

## DISCUSSION MAP

The discussion map is a useful structure for instructors to use to encourage student to construct their own conceptual understandings, unpack their ideas, and generally stimulate discussion and helps to “unpack” their ideas.

1. **Ask a broad question.** Examples:
  - a. “What happens to the mass of a log as it decomposes?”
  - b. “What might have happened to this deer?”
  - c. “Why might lizards lose their tails?”
  - d. “Should wolves be reintroduced to this ecosystem?”
2. **Listen to response and thinking. Accept responses neutrally (don’t imply that responses are good or bad).**
3. **Ask for evidence or explanation.** Examples:
  - a. “Tell me more about that”
  - b. “What makes you think that?”
  - c. “Can you show us what you mean?”
4. **Ask for alternate opinions or ideas.** Examples:
  - a. “Does anyone have a different idea?”
  - b. “What are some other possible explanations?”
  - c. “That’s an interesting idea. Let’s all turn and talk about that idea.”
5. **Ask a question leading back to the main topic.** Examples:
  - a. “What else should we consider to figure out where the mass of this log is going?”
  - b. “Are there any other parts of this deer that might provide some clues about what happened to it?”
  - c. “Try thinking about it from a predator’s perspective; can you think of another possible adaptation?”
  - d. “What other organisms in this ecosystem might wolves effect?”
6. **When you are ready to end the discussion, briefly summarize the main points and patterns of what has been said and/or ask students to summarize for you.**

Cut out this pocket-sized version to carry with you in the field.

