

Socratic Seminar Guidelines

What is a Socratic Seminar?

A Socratic seminar is a way teaching of founded by the Greek philosopher Socrates. Socrates believed that students learn best by asking questions. It is the teacher's job to moderate the discussion instead of lead the discussion.

Why do we have a Socratic Seminar?

Socratic Seminars help us engage a text in class. The thought process is when we work together to understand a text it will help everyone's understanding.

What do we do to prepare for the seminar?

The day prior to the seminar you will be given a Socratic Seminar prep sheet. Your job is to complete steps 1 – 4 for homework. **It is essential you read the text and prepare yourself with important questions and quotations.**

What type of questions should I ask during the seminar?

There are three levels of questions. You should come up with a *minimum* of 1 question per level.

- **Level I (Comprehension Questions):** Questions that help you understand the story.

Please use the following question stems:

- Can you state, *in your own words*...
- Can you *describe*...
- Can you *defend* your position...
- Can you *summarize* the information...

- **Level II (Interpretative Questions):** These are critical thinking questions that require evidence from the text.

Please use the following question stems:

- Explain how ...
- Explain why ...
- Interpret the reasons ...
- Compare and contrast ...
- Connect and explain ...

- **Level III (Application Questions):** These are critical thinking questions that connect the text to the outside world.

Please use the following question stems:

- Imagine ...
- What would happen if ...?
- Hypothesize ...
- Theorize...

Name _____
Seminar Date: _____

Socratic Seminar Preparation Sheet

Title: _____
 Author: _____
 Part Discussing (if applicable): _____

Please write the prompt to the Socratic Seminar in the box.

Step 1: Read the text looking for quotations that catch your interest.
Step 2: Please summarize the text:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Step 3: Write down any lines, quotes, excerpts, or phrases you found interesting, important, or just caught your attention.:

Page #	Quotation
	1.
	2.
	3.

Step 4: Write **three** questions about the reading. (See the attached Level Questions Worksheet for guidance).

Level 1 (Comprehension Question):

Level 2 (Application Question):

Level 3 (Synthesis Question):

Step 5: After the completion of the seminar, write down a summary of what you learned from the discussion in a paragraph. (you could start with: "At first I thought...., but now I think....")

SOCRATIC SEMINAR FOR: _____

Question: _____

Key Ideas	Evidence (A minimum of 2 text examples)	Interpretation

Question: _____

Key Ideas	Evidence (A minimum of 2 text examples)	Interpretation

SOCRATIC SEMINAR FOR: _____

Question: _____

Key Ideas	Evidence (A minimum of 2 text examples)	Interpretation

Question: _____

Key Ideas	Evidence (A minimum of 2 text examples)	Interpretation

Socratic Seminar Rubric for Individual Participants

Name: _____ Seminar Text: _____

(Teacher to Student Rubric)

Exemplary (4)

- reads closely, takes notes, and develops high-level questions before the seminar
 - uses prepared text, notes, and questions to contribute to the dialogue
 - moves the conversation forward
 - asks for clarification when needed
 - asks probing questions for higher level thinking
 - speaks to all participants and is heard clearly
 - thinks before answering
 - refers directly to the text
 - makes connections to other speakers
 - builds on others' comments
 - considers all opinions
 - writes down thoughts and questions
 - listens actively
 - demonstrates patience and respect toward others' opinions/ideas
-

Competent (3)

- comes prepared with marked text, notes, and questions
 - contributes to the dialogue
 - responds to questions
 - refers to text
 - offers interesting ideas
 - asks questions
 - takes notes
 - pays attention
 - is respectful of others' ideas
-

Developing (2)

- comes with some text preparation
 - emphasizes own ideas; may lean toward debate rather than dialogue
 - ideas not always connected
 - refers to text
 - repeats some ideas
 - asks a few questions and/or questions are lower level
 - takes some notes
 - loses track of conversation
 - judges others' ideas
-

Needs Improvement (1)

- does not participate or participation is inappropriate
- repeats same ideas
- few or no notes taken
- no questions asked
- seems lost/overwhelmed with the seminar

SOCRATIC CIRCLE RUBRIC

*Partner Evaluation

	Read the text.	Engaged in discussion.	Supports ideas with references from text.	Uses sound reasoning in questioning.	Accepts more than one point of view.	Listens and respects others.
Socratic Circle Rubric						
3 Outstanding	Remarks reveal a critical reading of the text with preparation.	Demonstrates active participation throughout circle time.	Makes specific references to text and defends ideas regularly.	Questions to others are thoughtful, logical, and contribute to the group's discussion.	Accepts other points of view.	Comments reflect active listening and respect of others.
2 Average	Remarks reveal a reading of the text, but ideas seem incomplete.	Demonstrates active participation in at least 50% of the circle time.	Makes references to text and defends ideas only when challenged.	Questions and comments are logical, but lack momentum to move group forward.	Acknowledges other points of view, but does not use them to expand meaning.	Generally listens, but is not attentive to details.
1 Below Average	Remarks suggest text was not read.	Some participation, but off-task for a majority of circle time.	Makes no references to text or does not defend ideas.	Remarks are difficult to understand or no remarks are made.	Does not accept other points of view.	Inattentive.

Based on Copeland, M. (2005). "Socratic Circle Rubric".

Socratic Seminar Observation Checklist

Your Name: _____ Partner's Name: _____

Directions: Each time your partner does one of the following put a check in the box.

Speaks in the discussion

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Makes eye contact with other speakers or as she/he speaks

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Refers to the text

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Asks a new or follow-up question

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Responds to another speaker

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Paraphrases and adds to another speaker's ideas

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Encourages another participant to speak

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Interrupts another speaker

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Engages in side conversation

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Dominates the conversation

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AFTER the discussion: What is the most interesting thing your partner said?

AFTER the discussion: What would you like to have said in the discussion?