QSSSA

A structured turn-and-talk that takes students from a question to a shared claim, with a stem they can actually use and a moment for you to listen.

What it is

QSSSA stands for Question, Signal, Stem, Share, and Assess. You post one hard question for the whole class. Students get time to think, show a signal when they are ready, use a sentence stem to form a claim, share it, and you listen for whether the thinking holds up.

The steps

1. **Question.** Post the question. Keep it the same for every student. Give them time to read it twice and form a claim they can qualify.
2. **Signal.** Students show they are ready — thumbs up, stand up, or pen down — so you are not calling on the first hand.
3. **Stem.** Give a sentence stem large enough to use. Students may qualify it. The stem is a start, not a script they have to finish in one word.
4. **Share.** A structure you choose: Partner A then Partner B, a random pair report-out, or a whip-around.
5. **Assess.** Listen for a qualified claim and for evidence that is sourced — not a verdict in a single word.

When to use it

Use QSSSA when you want every student to talk before they write, or after they have met a source and need to form a claim they can later corroborate or qualify. It is a turn-and-talk with a visible sequence, not a free discussion.

Quick tip. Write the stem so it cannot be finished with “yes” or “dangerous.” If the stem forces a because, students have to put a reason in the sentence — and that is the part you assess.

QSSSA is commonly credited to Seidlitz Education (Seidlitz & Perryman).

STUDENT ORGANIZER

QSSSA · Turn and Talk

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Period:** _____

Prompt / question: _____

Stem: I think _____ because _____. You may qualify the claim.

QUESTION

Write the question your teacher posted, in your own hand.

STEM I USED

MY RESPONSE

PARTNER'S IDEA

WHAT WE SHARED

What claim did you take forward? Did you qualify it after you heard your partner?