

CONVERSATIONAL MATURITY SCALE

Union of Saints

A Comparative Guide to Listening, Learning, Reasoning, and Teaching

Purpose: This model provides a practical way to assess conversational maturity through observable behaviors. It examines listening, comprehension, bias, logical reasoning, evidence, emotional regulation, accountability, and the ability to teach others.

1. The Conversational Maturity Spectrum

Level 1 — Reactive or Adversarial Communicator

Classification: Negative / Reactive

Prioritizes winning, attacking, dismissing, or provoking over understanding.

- Personal attacks and ridicule
- Unsupported assertions and misinformation
- Logical fallacies and contradictions
- Poor listening and misrepresentation
- Defensiveness and refusal to consider evidence
- Difficulty accepting responsibility or correction

Level 2 — Developing Communicator

Classification: Inconsistent / Developing

Participates in discussion but may struggle with bias, evidence, comprehension, or opposing views.

- Partial comprehension of the subject
- Assumptions presented as facts
- Selective listening
- Inconsistent reasoning
- Difficulty acknowledging mistakes
- Limited consideration of alternative explanations

Level 3 — Learner and Active Listener

Classification: Learning / Curious

Seeks understanding before reaching a conclusion.

- Asks relevant questions
- Separates facts from opinions
- Checks sources and verifies claims
- Considers counterarguments
- Acknowledges uncertainty
- Listens to understand rather than merely to respond

Level 4 — Reasoned and Constructive Communicator

Classification: Mature / Constructive

Engages respectfully while evaluating ideas critically.

- Strong topic comprehension
- Balanced consideration of evidence
- Sound logical reasoning
- Awareness of personal bias
- Emotional regulation during disagreement
- Willingness to revise conclusions when warranted

Level 5 — Mature Teacher or Mentor

Classification: Advanced / Supportive

Builds understanding, encourages independent thought, and communicates responsibly.

- Explains complex subjects accurately
- Adapts explanations to the learner
- Represents opposing arguments fairly
- Welcomes questions and scrutiny
- Corrects errors transparently
- Encourages critical thinking rather than blind agreement

Important distinction: Conversational role and conversational maturity are not the same. A person can act as a teacher while communicating immaturely, and a learner can demonstrate excellent judgment. These levels describe patterns of behavior, not a person's permanent worth or identity.

2. Negative-to-Positive Assessment Scale

Each dimension can be scored from **-5 to +5**.

Score	Classification	General interpretation
-5	Extremely negative	Consistently obstructs understanding
-4	Strongly negative	Repeatedly demonstrates harmful communication patterns
-3	Moderately negative	Recurring weaknesses in reasoning or communication
-2	Somewhat negative	More obstructive than constructive behaviors
-1	Slightly negative	Occasional negative tendencies
0	Neutral or mixed	Inconsistent, mixed, or insufficient evidence
+1	Slightly positive	Occasional constructive behaviors
+2	Somewhat positive	Generally constructive with notable weaknesses
+3	Moderately positive	Consistently demonstrates useful communication skills
+4	Strongly positive	Demonstrates sound reasoning and responsible communication
+5	Extremely positive	Consistently demonstrates exceptional maturity in the assessed dimension

A negative score does not automatically mean a person is unintelligent or malicious. Scores should reflect specific, observable behaviors.

3. The Nine Dimensions of Conversational Maturity

1. Bias and Impartiality

Negative indicators

- Prejudgment and stereotyping
- Selective use of evidence
- Applying different standards to opposing positions
- Rejecting information solely because of its source

Positive indicators

- Identifies personal assumptions
- Applies consistent standards
- Considers evidence that challenges an initial conclusion
- Evaluates arguments independently of personal preference

2. Logical Reasoning

Negative indicators

- Ad hominem attacks
- Straw man arguments
- False dilemmas
- Hasty generalizations
- Circular reasoning
- False equivalences and contradictions

Positive indicators

- Connects claims to relevant evidence
- Identifies faulty reasoning
- Distinguishes correlation from causation
- Addresses counterarguments fairly
- Draws conclusions proportionate to the available evidence

3. Topic Comprehension

Negative indicators

- Misunderstands important terms
- Ignores relevant context
- Misrepresents the subject
- Responds to an argument that was not actually made
- Repeats claims without understanding them

Positive indicators

- Accurately explains the subject
- Understands relevant context and terminology
- Recognizes complexity and limitations
- Can summarize competing positions fairly
- Identifies what additional information is needed

4. Listening and Comprehension

Negative indicators

- Interrupts or dismisses the speaker
- Selectively hears information
- Misrepresents another person's position
- Prepares a rebuttal without understanding the argument
- Treats disagreement as proof of ignorance

Positive indicators

- Listens carefully
- Asks clarifying questions
- Summarizes the other person's position accurately
- Recognizes valid points even when disagreeing
- Responds to the actual argument presented

5. Evidence and Factual Accuracy

Negative indicators

- Unsupported assertions
- Unreliable sources
- Presenting speculation as fact
- Misquoting or removing information from context
- Refusing to verify important claims

Positive indicators

- Uses credible, verifiable sources
- Distinguishes facts from interpretations
- Checks dates, context, and source reliability
- Acknowledges uncertainty
- Corrects inaccurate information

6. Intellectual Humility

Negative indicators

- Refuses correction
- Claims certainty without adequate evidence
- Treats questions as personal attacks

- Assumes disagreement proves another person is ignorant

Positive indicators

- Acknowledges limitations
- Admits when information is insufficient
- Revises conclusions when warranted
- Welcomes legitimate scrutiny
- Recognizes that expertise does not eliminate the possibility of error

7. Emotional Maturity

Negative indicators

- Hostility, intimidation, or ridicule
- Deliberate provocation
- Personal attacks instead of substantive responses
- Escalation when challenged
- Inability to tolerate disagreement

Positive indicators

- Maintains composure
- Disagrees without demeaning others
- Responds proportionately
- Sets boundaries without unnecessary hostility
- Addresses difficult subjects constructively

8. Teaching and Explanation

Negative indicators

- Uses authority to shut down questions
- Confuses others rather than clarifying
- Presents personal opinion as established fact
- Oversimplifies complex issues misleadingly
- Discourages independent thought

Positive indicators

- Explains ideas clearly

- Adapts to the learner's level of understanding
- Uses accurate examples
- Invites questions and discussion
- Checks whether the learner understands
- Encourages independent analysis

9. Accountability

Negative indicators

- Deflects responsibility
- Changes the subject to avoid correction
- Refuses to acknowledge established errors
- Applies double standards
- Blames others for one's own communication failures

Positive indicators

- Acknowledges mistakes
- Addresses criticism directly
- Corrects errors transparently
- Applies standards consistently
- Takes responsibility for the consequences of communication

4. Learner / Listener Compared with Teacher / Mentor

Dimension	Learner / Listener	Teacher / Mentor
Primary objective	Understand and evaluate	Explain and develop understanding
Bias	Identifies personal assumptions	Also identifies bias in instructional material
Reasoning	Tests claims and asks questions	Demonstrates and explains sound reasoning
Comprehension	Builds an accurate understanding	Demonstrates mastery and identifies gaps
Evidence	Investigates sources	Provides verifiable support and explains limitations
Humility	Admits what they do not know	Teaches without pretending to know everything
Feedback	Receives correction	Gives correction respectfully and accepts

	constructively	scrutiny
Success measure	Improved personal understanding	Improved understanding in oneself and others

A mature teacher remains a learner. A mature learner does not need to claim authority to ask valuable questions or identify faulty reasoning.

5. Conversational Maturity Assessment Worksheet

Conversation or participant: _____

Date: _____

Score each dimension from -5 to +5. Include specific examples rather than relying on impressions alone.

Dimension	Score	Evidence or example	Possible improvement
Bias and impartiality	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Logical reasoning	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Topic comprehension	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Listening and comprehension	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Evidence and factual accuracy	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Intellectual humility	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Emotional maturity	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Teaching and explanation	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—
Accountability	_____	_____	_____
	-	—	—

Total score: _____

Number of dimensions scored: _____

Average score: Total score ÷ number of dimensions scored = _____

Interpreting the Average

- **-5 to -3:** Substantial concerns across the assessed dimensions.
- **-2.9 to -0.1:** More negative than positive tendencies.
- **0:** Mixed, neutral, or insufficient evidence.

- **+0.1 to +2.9:** More positive than negative tendencies.
- **+3 to +5:** Strong positive tendencies.

Interpret the average alongside individual dimension scores. A person may demonstrate excellent topic comprehension but poor emotional regulation, or strong listening skills but weak factual knowledge.

6. Principles for Fair Assessment

1. Assess observable words and behaviors rather than presumed motives.
2. Apply the same standards to people whose conclusions you support and those whose conclusions you oppose.
3. Separate factual accuracy from tone. A polite statement can be incorrect, and an uncomfortable statement can raise a valid point.
4. Consider context and repeated patterns instead of treating one exchange as a complete assessment of a person.
5. Do not confuse education with infallibility, confidence with comprehension, or authority with maturity.
6. Distinguish a genuine logical fallacy from a disagreement over facts, values, or interpretation.
7. Use the assessment to improve communication and understanding, not to humiliate, diagnose, or label people permanently.

7. The Three-Part Model

Conversational maturity is best understood through three related but distinct categories.

Conversational maturity concerns respect, emotional regulation, listening, and accountability.

Intellectual maturity concerns comprehension, evidence, logic, impartiality, and the ability to evaluate competing claims.

Teaching maturity concerns accuracy, clarity, fairness, responsiveness to questions, and the ability to help others understand.

A person may be strong in one category and weak in another. Assessing each separately produces a more meaningful result than assigning a single label to an entire person.

Central Principle

Conversational maturity is not measured by how loudly a person speaks, how much education they have, whether they hold a teaching position, or whether they agree with a

particular viewpoint. It is measured through observable behaviors: understanding a subject, evaluating evidence, reasoning logically, listening accurately, managing disagreement, and accepting correction.

The objective is not simply to win a conversation. It is to improve the quality of understanding, reasoning, and communication.