Discussing a Problem, Presenting a Grievance

**DO** Use a positive, friendly down-to-business approach.  
**DON’T** Make threats or try to bluff your way through a discussion.

**DO** Stick to the subject.  
**DON’T** Allow the discussion to be sidetracked on other issues, past problems or irrelevant subjects.

**DO** Discuss issues.  
**DON’T** Discuss personalities.

**DO** Remain calm, cool and collected.  
**DON’T** Become angry, belligerent or hostile.

**DO** Keep notes of what is said during the meeting.  
**DON’T** Lose focus of the objective: resolving the problem or grievance.

**DO** Listen for the main point of the State’s argument and for possible openings to resolve the problem or grievance.  
**DON’T** Get into arguments during the meeting; if need be, ask for a caucus and step outside the room to iron out differences and clear up any confusion.

**DO** Attempt to resolve each problem or grievance at the lowest possible step, but, if the State is not willing to fairly resolve the case, be prepared to appeal to the next step.  
**DON’T** “Horse trade” or swap one grievance for another (where the union wins one, the State wins one). Each case should be decided on its merits.

**DO** Get every problem resolution or grievance settlement in writing.  
**DON’T** Accept the State’s verbal assurances that “it will be taken care of.”

**DO** Give your understanding of what (if any) resolution has been reached or what will happen next after the conclusion of the meeting. This helps avoid misunderstandings later.