



**Touchstones®**  
Discussion Project

*Touchstones  
sparks  
curiosity and  
thinking to  
drive  
students'  
growth.*



# Program Catalog



# Touchstones®

Discussion Project



*Changing the world one discussion at a time.*





**Touchstones®** is a non-profit on a mission to build a more inclusive world, one discussion at a time. Collaborative learning requires different skills than learning as an individual. With Touchstones, these skills are explicitly addressed and intentionally built. In our discussion programs, every student has an equal right to speak and learn and an equal responsibility to listen and make room for others. Touchstones democratizes education to prepare your students for academic success and civic engagement in an ever-changing world.

## Touchstones Essential Skills



Speaking



Cooperative  
Learning



Confidence



Active  
Listening



Collaboration



Leadership

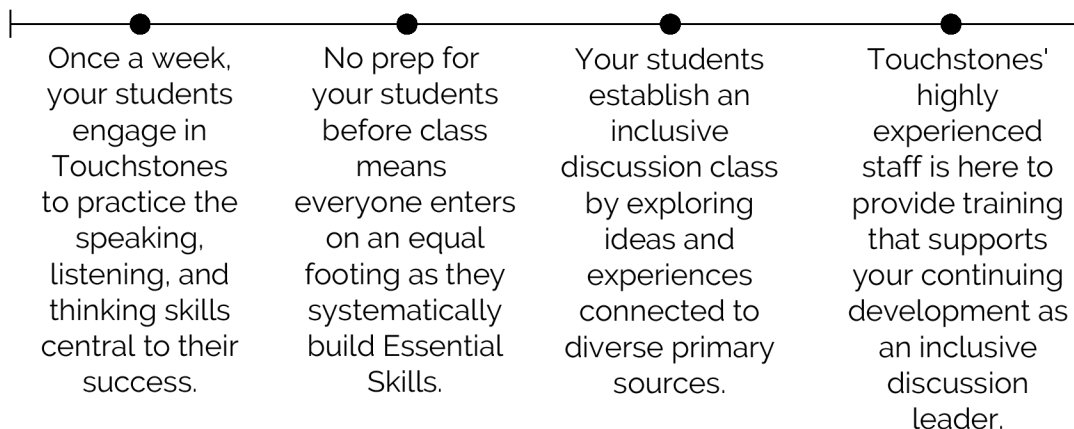


Analytical  
Reasoning



Reflective  
Thinking

## How Touchstones Works



*Touchstones  
teachers learn to  
foster inclusive  
discussions in  
which every  
student has a  
voice and a  
responsibility to  
the entire class.*



“

**Touchstones teacher training and support is excellent. It models the program's individualized approach to classroom discussion, and teachers experience firsthand how the program transforms teaching and learning.**

Sarah Heinrich Jeanblanc  
Director, Center for Teaching and Learning  
IB MYP Coordinator  
Baltimore City College

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# Touchstones Professional Development

Since 1984, we've trained tens of thousands of educators, and participants consistently rate Touchstones workshops as some of the best training they've had! Our highly experienced facilitators are here to help you prepare for success with Touchstones. Whether you are an individual instructor interested in using Touchstones in your classroom, a school administrator looking to implement Touchstones more widely, or a researcher in education, we offer a variety of training options to support your working knowledge as a Touchstones discussion leader.



## Workshops

Touchstones offers regularly scheduled virtual and in-person workshops throughout the year, open to any educator. Three levels of training help you work toward a Certificate in Discussion Leadership.

## Coaching

Get personalized support for you or your colleagues with individual coaching. Educators identify their goals and Touchstones staff engage in an observation and feedback cycle to support growth.

## Custom Training

We offer in-service workshops and professional development to support entire faculties and staff in successfully implementing Touchstones. Each workshop is tailored to your unique needs and goals.

Cost: Reach out to us for a quote

Location: In-person and virtual

Register on our website

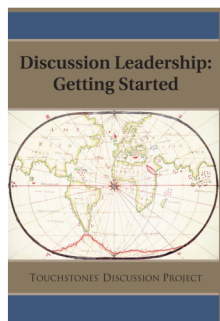
Cost: Reach out to us for a quote

Location: In-person and virtual

Cost: Reach out to us for a quote

Location: In-person and virtual

# Getting Started with Touchstones

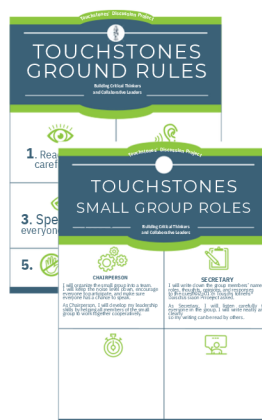


## Discussion Leadership: Getting Started

Discussion Leadership: Getting Started covers all aspects of the Touchstones method, including individual and small group work, questioning techniques, discussion dynamics, and common behavioral problems. Its practical advice helps new discussion leaders get started and enhances the established skills of experienced leaders.

\$30


Also available in French



## Touchstones Two-Poster Set

This two-poster set reminds your students of the Touchstones Ground Rules and helps them to understand the different leadership roles they will assume in small groups.

\$30.95 for both posters

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt, is sitting in a classroom. He is holding a clipboard with a silver clip at the top and looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing other students and classroom furniture. The text "Touchstones is building community through discussion everywhere." is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

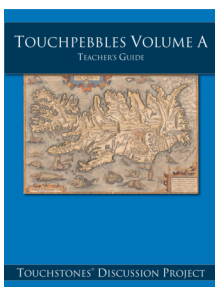
*Touchstones  
is building  
community  
through  
discussion  
everywhere.*



# Elementary School Volumes

In Touchpebbles, your 2nd-5th grade students build speaking, listening, and cooperative learning skills by exploring ideas from diverse primary sources. No matter the school context or where you teach, Touchpebbles gives you the tools to help your students take charge of their learning today and begin building the discussion skills they need for tomorrow.

Digital volumes are available through our Online Classroom on an annual subscription basis and require a minimum purchase of 10 student licenses. All class sets include 30 Student Editions and 1 Teacher's Guide. Reach out to us at 410-604-3309 or [schoolprograms@touchstones.org](mailto:schoolprograms@touchstones.org) if your needs differ.



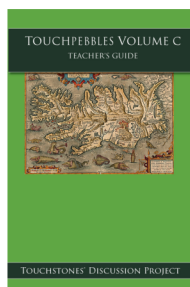
## Touchpebbles Volume A

Touchpebbles Volume A uses discussion to foster an inclusive classroom where students of all abilities learn to discuss a range of ideas through 30 lesson plans on diverse texts, including tales from Aesop and other early cultures, paintings by Winslow Homer and Sotatsu, and passages from ancient Greek and Chinese philosophers and historians.

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Class set: \$1,575

Digital: \$30 per student



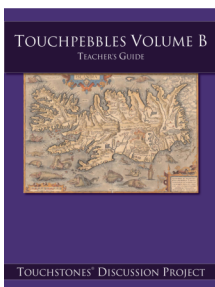
## Touchpebbles Volume C

Touchpebbles Volume C brings an engaging new set of primary source texts for discussion, along with full lesson plans that develop your students communication, interpersonal, and collaboration skills while building vital critical thinking skills. In this volume, you'll find philosophy from Hume and Laozi, folktales from Bhutan and Iceland, works of fine art, and the writings of Anna Freud, George Washington Carver, and Maria Montessori.

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Class set: \$1,575

Digital: \$30 per student



## Touchpebbles Volume B

Touchpebbles Volume B offers the same proven Touchstones method with an additional 30 lesson plans and texts for inviting discussion in the classroom. Touchpebbles B may be used after Touchpebbles A or to introduce Touchstones to slightly older students in elementary grades. Featured in Touchpebbles B are engaging texts such as *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams and thought provoking selections from Francis Bacon and Malcolm X; folktales from Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East; and paintings by Mondrian and the Bangba tribe.

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Class set: \$1,575


Digital: \$30 per student

“

[Touchstones] has changed our students', teachers', and even my own understanding of what school can be and how we can create empowering spaces to engage with complex ideas.

Colin Hogan,  
Learning Community Charter School, Jersey City, NJ

”



The world is  
changing.  
Teaching  
and learning  
should, too!

“

Learning to talk to one another is our most important organizational goal...our schools depend on mutual understanding and effective communication. Touchstones helps us all to develop these skills and build a community.

Kevin Topper  
Chandler Preparatory Academy, AZ

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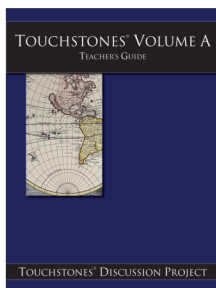


# Middle School Volumes

Touchstones for grades 6-8 supports the investigation of diverse perspectives, intentionally cultivates discourse skills, and builds community using primary sources as a starting point. Our middle school volumes give your students the tools they need to engage in respectful and inclusive discussion while developing as collaborative leaders.

Digital volumes are available through our Online Classroom on an annual subscription basis and require a minimum purchase of 10 student licenses. All class sets include 30 Student Editions and 1 Teacher's Guide. Reach out to us at 410-604-3309 or [schoolprograms@touchstones.org](mailto:schoolprograms@touchstones.org) if your needs differ.



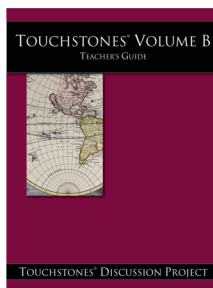


### Touchstones Volume A

Through Touchstones Volume A, students consider lessons offered in folktales, evaluate and discuss early historical accounts, explore the foundations of society through Plato and Pascal, examine compassion in Mary Shelley's compelling narrative, and reflect on the human struggle in Langston Hughes' poetry and writings by Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Dubois, among others.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

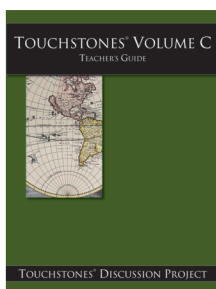


### Touchstones Volume B

Touchstones Volume B may be used after Touchstones Volume A or as a first Touchstones volume. Texts from philosopher and psychologist William James, mathematician René Descartes, and political advocate Mary Wollstonecraft invite students to reflect on the consequences of actions, while selections from the Odyssey, medical ethics, and ancient Chinese philosophy invite discussions on responsibility.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

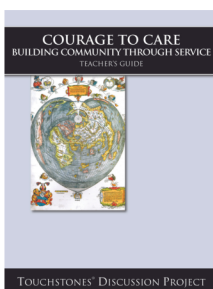


### Touchstones Volume C

With Touchstones Volume C, students develop discussion and thinking skills required for a range of leadership roles. Touchstones selections from philosophers Boethius and Voltaire, founders of the United States, mathematicians Dedekind and G.H. Hardy, and works by artists da Vinci, Kollwitz, and Vermeer challenge students to evaluate multiple perspectives and collaborate to understand and address complex questions.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

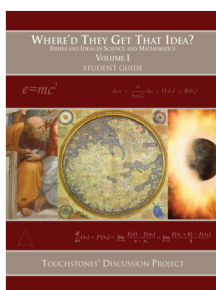


### Courage to Care: Building Community Through Service

Released by Touchstones in 2011, Courage to Care: Building Community through Service explores our responsibilities as citizens. The Touchstones texts are arranged thematically to cover essential issues of trust, respect, cooperation, compassion, and leadership. All students will learn to find and share their voice on social and civic issues as they discover and discuss important literary and philosophical texts together.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

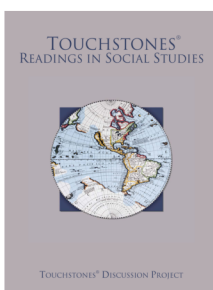


### Where'd They Get That Idea?

Touchstones' Where'd They Get that Idea features short, primary source texts from mathematicians and scientists. Through individual and small group work, class discussion, and evaluation activities, students develop discussion skills in math and science. They gain understanding of these subjects as a series of assertions, questions, and investigations, which rely on strategic decision making. As students apply their own thinking to understand the viewpoints and processes expressed by the authors, students will see themselves as both mathematical and scientific.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student



### Touchstones Readings in Social Studies

Most effective when used in tandem with Touchstones Volumes I and II, Touchstones Readings in Social Studies offers 87 Touchstones texts for discussion that are drawn from different historical periods and arranged into themes of Ancient History, World Cultures, Civics, U.S. History, and the Humanities. Students apply and practice their Touchstones discussion skills in content-specific classes, using the wealth of readings provided in this volume.

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Class set: \$2,325  
Not available in digital format



*Touchstones is joyful, student-centered, authentic learning!*



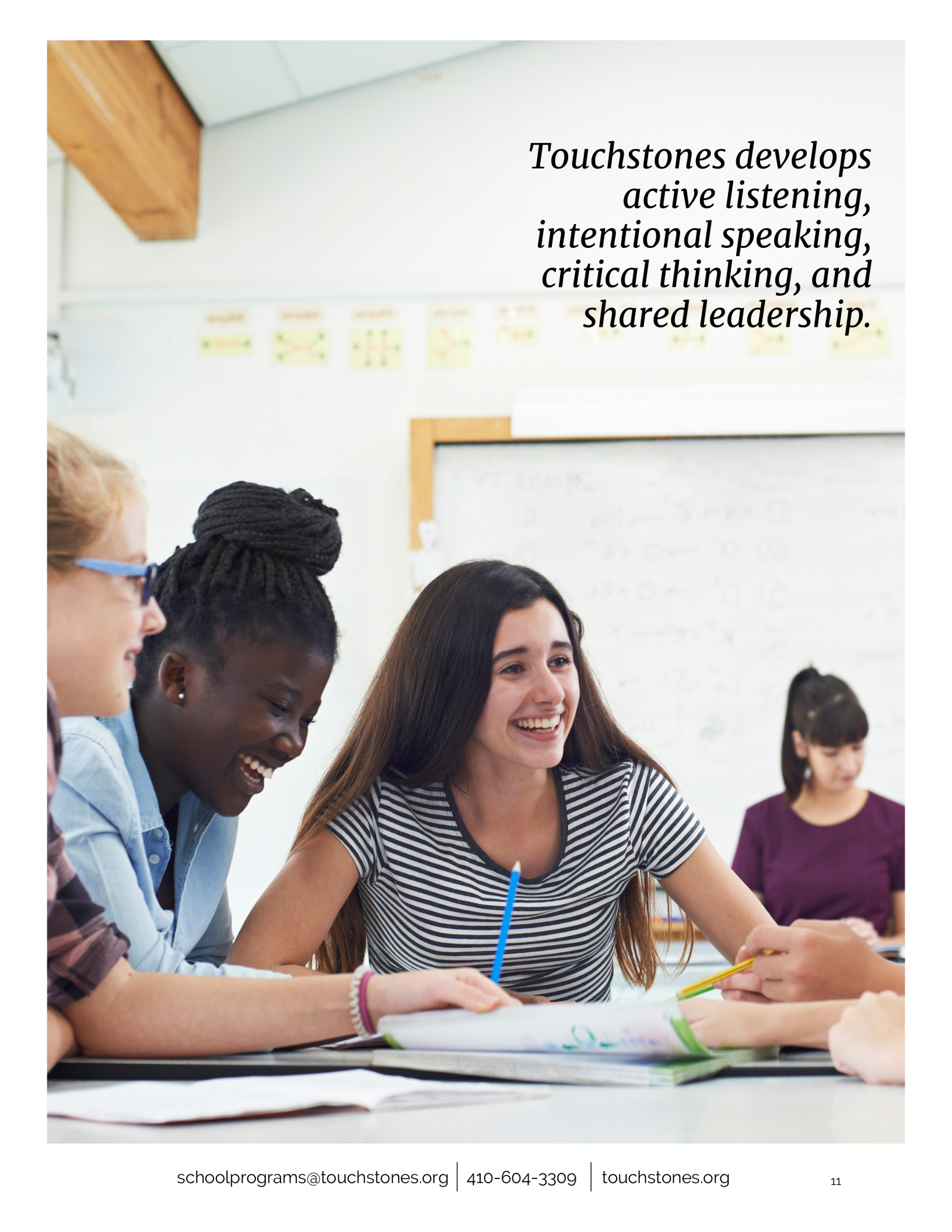
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**Touchstones is a methodology that trains students to participate meaningfully, confidently, and cooperatively.**

Professor Marsha Bronstein.,  
Learning Communities Coordinator,  
Montgomery College

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A photograph of a classroom scene. In the foreground, three students are seated at a desk. On the left, a young woman with blonde hair and blue glasses is looking towards the center. Next to her is a Black woman with her hair in a large bun, smiling and looking down at a notebook. To her right is a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt, who is smiling broadly and looking towards the right. They are all holding pens or pencils. In the background, a whiteboard is visible with some faint writing, and another student is partially visible on the right. The room has wooden beams on the ceiling and colorful posters on the wall.

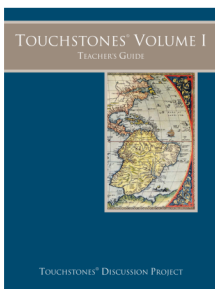
*Touchstones develops  
active listening,  
intentional speaking,  
critical thinking, and  
shared leadership.*



# High School Volumes

Touchstones prepares your 9th-12th grade students for life as they learn how to discuss complex topics, integrate diverse perspectives, and practice leadership. Our programs democratize education to prepare your students for academic success and civic engagement in our constantly changing world.

Digital volumes are available through our Online Classroom on an annual subscription basis and require a minimum purchase of 10 student licenses. All class sets include 30 Student Editions and 1 Teacher's Guide. Reach out to us at [schoolprograms@touchstones.org](mailto:schoolprograms@touchstones.org) if your needs differ.

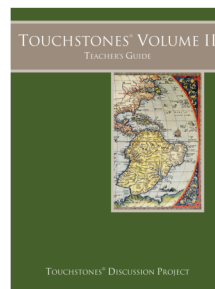


## Touchstones Volume I

Using Touchstones Volume I, students identify and examine their own assumptions, presuppositions, and opinions and compare them with those of their peers, and with authors such as Aristotle, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Kafka, Mencius, and others. Touchstones lessons invite careful reading and mindful discussion on issues of truth, justice, equality, friendship, and freedom.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

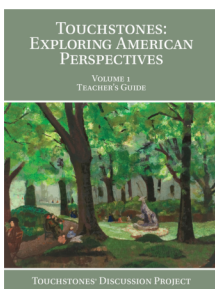


## Touchstones Volume II

Following Volume I, Touchstones Volume II helps students to refine their oral and written communication, cooperation, and leadership skills with 30 additional lessons on humanities texts from around the world. Along with Touchstones discussion exercises, each lesson in Volume II includes a specific writing assignment to focus student thinking on the development and expression of coherent ideas in an organized format.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

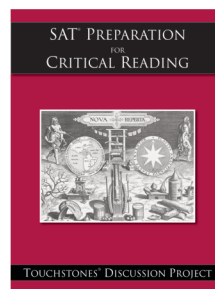


## Exploring American Perspectives

The first volume of this series features selections from W. E. B. DuBois, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, Frederick Douglass, Lois Mailou Jones, and other Black writers, philosophers, poets, and visual artists. These diverse texts serve as tools for students' shared exploration of uniquely American perspectives. Each of the 22 lessons fosters and enhances problem-solving, critical thinking, and leadership through direct practice.

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Class set: \$2,325  
Digital: \$35 per student



## Touchstones Preparation for the Critical Reading Section of the SAT

This Touchstones volume features texts, sample test questions, and discussion exercises that strengthen students' abilities to evaluate written material for specific purposes. Students encounter challenging texts while practicing test-taking strategies that prepare them for improved performance on the Critical Reading Section of the SAT®. The Touchstones approach has proven successful in dramatically raising students' scores overall on the verbal portion of the SAT®.

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Class set: \$1,550  
Not available in digital format

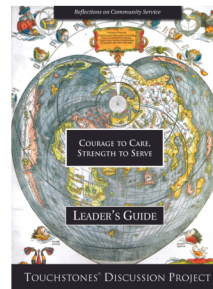


### Investigating Mathematics

Investigating Mathematics gives students in I.B., A.P., and advanced math classes a chance to explore the underlying principles of mathematics and science with Touchstones lessons and primary source texts. Through discussion, students come to understand mathematics as a creative activity that draws on multiple perspectives and diverse talents.

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Class set: \$1,550  
Digital: \$35 per student

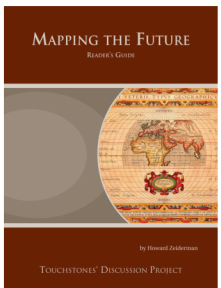


### Courage to Care: Strength to Serve

Courage to Care: Strength to Serve is an anthology of Touchstones texts and questions for discussion that invite students to reflect on all aspects of community service. Arranged by theme, the texts offer students and teachers alike a format in which to openly consider the opportunities and challenges associated with service. Topics covered in the volume include the preparation for service, historical perspectives, general reflections, and service to others.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Digital: \$35 per student

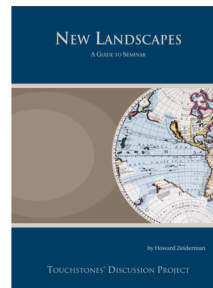


### Mapping the Future

Students using Mapping the Future as a course companion for Theory of Knowledge engage in collaborative explorations of philosophical, political, and scientific constructs through primary source texts. Each lesson features a classical text paired with a contemporary text, which serve to illuminate our thinking and presuppositions within a world of increasing cultural and intellectual diversity and global interconnectivity. Through Mapping the Future, students learn to analyze, evaluate, synthesize systematically, and apply knowledge as reflective thinkers, mindful discussants, and ethical leaders. This volume can be used as a course companion for Theory of Knowledge in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP).

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Class set: \$2,325  
Digital: \$35 per student



### New Landscapes

The longer selections in New Landscapes encourage students to reflect on the foundations of their basic attitudes and assumptions. Students use the texts to delve into their presuppositions and examine sources of their own knowledge, engaging creatively and effectively as leaders. New Landscapes helps upper level undergraduates and college faculty alike to develop seminar leadership skills.

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Class set: \$2,325  
Not available in digital format

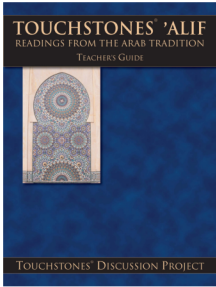
“

**Touchstones' emphasis on democratic and structured discussion where all perspectives are aired gives students a chance to examine issues from other perspectives and helps them reflect on their own thinking, developing more critical and open habits of discussion.**

Miriam Nightengale  
Columbia Secondary School, New York, NY

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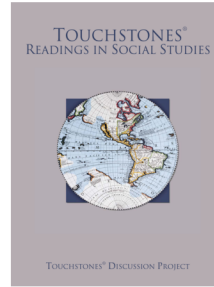


### **Touchstones ALIF: Readings From the Arab Tradition**

Alif features 20 Touchstones lessons and texts that introduce students to central concepts within the Arab intellectual and cultural tradition. Selections from early Arab philosophers, mathematicians, sociologists, religious leaders, and astronomers, along with ancient Greek predecessors, provide students with the opportunity to consider diverse points of view and gain a wider perspective of the world of knowledge.

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Class set: \$1,575  
Not available in digital format



### **Touchstones Readings in Social Studies**

Most effective when used in tandem with Touchstones Volumes I and II, Touchstones Readings in Social Studies offers 87 Touchstones texts for discussion that are drawn from different historical periods and arranged into themes of Ancient History, World Cultures, Civics, U.S. History, and the Humanities. Students apply and practice their Touchstones discussion skills in content-specific classes, using the wealth of readings provided in this volume.

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Class set: \$2,325  
Not available in digital format



“

**[Through Touchstones], I have learned to listen and understand views other than my own. I love the way we have started to trust each other enough to actually voice our original thoughts.**

12th grade student,  
Centennial High School, Franklin, TN

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# Touchstones in Schools

Touchstones® discussion programs teach students to explore their own ideas, dreams, and goals while connecting authentically with their peers. Together, students learn to build a community of learners in which every voice is heard and valued.

Learn more on our website about how Touchstones supports teaching and learning.



[schoolprograms@touchstones.org](mailto:schoolprograms@touchstones.org) | 410-604-3309 | [touchstones.org](https://touchstones.org)

