

COMMANDANT'S GENERAL DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES

6 WORDS

This tool, inspired by Larry Smith, Six Word Memoir⁷, is designed to help the Soldier focus on a core idea by writing a short phrase summarizing their thoughts into a set number of words that are clear, concise, and accurate. This idea is based on a complete short story written by Ernest Hemingway: "For sale, baby shoes –never worn." Six Words forces people to synthesize their ideas in a succinct and meaningful way, cutting away fluff and distilling the idea to its bare essence.

Utilize the tool to encourage participants to critically think about ideas when writing down their ideas to share. This tool also mitigates others from sharing ideas out loud that are not well thought out.

When a priming question is asked, and participants are provided time to think, have them write down their ideas in 6 words or less. Review my general discussion guide for some great priming questions.

The facilitator will guide the Soldiers by collecting their ideas through storytelling, 5x8 cards, sticky notes or writing them down on a white board.

Larry Smith, "Six Word Memoir," (2006), <https://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/about/#story-of-six-words>.
