

WHEN NO ONE TALKS

Silence is not failure. Often, it means students are thinking, processing, or deciding if it feels safe to speak.

Give it a moment.

After asking a question, count to five in your head before jumping in. Students might need more time to process.

Normalize thinking time.

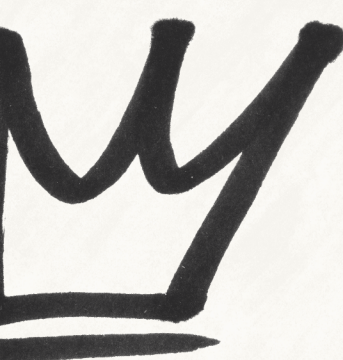
Say something like, “Take a second to think about this,” or “It’s okay if this takes a minute.” This removes pressure and awkwardness.

Lower the risk.

If a question feels too personal, invite general answers first. You can say, “What might someone your age struggle with here?” before asking, “What about you?”

Offer choices instead of open space.

When silence stretches, reframe the question with options. For example: “Would this be harder at school, at home, or online?” Options give students an entry point.





LONG HOLLOW STUDENTS

Model honesty without oversharing.

Briefly share a general example from your own life to show what an answer might sound like. Keep it short and age-appropriate.

Affirm effort, not depth.

When a student speaks, thank them. Avoid correcting or over-explaining their response. Feeling heard builds confidence to speak again.

Use silence as a signal, not a threat.

If no one responds, say, “That might tell us this question matters,” rather than rushing past it.

Know when to move on.

If silence continues, it’s okay to summarize the truth and move forward. Not every moment needs discussion to be effective.

Remember:

Meaningful reflection often looks quiet before it looks talkative.

