

# Socratic Seminars

**Student-led text-driven discussions**

# Get Your Students Talking with *Socratic Seminars*

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Common Core  
Standards  
Online



# THE BIG IDEA

## Value of a Socratic Seminar

Dialogue as a form of inquiry and understanding  
Learn how to disagree; good way to learn how to  
talk about things that don't have definitive  
answers  
Analyze and discuss complex issues  
Symphony

# COLONIZATION ROAD:



• KENORA  
• RAINY RIVER  
• EMO  
• FORT FRANCES  
• DRYDEN

• BRUCE MINES  
• BLIND RIVER  
• SPANISH

• SUDBURY

• HUNTSMVILLE

• TWEED



04:56

Play



A glowing lightbulb is the central focus, emitting rays of light. It is surrounded by a dense field of white icons on a dark blue background. The icons represent various fields of study: science (DNA, atom, microscope, globe), mathematics (percentages, graphs, numbers, pi symbol), art (palette, camera), music (musical notes), and general education (books, graduation cap, pencil, compass). The word "BENEFITS" is written in bold black letters on a yellow rectangular background, centered over the lightbulb.

**BENEFITS**

# TOPICS

*Is the topic a good choice for a Socratic Seminar?*

## HOW TO CHOOSE A TOPIC

### POINTS OF VIEW:

Does your topic involve multiple perspectives?



### SHARING

Will students feel comfortable sharing ideas?



### OUTCOMES:

Does the topic allow for individual interpretation AND general big picture understanding?

# CHOOSING THE TEXTS

## LITERATURE

Essays, articles, excerpts, images, video,  
audio.

## DATA

Graphs, spreadsheets, stats, infographics, excerpts  
from anecdotes, notes, interviews

## THOUGHTS, REFLECTIONS, QUESTIONS

Student notes, reflections, questions



- Groups in countries like Canada, the United States, and Britain are urging changes to the development and use of land in developing countries. Are those who advocate for resource development in Canada for the sake of jobs likely to have a different view of development in countries like Brazil? Explain.
- For those people who are concerned about land rights and environmental preservation in **other** countries, what policies should we develop here in Canada to lands occupied by settlers?

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do we address issues of land and reconciliation in places like Vancouver (unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh)?
- How have those of us who are not indigenous benefitted from settler colonialism (even if we are new or recent immigrants)?

# GUIDELINES

Be prepared with notes, ideas and questions.  
Refer to the text(s).

Look at other students when speaking.

Stay focused on the topic.

Ask thoughtful questions of students who haven't  
spoken.

If you don't understand, ask a question.

Take notes.

## SET CLASS RULES/NORMS

1. Do not raise your hand.
2. Participate x number of times.
3. No side conversations, interrupting or debating.
4. If you disagree, be respectful. Ask a question, ask for evidence or state alternatives.

# GETTING ORGANIZED

## PREPARING

time, graphic organizers, guiding questions

## FACILITATING

Guidelines on the wall.

Intervene only when necessary.

Guiding Question	Textual Support	Personal/World Support
Which events were the easiest to connect to historical events? Which were the most challenging? Why?		
Do you think the book works as an allegory? If so, does that make the book less interesting than other novels you have read?		
Do you have empathy for the characters?		

## Organize Notes

# Sentence and Question Frames

## Clarifying Frames



Could you please repeat/rephrase that? I did not understand.  
Can you please explain what you said about...  
Can you say more about that?  
In other words, are you saying...  
I have a question about...



## Affirming Frames

My idea is related to...  
I really liked \_\_\_'s idea about...  
I agree with... Also...  
My idea builds on \_\_\_\_\_'s idea.



## Frames of Difference

I was thinking about what \_\_\_\_\_ said, and I was wondering what if...  
This makes me think...  
What would be an example of what you are saying?  
Could you explain your reason?  
Did anyone else find evidence to support this idea?  
Can you tell me why you think it is true?  
Can you show me a place in the text that illustrates that idea?  
I see it differently because...



For more sentence and question frames, go to:

1. [TeachThought.com](https://www.teachthought.com)
2. [AVID Socratic Seminar](https://www.avid.org/)
3. [Accountable Talk Toolkit](https://www.accountabletalk.com/)

OR JUST SEARCH ONLINE FOR  
SENTENCE AND QUESTION  
STEMS FOR SOCRATIC  
SEMINARS.

# Socratic Seminar Scoring Guide

The following criteria will be used to evaluate your participation in the seminar.

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## Exceeds Expectations

- Fully prepared with notes, questions, and/or comments; may have done additional reading or research
  - Contributions to discussion build on those of other people; responds insightfully to other people's contributions
  - Consistently uses evidence from the text(s) (and possibly other sources) to support opinions and explanations
  - In challenging another person's point of view or idea, creates a thoughtful exchange of ideas
  - Makes insightful connections to other ideas (other novels, current events, art, etc.)
- 

## Meets Expectations

- Prepared with notes, questions, and/or comments
  - Contributes thoughtful questions and/or comments to the discussion without prompting
  - Engages directly with other students and their ideas (eye contact, body language, etc.)
  - Uses evidence and examples from the text when speaking
  - When challenging another person's ideas, maintains a respectful, collegial atmosphere
-

Students Step UP



# TROUBLE SHOOTING

No one speaks.

Student speaks  
too much.

A few students  
don't speak.



unrelated  
comments

transforming into  
a debate



**Promo code: SS2018**

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**For more information**

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