sheet you have selected so you are familiar with the information in it.

3. Plan the Discussion agenda

Review the included discussion agenda and get comfortable with it prior to your session. Since the agenda can run from 90 to 120 minutes, determine how long to spend on each agenda item.

Materials Checklist

In advance of the meeting, prepare the following:

- Print out a sign-in form to capture the names and email addresses (optional) of participants. Page 23 of this Guide
- Print a copy of the Issue Fact Sheet for each participant. They are available for download at facethefactsusa.org/discussions. You can ask participants to bring their own, or have printed copies for them. Be sure to have extra copies on hand.
- Print copies of the Issue Worksheet (page 24) and the Action Worksheet (page 25) for each participant
- Optional: Face The Facts USA video(s) streamed or downloaded from the Face The Facts website or YouTube
- If you are showing the video, set up a computer and/or LCD projector to share the video with participants. Be sure to test the video in advance!
- Pens or pencils for those who don't bring their own

In addition, the following materials are available at our website as part of your Face the Facts USA Discussion kit:

- Outreach materials (flyer, newsletter article, email invitation) that you can personalize to invite participants to your conversation

Other optional materials or resources you may want to gather to support your meeting include:

- Snacks and drinks to make participants feel more welcome
- Digital camera or video camera to capture a group photo if you want
- Flip chart and markers to take notes on what you discuss
- Extra paper to take notes



4 Lead Your Discussion

Focus Your Discussion on a Key Issue

If you haven't yet chosen an issue to focus your Discussion, choose one of the ten big issues described on page 3 of this guide.

Agenda Overview

Details for each step are described in the following pages.

Prior to Meeting Start

- Help participants feel welcome as they arrive.
- Ask each participant to sign in.

1) Welcome and Overview of Meeting (5 min.)

- Welcome participants and explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Make a few brief comments about the upcoming election and the importance of being active citizens at this time.
- Summarize what will happen during the meeting.
- Introduce the guidelines for group discussion.

2) Introductions & Opening Discussion (15-25 min.)

- Participants briefly introduce themselves with a little personal information and one idea about why most people aren't very active as citizens.
- Introduce the idea that we need to squarely face the problems in our country and the fact that citizens have an important role to play.
- Read the statement about the overall situation in our country then ask participants what they think of this statement.
- Summarize the level of agreement from the discussion and then close this discussion.

3) Learning about the issue (20-30 min.)

- Read a brief statement introducing the issue.
- Show the Face the Facts USA video on the issue.
- Ask everyone in the group to take a few minutes to read the Issue Fact Sheet.
- Participants fill out the Issue Worksheet and reflect on what they have heard and seen.
- Lead a short discussion where participants share their answers to the two questions.
- Make some brief closing comments.

4) Issue Discussion (35-45 min.)

- Pose a variety of questions that engage participants in discussing the issue.
- After some general discussion, direct participants to the section of the Issue Fact Sheet that lists different approaches to the issue and ask some questions to discuss those ideas.

5) Discussion of Possible Actions to Take (10 min.)

- Ask what else people want to know about this issue, using the Issue Worksheet".
- Hand out and discuss the Action Worksheet.

6) Concluding Comments & Commitments (5 min.)

- Invite summary comments and/or descriptions of any actions participants plan to take to be a more active and effective citizen.

After the Meeting

- Complete the online Discussion Report Forum at facethefactsusa.org/discussions/HostReport



Host Script and Step-by-Step Agenda

Prior To Meeting Start

Action Items & Notes

- Help participants feel welcome as they arrive.
- Ask each participant to sign in.
- Ensure there are enough handouts, sign in sheets and pens for the expected number of participants.

Suggested Talking Points

This sign in sheet is to record attendance at this Discussion. If you want to get regular information from Face the Facts USA, check the box to make sure you receive daily facts and other information.

Action Items & Notes

- Welcome participants and give a short statement explaining the purpose of the meeting
- If there are two co-hosts they should both be involved in the opening comments.
- Remember to make copies of the worksheet for participants.
- Hand it out when it is time to go over the purpose of Face the Facts, USA.
- After the opening statements, make a few brief comments about the upcoming election and the importance of being active citizens at this time.
- Give a brief summary of what will happen during the meeting.

Suggested Talking Points

Good evening and welcome. My name is _____ and I have helped to organize this event along with _____.

This program was inspired by Face the Facts USA, which is a project of The George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs in Washington DC in association with AmericaSpeaks.

Pass out the Issue Worksheet that includes purpose of meeting and statement on citizenship.

Face the Facts USA is a non-partisan educational effort that has the support of people from across the political spectrum. The purpose of the group is to help people do three things:

1. Make the American people more aware of the facts behind the major issues
2. Get citizens more engaged in the political process
3. Elevate the tone of our political debate

As you know, we are in the midst of an election season where we are once again being asked to choose our national leaders. Our purpose today is to come together for a while and focus on our role as voters and American citizens.

Make a few brief comments like these about citizenship:

- Although citizenship is critically important, many of us don't give enough time to it
- Being an American citizen has rights but it also has responsibilities
- Being a good citizen means voting, but it means more than that—it means being informed and involved

This purpose of this meeting is to help us practice being more active and engaged citizens. It will be structured around the three goals for Face the Facts USA. We will learn some basic information about the issue of _____, spend some time discussing our views and then talk about how we can be more effectively involved in the political process.

Action Items & Notes

- Ask participants to introduce themselves briefly by giving a little personal information and answering a question about why they think most people aren't very active as citizens.
- The type of introduction will vary depending on the number of people and whether they already know each other.
- Make a brief statement about the need to squarely face the problems in our country and the fact that citizens have an important role to play
- Next read the statement about the overall situation in our country.
- Next read the statement about the overall situation in our country.
- After a few minutes, make a brief comment to summarize the level of agreement from the discussion and then close out this discussion.

Suggested Talking Points

As we begin, we want to take a few minutes and have everyone briefly introduce themselves. Our time is limited and so we ask each of you to take no more than 30-60 seconds and answer the following questions:

- What is your name?
- Where do you live?
- What do you think is the main reason people aren't more involved in our political process?

While we need to "face the facts" about important issues, we also need to face some facts about our country and our role as citizens.

Before we go into our issue discussion, I am going to read a short statement that summarizes some facts we need to face about the current situation in the country. After that, we'll take a few minutes to get your reaction to them.

Read the following statement:

We need to face the fact that: Our country has serious problems that threaten our future and our political system is currently not doing a good job of dealing with them. To help our political system function effectively, we need a big increase in the number of citizens who are

- more engaged,
- better informed, and
- willing to work together across different points of view

Ask questions like the ones below and lead a brief discussion for 5-10 minutes

How do you feel about this statement?

Is there any part of this statement you disagree with?

It's been interesting to hear your comments on these statements and to see the large level of agreement (or the wide variety of views) about them.

Action Items & Notes

- Read a brief statement introducing the issue.
- Be sure to plan carefully how you will show the video. Test it and make sure it will be clear and loud enough for everyone to see and hear. Don't worry if you aren't able to show the video, the participant handouts cover similar information.
- The host will then ask everyone in the group to take a few minutes to read the background information
- Participants will be asked to take a couple of minutes to fill out the worksheet and reflect on what they have heard and seen.
- After participants fill out the worksheet, lead a short discussion where they share their answers to the two questions.

Suggested Talking Points

There are several issues at the center of discussion today and we are going to focus on one of them. The issue of _____ is hotly debated by candidates and citizens and it is important that:

- Each of us know basic facts relating to the issue and
- We understand the different points of view about possible solutions

We are first going to spend a little time making sure we understand the basics of _____ and then later we will have some time to share our views and experiences with the issue

To begin, we are going to look at a short video from Face The Facts USA.

Show Face the Facts USA video

I hope you found that interesting. It's also helpful if we review some additional information.

Let's all take a few minutes to read over the summary that is provided in our issue guide.

Give everyone 3-5 minutes to read over the information

All right, I hope you found that summary to be informative.

Before we have a discussion about this issue, I want to ask you to take a moment and reflect on what you have heard about it.

In order to help you do that, please take a moment to fill out the worksheet you received earlier.

Point to worksheet that has already been handed out and give them 3-4 minutes to fill it out.

OK, let's talk a bit about the information in the video and the basic facts about this issue.

Notes

Action Items & Notes

- Pose a variety of questions that engage participants in discussing the issue.
- As much as possible, the discussion questions should grow out of the factual information that has been presented to the group.
- After some general discussion, direct participants to the section of the discussion guide that lists different approaches to the issue and ask some questions to probe their thoughts about those ideas.

Suggested Talking Points

Let's talk now about _____ in more detail. We want to hear your thoughts about this issue, how it affects you and what ideas you have about possible solutions.

Some questions you can ask to begin the discussion are:

- What do you think is the main problem with this issue that needs to be addressed?
- Are there ways in which this issue is particularly important to you?
- Based on what you know, what actions do you think are needed?

After about 15 minutes, direct the group's attention to the section of the discussion guide that summarizes different approaches to the issue. Have people read this short section again and ask questions like:

- What do you like about the first approach? What do you agree with?
- What do you like about the second general approach? What do you agree with here?

Some Issue Fact Sheets have only two approaches. Repeat the above question for additional approaches if there are more than two and time allows.

- What do you think about the summary of the main areas of agreement and disagreement on this issue?
- Why is it so difficult for our country to act effectively on this issue?

Other probing questions you might ask if there is time:

- What facts have you heard this evening that help you understand this issue more fully?
- Are there personal experiences have you had that helped to shape your views?

Discussion of Possible Actions to Take

Suggested Time
10 MINUTES

Action Items & Notes

- Turn the discussion to things that participants can do to build on the discussion they have had.
- First, pose a question about what else people want to know about this issue. Ask them to identify specific things they want to learn.
- Prepare to hand out the Action Worksheet. (Be sure to make copies in advance for all participants).
- Next hand out and discuss an Action Worksheet that gives suggestions about what people can do to be a more active citizen during this election season.
- Review the worksheet and ask for brief comments from participants about the ideas listed on it.

Suggested Talking Points

This has been a good discussion, but we only have a little time left and want to spend a few minutes talking about things you might want to do to follow up on this discussion.

As we said earlier, the goal of Face the Facts USA is to get citizens better educated and more effectively engaged in our political process.

There are lots of ways you can do that and we want you to think about anything you may want to do to enhance your role as a citizen and an informed voter.

First of all, I'd like you to take a moment and think about this issue and what you'd like to learn more about. You may even want to write down a few things specific things on your worksheet or another piece of paper. I'll give you just a moment to identify some things you'd like to know more about.

Pause for about a minute while people think and/or write out some ideas.

Would someone like to share a thing or two you identified that you want to know more about?

Okay, we want to think now about some other actions we can take to be more effective citizens.

We have a form we'd like you to look at. It is primarily for your own use and has some suggestions about specific things you can do to be a more active citizen between now and the election.

Hand out the Action Worksheet.

Let's all look through this briefly. As you can see it includes things such as _____ and _____.

What do you think about these actions?

Would it make a difference if more people did these things?

Are there any actions that you think you want to take?

Notes

Concluding Comments and Commitments

Suggested Time
5 MINUTES

Action Items & Notes

- Participants will be given an opportunity to make summary comments and/or to describe any actions they plan to take to be a more active and effective citizen.

Suggested Talking Points

We are going to adjourn in a few minutes, but have a couple of things we want to do quickly as we close.

First, I want to remind you how you can get more information from Face the Facts USA to help educate you and answer your questions.

The Face the Facts USA website address is the name of the group: www.facethefactsusa.org. I hope you will go to it regularly and use it as a resource to learn about issues.

Second, I want to pause for just a minute or two to see if a few of you have brief closing comments about what you've learned, what you want to know more about or maybe about an action you have decided to take.

Are there some other specific things you want to mention that you've decided you want to learn more about?

Does anyone have some closing thoughts you want to share about something you've learned or perhaps an action you want to take?

Pause to see if there are comments and encourage 2 or 3 people to say something briefly.

Thank you for your participation and I am glad you came. I hope that this discussion has been helpful and given you the desire to be a more active and informed citizen during the remainder of this campaign and into the future.

As you leave, remember that one of the facts we have to face is that the actions of each of us have an impact on what happens in our country.

If haven't signed up for the email list, you can do it now.

Again, thanks for coming and goodbye.

- Collect the Sign in Sheet

Notes

Tips for Facilitating your Discussion

In hosting your Face the Facts USA Discussion, you serve as a discussion facilitator for the group. Your job is to help the group stay on task, make sure that everyone's voice is heard, and identify areas of agreement and difference.

Remember, if you have more than 12 participants, we recommend dividing the group into smaller groups with one person who is prepared to lead the conversation for each small group.

Serve as a Neutral Guide

Your role is to help support the Discussion. The best way to do that is to maintain a neutral position and to hold back on voicing your own opinions. Instead, focus on keeping the Discussion going and making sure everyone has a voice.

Establish Ground Rules for the Group

Begin by agreeing on clear ground rules for the Discussion. For example:

- Listen carefully to each other
- Keep your comments brief and to the point
- Show respect for each other even when you disagree
- Share time equitably

You Need Not be an Expert

Don't feel that you must be an expert on the issues. Before your Discussion, read the materials you've been provided. If questions come up in your Discussion, consider assigning someone to do more research and report back to the group.

Ask Probing Questions

You may find that in order to get the best from your group, you'll need to prod them a bit; sometimes inviting participants to be clearer, sometimes encouraging conversation about a point that you think merits more discussion, sometimes seeking to find common ground.

Some useful questions you may want to ask at the right moment:

- What is the key point here?
- Does anyone want to support or challenge that idea?
- Could you give an example to illustrate the point?
- Are there any ideas on which most of us agree?

Reflect Back Themes from the Discussions

As you begin to hear common themes or areas of agreement, it will be useful to reflect back to the group what you are hearing and check in to see if everyone agrees with your summary. You might say: "so, it sounds like several of you are saying..." or: "What I hear the group saying is ... is that right?"

Be Mindful of Time

You will want to pay attention to the time of each task to ensure that you are able to complete each step of the meeting. Some hosts find it useful to ask a volunteer from the group to keep time and/or to take notes if you wish to keep record of the conversation.

5 Report Your Results and Take Next Steps

Thank You! Your Face the Facts USA Discussion is over. What's next?

Record and Report

Help build momentum towards more informed and civil discourse in America. Please go to facethefactsusa.org/discussions/HostReport and report two pieces of information:

1. Evaluate your Discussion (what worked well, and what could be done differently next time) by completing the online Discussion Report Form.
2. List the people who participated in your Face the Facts USA Discussion and their email address if they shared it (from your Sign In Sheet)

Take Your Own Next Steps and Support Participant Action

There are many actions you can take, and encourage your participants to take, to build on the momentum of your Face the Facts USA Discussion. For ideas, see the Action Worksheet: *Ways to Be an Active and Informed Citizen*. In particular, consider:

- Hosting a debate or election night party that emphasizes civil discourse and fact-checking
- Writing a letter to the editor about your experience in the Face The Facts SUSA Discussion
- Volunteering with a political party
- Getting involved with a political issue that is important to you



Issue Worksheet

Purpose Statement

Face the Facts USA is a non-partisan educational effort that has the support of people from across the political spectrum. The purpose of the group is to help do three things:

- 1) Make the American people more aware of the facts behind the major issues
- 2) Get citizens more engaged in the political process and
- 3) Elevate the tone of our political debate

Statement on Citizenship

We need to face the fact that:

Our country has serious problems that threaten our future and our political system is currently not doing a good job of dealing with them. To help our political system function effectively, we need a big increase in the number of citizens who are

- more engaged
- better informed
- willing to work together across different points of view

After reading and/or watching information about the issue, please take a couple of minutes to write down brief answers to these two questions:

1. Which facts stand out to you the most from what you just saw or read?

2. What are some other things you know about this issue that were not mentioned that you think are particularly important? If there are things you want to know more about, also list here some websites, people or other resources (such as the Face the Facts website) that may provide this information.



Action Worksheet

Ways to Be an Active and Informed Citizen

There are many ways to be an active and informed citizen during this election period. Most are easy and don't take much time.

Here are some specific suggestions about what you can do to make sure you do your part during this important election.

1. Continue to learn about important issues

- Sign up to receive Face the Facts USA information on a daily basis
- Dig deeper into things you want to know more about, using Face the Facts USA and other websites
- Spend time each week getting answers to your questions about the issues

2. Learn how others see things

- Talk respectfully with colleagues, friends and/or family members who have different views
- Go online to read the ideas of people from across the political spectrum
- Watch TV programs or listen to talk radio that discuss issues from different points of view

3. Help those around you to be better informed

- Share basic information you have learned with close friends and family
- Get a group you are a member of to host a Face the Facts USA Discussion
- Tell others about Face the Facts USA and other resources for learning about issues

4. Share your views publically. Visit [facethefacts.org/get-involved](https://www.facethefacts.org/get-involved) for tools to help you do the following:

- Write letters to the editor of your local paper or share your ideas at an online site
- Send email to your elected officials
- Email all your contacts sharing information about what you have learned
- Share on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media
- Communicate with candidates and campaign representatives about your views

5. Vote and encourage others to do so also

- Vote at your polling place or, if necessary, before Election Day
- Make sure others you know are registered and planning to vote
- Offer rides to the polls or give other needed assistance to help others vote

Learn more about issues and get more suggestions about how to be an active and informed citizen at [facethefactsusa.org](https://www.facethefactsusa.org).



For more info visit www.facethefactsusa.org