

DURING SOCRATIC SEMINAR

Socratic Seminar Rules

- Discuss, do not debate.
- Be courteous, NO PUTDOWNS.
- Goal is the pursuit of deeper understanding.
- Respect different thoughts and ideas.

Socratic Seminar Tips

Your Goal is to Understand...

- the ideas,
- issues,
- concepts,
- and values reflected in the text.

Protocol:

- Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. This is not a test of memory.
- Do not stay confused; ask for clarification of both ideas and definitions.
- Discuss ideas, rather than other's opinions.
- It's OK to pass when your turn comes; participate at another time instead.
- Do not participate if you are not prepared.
- Stick to the point currently under discussion; write down inspirational ideas so you can bring them up at a more appropriate time in the conversation.
- Listen carefully, especially when you are waiting to speak, as they may be moving on to another point.
- Speak up so that all participants can hear you; don't speak while others are.
- Remember that this is a conversation between students, not between student and teacher.

Basic steps to forming opinions:

1. What is it that I think I know? Or that the author thinks he/she knows? Can I restate his/her ideas in my own words? What needs clarification? Definition?
2. Is it true? Why do I think so? What else do I need to know or understand before deciding?
3. What inferences can be drawn from this? What are the implications of this? So what? How does this change things?
4. What are the underlying assumptions with this claim?
5. What are the reasons I believe this? How do I know what I think I know? Is the evidence credible?
6. How does this happen in other situations? In the world? How does this connect to other stuff?
7. Can I think of a counter example? When this doesn't happen? Why doesn't it happen? Are there internal contradictions?

Seminar Questioning Cheat Sheet

Clarification Questions:

- What do you mean by _____?
- What is your main point?
- How does _ relate to _____?
- Could you put that another way?
- What do you think is the main issue here?
- Let me see if I understand you; do you mean ___ or _____?
- Jane, would you summarize in your own words what Juan has said?... Juan, is that what you meant?
- Could you give me an example?
- Would this be an example: _____?
- Could you explain that further?
- Could you expand upon that?

Questions About the Initial Question or Issue:

- How can we find out?
- What does this question assume?
- Would _____ put the question differently?
- How could someone settle this question?
- Can we break this question down at all?
- Is the question clear? Do we understand it?
- Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?
- Does this question ask us to evaluate something?
- Do we all agree that this is the question?
- To answer this question, what question would we have to answer first?
- I'm not sure I understand how you are interpreting the main question at issue.
- Is this the same issue as _?
- How would _____ put this issue?
- Why is this question important?
- Does this question lead to other questions or issues?

Assumption Probes:

- What are you assuming?
- What is Erika assuming?
- What could we assume instead?
- You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly?
- All of your reasoning depends on the idea that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on _____ rather than _____?
- You seem to be assuming _____. How would you justify taking this for granted?
- Why would someone make this assumption?

Reason and Evidence Probes:

- What would be an example?
- How do you know?
- Why do you think that is true?
- Do you have any evidence for that?
- What difference does that make?
- What are your reasons for saying that?
- What other information do we need?
- Could you explain your reason to use?

Reason and Evidence Probes (continued):

- Are these reasons adequate?
- Can you explain how you logically got from _____ to ____?
- Do you see any difficulties with their reasoning here?
- Why did you say that?
- What led you to that belief?
- How does that apply to this case?
- What would change your mind?
- But is that good evidence to believe that?
- Is there a reason to doubt that evidence?
- Who is in a position to know if that is so?
- What would you say to someone who said _____?
- Can someone else give evidence to support that response?
- By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?
- How could we find out whether that is true?

Origin or Source Questions:

- Where did you get this idea?
- Do your friends or family feel the same way?
- Has the media influenced you?
- Have you always felt this way?
- What caused you to feel this way?
- Did you originate this idea or get it from someone else?

Implication and Consequence Probes:

- What are you implying by that?
- When you say _____, are you implying _____?
- But if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?
- What effect would that have?
- Would that necessarily happen or only probably happen?
- What is the probability of this result?
- What is an alternative?
- If this and this are the case, then what else must also be true?
- If we say that this is unethical, how about that?

Viewpoint Questions:

- You seem to be approaching this issue from _____ perspective. Why have you chosen this rather than that perspective?
- How would other groups/types of people respond? Why? What would influence them?
- How could you answer the objection that _____ would make?
- What might someone who believed _____ think?
- Can/did anyone see this another way?
- What would someone who disagrees say?
- What is an alternative?
- How are Hillary and Tom's ideas alike? Different?

Observation Form

Inner-Outer Discussion Circle

Your Name:	Partner:																				
DIRECTIONS: Each time your partner does one of the following, put a check in the box.																					
SPEAKS IN THE DISCUSSION:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
LOOKS AT THE PERSON WHO IS SPEAKING:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
REFERS TO THE TEXT:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
ASKS A QUESTION:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
RESPONDS TO ANOTHER SPEAKER:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
INTERRUPTS ANOTHER SPEAKER:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
ENGAGES IN SIDE CONVERSATION:																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 30px; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>																					
AFTER DISCUSSION: What is the most interesting thing your partner said?																					
AFTER DISCUSSION: What would you like to have said in the discussion?																					

Name: _____
Date: _____ Period: ____

AFTER SOCRATIC SEMINAR

Directions: Answer the following questions in the Socratic Seminar Debrief using complete sentences. After the debriefing discussion, answer the Socratic Reflective Writing Questions using complete sentences.

Socratic Seminar Debrief

1. How did you feel about the seminar?

2. Reflect on your own experience.

3. If you changed your opinion during the discussion, what changed it?

4. Using your own knowledge on this topic or issue, create a question to start a seminar.

5. What was the best part of the seminar? The worst part?

6. What was your overall opinion of the Socratic Seminar?

Name: _____
Date: _____ Period: ____

Socratic Reflective Writing

1. What is one thing you liked that you said?
2. What is one point someone else said that you agree with?
3. What was the most interesting question?
4. What was the most interesting idea to come from a participant?
5. What was the best thing that you observed?
6. What was the most troubling thing that you observed?
7. What do you think should be done differently in the next seminar?
8. As a Socratic Seminar participant, what area of the process will you work on for next time?
9. What new questions arose as a result of the discussion and debrief?