

SOPHIA Meeting Preparation Checklist:

This document is for planning ahead of the next meeting.

1. Pick a topic & identify or create a "One-Sheet." _____

Consult with the community, at least a small group of SOPHIA chapter leaders, if not a larger group, about what topic might be of significant interest to the community to talk about. If you reach out to many people, it's good to offer a small set of varied topical choices. A flood of options is hard to choose from & may lead to no clear more popular choice. At the same time, it can be a lot of work to develop what we call a "One-Sheet." The purpose of such documents is to make it easy, with little to no technical terminology, for people to be at least introduced to a topic, situation, or challenge that inspires philosophical discussion. So, it's a good idea to look at existing "One-Sheets" or to have a plan for how the group will identify or create a "one-sheet" for whatever topic is selected. For new groups, it's a good idea to limit choices to existing one-sheets, as easy successes early on will inspire future engagement with SOPHIA.



2. Pick a day and time. _____

It is a good idea to try to identify a time of month, day, and week is as convenient as you can make it for as many different kinds of people as possible. If the group is primarily student-targeted, for example, after class, but before the end of "work day" hours for other people might be acceptable or good. But, for groups looking to engage the working community, it is rare that before end of the work day during the work week will be a good time for people. Weekend evenings are also often devoted to other things or family events, so some groups have found that an evening event around 6pm or an early afternoon weekend event is often best. For your groups, you can put together a free survey to email people to identify maximal overlap in the selection of a time that is convenient for the largest number of people. [Doodle.com](https://www.doodle.com) is a popular tool for finding a day and time.



3. Pick the place & gain a commitment to be able to use it. _____

Where you meet matters. Some members of a community find parking on a college or university campus challenging. Often, meeting off campus also diminishes intimidation factors, or the feeling that community members are there just to listen. Meeting off of university and college campuses can therefore increase participation and engagement in conversation. Alternatives include public libraries with usable open spaces for conversation, public schools that allow community groups to use their spaces after school, and other community organizations, such as religious institutions or grocery-story co-ops. For any such space, it is commonly required to reserve the space in advance, to ensure that you can use it, and especially that it will ideally be usable at no cost.



4. Announce the event as widely as you can! _____

There are various online tools available today. One great one is [MeetUp.com](https://www.meetup.com), on which a number of our chapters have accounts ([Seattle, WA](#); [South Puget Sound/Tacoma, WA](#); [Milwaukee, WI](#); and [Lexington, KY](#)). Services like MeetUp can cost money to run, but remember that SOPHIA offers chapter seed grants as well as ad hoc grants, which can cover such costs. Chapters are free to use other tools, of course. At the same time, it can be very helpful also to take posts to services like MeetUp and share them on social media, such as (the following examples are from the Lexington chapter) [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), LinkedIn, and Google Plus. Announcing these events can be easy also with an email about the Who, What, When, Where, and How sent to local newspapers, local libraries, and college and university events calendar outlets.



5. Think ahead & plan to announce at the gathering. _____

Ideally think ahead by at least one meeting, to tell people what the next meeting will be about. You can also solicit input about future topics at meetings, but again, try to prepare a reasonably short but varied list of choices, ideally based on matters for which the selection or creation of a "one-sheet" will be easy. Organizing should be as easy and fun as possible, because over-commitment leads to excusable failure to create guiding documents. People need to be on the same page for meetings, to try to stick to achievable commitments for planning future meetings.



→ [Next, see the Meeting Day Checklist!](#)