

Four “A’s” Text Protocol

1. Select a grade-appropriate complex text.
2. Assign the silent reading of the text, asking students to highlight it and write notes in the margin or on post-it notes in answer to the following four questions (feel free to add your own A’s):
 - What ASSUMPTIONS does the author of the text hold?
 - What do you AGREE with in the text?
 - What do you want to ARGUE with in the text?
 - What parts of the text do you want to ASK questions about?
3. Group students into groups of 4-5 for this collaborative discussion.
4. Review the rubric for assessing discussion skills.
5. In a round, have each person identify one assumption in the text, citing the text (with page numbers) as evidence.
6. Continue in rounds so that each group talks about the text in light of each of the remaining A’s, taking them one at a time—what do group members agree with? What do group members want to argue with? What do group members want to aspire to? Try to have the discussion move seamlessly from one A to the next, giving enough time for full exploration of group members’ ideas. Remind group members that textual evidence is required for each A.
7. End the discussion with an open, large-group discussion framed around an essential question on the overall meaning or big idea of the text.