

Ground Rules for Effective Groups

See also: [Biology 101 Syllabus](#) | [Lab Exercise: Bioethics Debate](#)

Ground Rules for Effective Groups*

- Test assumptions and inferences
- Share all relevant information
- Focus on developing an interesting discussion, not on arguing a position
- Be specific – use examples (present evidence)
- Use common terminology – agree on what important words mean
- Make statements, then invite questions and comments
- Be prepared to explain the reasons behind your statements, questions, and actions
- Disagree openly and respectfully
- Avoid sentences that start with "You....." Instead, start sentences with "I"
- When disagreement arises, together design a way to test the differences and solutions
- Stay on task – keep the discussion focused on the issue at hand
- Do not take "cheap shots" or make distracting comments (even if you mean to be humorous)
- All members are expected to participate
- Do a self-critique – take a few minutes to reflect on your behavior during all phases of the process

* Adapted from Schwarz, Roger M. 1994. *The Skilled Facilitator*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pg. 75