

## Making Your ASK Videoconference a Success

### Before You Start

1. Watch the ASK video to get an overview of the project. Note especially how the teacher explains the difference between a “reaction” and a “summary.”
2. Look through the materials, lessons, and resources included in the kit. Decide which ones might enhance the unit and will be best to use for your students.

### Students Journaling & Writing Questions

1. Encourage students to move beyond basic reading comprehension. Get them to tie what they are reading to their own lives and experiences.
2. If desired, hang the posters of the journal process in your classroom.
3. Each time the students read, they should journal. If it is a chapter book, have them write down the page number, their reaction, and questions based on that section. We want students to tie their reading to the interview process.
4. Write questions that draw out the author or specialist. Have them explain or describe things.

### Ideally How the Conference Should Go

1. Usually the facilitators will do sound checks with all participating sites. Then there will be a welcome and the author or specialist will give a 5-10 minute introduction.
  2. Students should ask their questions in pairs or threes. Group students to ask the questions. Each group should have 3-10 questions (in case another school asks their question). It will work best if during the conference the groups come up to the microphone together. They should say something like this:  
Student 1: “Hello my name is Jim.”  
Student 2: “My name is Arnie.”  
Student 1: “And our question is .....
  - Both students should stay at the microphone until the author finishes answering their question. Then they should say “Thank you” and go back to their seats.
  - The facilitator will then call on the next school.
  - This procedure will allow all students “on camera” time, even if they don’t get to ask their question. In addition, it gets all students involved, and takes away some of the pressure students feel standing at the microphone alone.
3. Generally the facilitator will ask for three questions from each school at a time and rotate through the schools in a round-robin fashion.
  4. While other schools are asking their questions, the teacher should get the next students ready. Students should be ready & standing at the microphone when your turn comes. We don’t want to waste precious time with the guest waiting for students to move. So have them ready at the microphone or lined up at the microphone. You don’t have to move fast, but be organized.
  5. In addition, everyone should listen carefully to make sure their question (or some variation of it) isn’t asked by another school. Don’t ask questions twice! It is a waste of time for the students as well as the author/specialist in having to answer the question again.

6. When there is about 5 minutes left of the interview, the facilitator may ask for just one or two questions from each school. The author or specialist will give closing comments. At the end the students should applaud the guest.

### **Organization**

1. Organize the questions in the order of the book or chapters. Group the “general” questions after the “book” questions.
2. Have all the questions written on 3x5 cards. You may think students will remember their question, but there’s nothing like stage fright to clear the mind! In addition, 3x5 cards are harder to rattle. The microphone will pick up rustling paper. Have students bring the card up, put it down in front of them, and ask the question. You may want to have them practice. And with that as the students at the microphone are talking the students in the background should not be heard either as this is also picked up by the microphone.
3. One teacher who participated in ASK had a master list of all the questions and checked them off as they were answered. She also had 3x5 cards with extra questions in case their questions were taken.

### **Notes on the Conference**

1. Have students in place 15 minutes before the connection so that the students can get comfortable, any instructions can be given and the program can start on schedule.
2. When your school is not asking questions, you should be muted. Your distance learning person may take care of this, or they may teach you or one of your students how to mute & un-mute the microphone.
3. At the beginning, the facilitator will poll the sites for audio & video checks.
4. Then the facilitator will provide the order for the questions and give opening comments.
5. If you know you are next, get your students up to the microphone and ready to ask questions.
6. Have the microphone in the front of the room so the author can see the students. Don’t stand too close to the microphone.
7. After your set of questions is finished, then mute the microphone until it’s your turn again.

### **Afterwards**

1. Debrief the conference with your students. Talk about what you learned. What the best questions were. What answers surprised you? How did the other classes do?
2. Practice writing a friendly letter and have students write a letter of thanks to the author/specialist. Put them in an envelope directing it to the author/specialist and who they are from and return them in the kit to the ISD, and they will be mailed to the author/specialist for you.
3. Fill out the evaluation form and put in the box.
4. Make sure the box is packed with everything it came with. A return address card is on top of the container and will need to be flipped over for the return address.
5. Send the box back through the MISD inner school van mail.

If you have any questions or comments contact Denise Jobe at [djobe@misd.net](mailto:djobe@misd.net)  
Thank you for being part of the ASK interactive distance learning programs!