Source: Building Academic Language: Meeting Common Core Standards Across Disciplines By: Jeff Zwiers

Here are some comments that teachers can use to maintain and deepen classroom discussions. Not only can teachers use these discussion starters, but students should also use them in their own responses and conversations.

To Prompt More Thinking:

"You are on to something important. Keep going,"

"I know you may not know, but if you knew, what would you say?"

"You are on the right track. Tell us more."

"I noticed that you mentioned… Tell me more about…"

"You may have forgotten, but tell me one thing you do remember about…"

"Great thinking. Keep going."

"There is no right answer, so what would be your best answer?"

"Wondering is very important for inference. What do you wonder about?"

"What did you notice about…?"

To Fortify or Justify a Response:

"That's a good probable answer… How did you come to that answer?"

"That is an interesting response… Can you explain your thinking to me?"

"Why is what you just said so important?"

"Why do you think s/he did that?"

"Why do you think that?"

"What is your impression [opinion] of …? Why?"

To See Other Points of View:

"That's a great start. Keep thinking, and I'll get back to you."

"Why do you think the author wrote this?"

"If you were in that person's shoes, what would you have done?"

"What are the different views of this issue?"

"Would you have done [or said] it like that? Why or why not?"

"If… hadn't happened, then how would things have turned out?"

To Consider Ethical Ramifications:

"Should s/he have…?"

"How can we apply this to real life?"

"Of what does this remind you from what we studied about…?"

"Let's pull it all together and figure out…"