

## Socratic Seminar Guidelines



**What it is:** Socratic seminars are named for their embodiment of Socrates' belief in the power of asking questions, prize inquiry over information, and discussion over debate.

**How it works:** Students are arranged in an inner and outer circle. The inner circle discusses while the outer circle observes and provides feedback.

### Before the seminar:

- Read and annotate your text. Make notes in the margins to guide your thoughts.
- Create questions
  - Ask “why?” about the author’s choices in the text, about a character’s motivation, about a situation described, etc.
  - Ask about a viewpoint or perspective.
  - Examine the tone, theme, make connections (T-S, T-T, T-W)
  - Ask questions that explore your own interpretation of the text.
  - Ask about importance: “So what...?” “What does it matter that...?” “What does it mean that...?”

### During the seminar:

1. Participate and ask questions. **The quality of the seminar is diminished when participants do not prepare.** There’s no need to raise hands; talk to each other and not just the teacher.
  - a. The teacher’s role is to guide and keep the discussion moving
  - b. There will be a student discussion leader as we progress
  - c. Outer circle will use Today’s Meet: 6 questions or comments required
2. Show respect for differing ideas, thoughts, and values.
3. Allow each speaker enough time to begin and finish his/her thoughts – try not to interrupt.
4. Involve others in discussion
  - a. **Ask questions to dig deeper/elaborate:** “John makes me think of another point...” “Sarah, what makes you think the author meant...?”
  - b. **Clarify:** “I think what Brad is trying to say is...”
  - c. **Paraphrase and add:** “Justin said that... I agree with him and I think...”
  - d. **Synthesize:** “Based on the ideas from Tim, Stephanie, and Jessica, it seems we all think the author...”
5. Use active listening skills: Nod, make eye contact, provide feedback.
6. Refer to the text often and give examples to support your points; Refer to Today’s Meet.
7. Take notes about important points or new questions you want to ask.

### After the seminar:

You will reflect upon your experiences in the inner and outer circle by filling out a reflection form.

### Grades:

You will receive 1 – 8 points for coming prepared with questions and for having your reading annotated.

You will receive 1 – 15 points for participating in discussion.

Total=23 points

You can check Class Dojo to track your participation progress: [www.classdojo.com](http://www.classdojo.com)

## Outer Circle Observation Form

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Each time your partner does one of the following, put an X in the box.

|                                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Speaks in discussion                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Refers to the text                         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Asks a question                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Responds to the speaker                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Engages in side conversation or uses phone |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

After discussion answer the following:

1. What was the most interesting comment your partner made?
2. What suggestions do you have for your partner to improve?
3. What suggestion do you have for the entire circle to improve?
4. What was your most valuable comment in Today's Meet?
5. What do you wish the inner circle had discussed?

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## Inner Circle Reflection Form

1. What is the best point you made in seminar?
2. What ideas did you agree with?
3. What ideas did you disagree with?
4. What questions were left unanswered?
5. What did you contribute to the discussion?
6. What do you wish you had said during discussion?
7. Who were the top 3 contributors today?
8. What is your overall evaluation of today's seminar?

## Discussion Rubric

### 6 times speaking = 5 x 3 = 15 points

|          | Codes                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Students | S=surface; I=insightful;<br>P=piggybacking/unoriginal;<br>A=analytical,<br>E=evidence,<br>DE=quotations,<br>Q=questions,<br>C=connections, T=talking while others are talking,<br>L=active listening | Questions/comments are clarifying and/or personally reactive. Ideas are unsupported. Student is often off topic. Student is inattentive, but may participate 1 - 2 times. Inappropriate phone use = automatic 0 | Questions/comments are rarely at an analysis level, and are often clarifying. Ideas are often unsupported. When student participates, he or she is for the most part on topic, but at times digresses abruptly. Student is at times inattentive, but participates in some fashion at least 2-3 times. | Questions/comments are at times at the analysis level, but sometimes are understanding/clarifying and/or personally reactive. Student occasionally provides evidence to support claims. Student asks questions related to current discussion, but may not have a direct connection to previous ideas. Mostly attentive and participates at least 4 times. | Questions/comments are primarily at the analysis level. Student paraphrases evidence from the text to support ideas. Student makes comments that connect ideas to previous comments and/or builds on another student's ideas. Attentive and participates at least 5 times. | Questions/comments are at the analysis, synthesis, and evaluative level. Student uses direct evidence from the text to support ideas, citing specific quotes and lines. Connects ideas with other classmates and/or ideas in the text. Student bridges off of ideas from previous discussions. Attentive and participates 6 or more times. |
|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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## Seminar Preparation Rubric

|                    | 4                                                                                       | 3                                                                      | 2                                                                                  | 1 - 0                                    |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Reading</b>     | Identifies/highlights key words and phrases<br><br>Many notes for main ideas in margins | Identifies some key words and phrases<br><br>Has some notes in margins | No identifying/highlighting of key words and phrases<br><br>Very few notes, if any | Unprepared, unfamiliar with text         |
| <b>Questioning</b> | Prepared at least 4 high level questions based on the text; questions are labeled       | Prepared at least 3 questions or questions are not all high level      | Prepared 2 questions                                                               | 1 question or has not prepared questions |

### Introducing the Strategy: Question the Text

Another complex skill that successful readers practice is asking questions about the text. Readers can actively involve themselves with the text by asking three levels of questions:

- **Level 1, Literal**—Literal questions can be answered by referring back to the text or consulting references.

**EXAMPLE:** *What is "Coney Island"?*

- **Level 2, Interpretive**—Interpretive questions call for inferences; answers cannot be found directly in the text; however textual evidence points to and supports your answers.

**EXAMPLE:** *Why does the narrator call this young couple "the wisest"?*

- **Level 3, Universal**—Universal questions go beyond the text. What are the larger issues or ideas raised by the text?

**EXAMPLE:** *Why are some people motivated to make sacrifices for others?*

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

**Socratic Seminar Absence**  
*Due no more than 2 days after your absence*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Write a short summary of the reading **include at least two integrated quotations.**
2. List and explain 6 of your annotations.
3. List your questions for Socratic Seminar.
4. You must **type** your response.
5. Total = 23 points
  - 4 points for questions
  - 4 points for summary
  - 15 points for 6 annotations

Integrated quotation example:

The reporter in question writes for other outlets including “regular columns for Time and The Post, as well as books about world affairs” (Smith 6).



Citation includes article author and page number.  
Punctuation included after citation.