

Facilitation Difficulty: 

 40-45 min.

 Any size, divided into groups of 4

 No preconference

Purpose – To clarify and expand our thinking around a text or document. To build on each other’s thinking without entering into a dialogue.

Group size – Any size group, divided into smaller groups of 4 (quads).

Preparation – Send the text to all participants in advance. Instruct them to read the article before the meeting, identify the most significant idea, and highlight segments that support those ideas. Advise them to also mark one or two “backup” ideas in case others choose the same passages. Make copies in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, distribute the Save the Last Word Handout to all participants.

Steps:

1. **Divide** – Divide group into quads of four participants each. Each quad should choose a timekeeper/facilitator with a timer (who also participates) and determine which person will present first, second, third, and fourth. (Next steps will all be governed by the small group timekeepers individually.)
2. **Present** – (~1 min.) The first volunteer reads a meaningful passage but offers no explanation about why they chose that particular passage.
3. **Reflect** – (30 sec.) Reflect for a moment on the passage before moving to the next step.
4. **Respond** – (3 min.) The other three participants each have **up to one minute** to respond individually, without discussion: what thoughts and feelings arise from hearing the presenter’s idea, what questions they may have, how they might agree or disagree with that idea, etc. The presenter does not reply at this time. If a participant is finished before their time is up, the facilitator/timekeeper may move onto the next participant. However, no participant should take more than their allotted time.
5. **Last word** – (3 min.) The presenter then has “the last word,” **up to three minutes** to tell why they chose that idea, and to respond to or build upon what they heard from the others in the group.
6. **Repeat** – (Total of 8 min. per round for three more rounds = 24 min.) Repeat Steps 2-5 until all four members of the quad have presented and then had “the last word.”
7. **Group discussion** – (10 min.) If time is available, invite all the quads to come back together and open a group discussion about everyone’s ideas.
8. **Debrief** – (5 min.)
 - *How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to expand your own thinking?*
 - *Did your perspective on “the most important” idea shift during or after this protocol?*
 - *How did you feel about the requirement to use the text to support your specific idea?*

Option – “The Final Word” modification: If desired, extend Step 2 to three minutes so the presenter reads their selection from the text and uses the additional time to explain why they selected that quote. Steps 3 and 4 are completed as written. Step 5 reduces to one minute for “the final word,” when the presenter can reinforce their original idea or reflect on what was said in Steps 3 and 4.

Steps for participants:

1. Each quad chooses a timekeeper/facilitator who has a timer (who also participates). Determine which person will go first, second, third, and fourth.
2. Have timekeeper start the timer for one minute, and have the first volunteer read the passage they feel is the most significant idea. The person speaking offers no explanation about why they chose that particular passage. (1 min.)
3. Reflect silently for a moment on the passage before moving to the next step. (30 sec.)
4. The other three participants each have one minute to respond to the passage individually, without discussion: what thoughts and feelings arise from hearing the presenter's idea, what questions they may have for the presenter or the author, how they might agree or disagree with that idea, etc. The presenter does not reply at this time. If the participants finish before their minute is up, the timekeeper/facilitator may move on to the next participant. However, participants should not go over their allotted times. (3 min. total)
5. The presenter then has "the last word" – up to three minutes to elaborate on why they chose that idea, and to respond to or build upon what they heard from the others in the group. (3 min.)

Repeat Steps 2-5 until all four members of the quad have had a chance to present and then have "the last word."