

# Does Naming a Classmate Help on TOEFL Academic Discussion?

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## THREE FINDINGS

- 1 About half of answers name a classmate: 47.3% of 3,352 name at least one of the two classmates in the prompt, and 22.1% name both.
- 2 They score a little higher: 25.65 against 24.98 of 30, a difference of +0.67. It holds after accounting for length (+0.66) and within the same prompt (+0.45).
- 3 Relevance & Contribution is the sub-score that moves most (+0.13 of 5), against +0.08 for Language Use.

## CLASSROOM DRILL

### Respond, don't just name

10 minutes, pairs

1. Give students an Academic Discussion prompt with its two classmate posts.
2. Each student writes two sentences: one that names a classmate and restates that classmate's point in their own words, and one that agrees or disagrees with a reason.
3. Partners check that the name is followed by a response to the point, not just the name.

## READ THIS BEFORE YOU USE IT

3,352 of LingoLeap's published sample answers, scored by LingoLeap's AI grader (not ETS), retrieved 2026-09-26. Observational: naming a classmate may mark a writer who engages with the discussion rather than raise a score by itself.

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Source: [lingoleap.ai/research/academic-discussion-classmates](https://lingoleap.ai/research/academic-discussion-classmates) · Data: CC BY 4.0 (aggregate numbers only)

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