

# The Role and Responsibilities of the Seminar Participant

## Before the Seminar

- Read the text carefully and for understanding.
- Use highlighters to mark crucial text and make notes in margins.
- Look for places where the author is stating his views, arguing for them, or raising questions.
- Make connections between parts of the text by using your marginal notes.
- Think about what you have read and how you understand it.
- Make connections between the ideas in the text and what you know in your life and the lives of the others.

## During the Seminar

- Be prepared to participate; the quality of the seminar diminishes when participants speak without preparation.
- Refer to the text often and when needed; a seminar is not a test of memory.
- Ask good questions and ask for clarification when confused.
- Take turns speaking instead of raising hands.
- Listen carefully and actively to your fellow participants.
- Speak so that all can hear you.
- Address your fellow participants, not just the leader.
- Discuss the ideas of the text, not each other's opinions.
- Show respect for differing ideas, thoughts, and values.
- Give evidence and examples to support your responses.
- Help fellow participants clarify questions and responses.
- Keep your mind open to new ideas and possibilities.

## After the Seminar

- Be reflective about the process of the seminar.
- Discuss with your group parts of the seminar you think went well and which skills you and your fellow participants still need to improve.
- Use writing to think about both the process and the content of the seminar.
- Reflect on both yourself as an individual and the group as a whole.
- Be prepared to help set goals for improvement in the next seminar.

# Guidelines for Developing Questions

*The learning in Socratic Seminars occurs as a result of the questions asked. Keep these guidelines in mind as you develop seminar questions.*

- Be sure that your questions are void of judgment and derived from the text.
- Ask questions that raise questions.
- Avoid asking yes/no questions.
- Ask hypothetical and complex questions.
- Ask questions to which there are no right or wrong answers.
- Continue to ask “why” or to probe the responses of the participants with further questioning.
- Allow yourself to guide the discussion with your questioning but to go with the discussion as well.

*Listed below are examples of the types of questions you may want to develop and have ready as the leader of a Socratic Seminar. Use this page to assist you as you examine the text in preparation for the seminar.*

1. By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?
2. What would change your mind?
3. What are the assumptions, explicit or underlying, of this text?
4. Can you identify ideas in the text that seem to contradict one another?
5. What if \_\_\_\_\_ happened (or were true) instead of \_\_\_\_\_?
6. What might be some other good titles for this text?
7. What does the text say about the human race (or love, beauty, progress, etc.)? What do you think about it? What might other people say about it?
8. Do the ideas stated in this text seem to agree with or contradict this statement: \_\_\_\_\_
9. If \_\_\_\_\_ were writing (composing, painting, etc.) today, what might be different about this work?
10. In recent times, what well-known people are (were) like \_\_\_\_\_ in the text?
11. What does the term \_\_\_\_\_ mean in this text?
12. In what way would \_\_\_\_\_ change, if \_\_\_\_\_ happened differently?
13. How do you think something from the text was (would be) viewed by \_\_\_\_\_?
14. In what ways are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ alike (or different)?
15. What part of this work provokes the most discussion? Least discussion? Why? What in the text supports that opinion?
16. What important conclusions can we draw from the text?
17. What does the writer/artist assume? What are you assuming?



## **Socratic Seminar Group Guidelines**

### **Listen**

*No one can speak while someone else is speaking.*

### **Build**

*Speakers must try to build on what others say, not debate their views.*

### **Refer to the Text**

*Speakers must refer directly to the section of the text from which their ideas come rather than making general comments or observations.*



This table provides six strategies that help readers understand texts. While making connections, clarifying information or doing some other work defined on this page, write down your thoughts in the margins of the text, on sticky notes, or in your Cornell notes.

<p><b><u>Visualize</u></b> Visualize what the author is saying and draw an illustration in the margin. Visualizing what authors say will help you clarify complex concepts and ideas.</p> <p>When visualizing ask,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does this look like?</li><li>• How can I draw this concept/ idea?</li><li>• What visual and/ or symbol best represents this idea?</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Summarize</u></b> Briefly summarize paragraphs or sections of a text. Summarizing is a good way to keep track of essential information while condensing lengthier passages.</p> <p>Summaries will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• state what the paragraph is about</li><li>• describe what the author is <i>doing</i></li><li>• account for key terms and/or ideas.</li></ul>
<p><b><u>Clarify</u></b> Clarify complex ideas presented in the text. Readers clarify ideas through a process of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Pausing to clarify ideas will increase your understanding of the ideas in the text.</p> <p>In order to clarify information you might...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• define key terms.</li><li>• reread sections of the text.</li><li>• analyze or connect ideas in the text.</li><li>• paraphrase or summarize ideas.</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Connect</u></b> Make connections within the text, to your own life, and to the world. Making connections will improve your comprehension of the text.</p> <p>While reading you might ask,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does this relate to me?</li><li>• How does this idea relate to other ideas in the text?</li><li>• How does this relate to the world?</li></ul>
<p><b><u>Respond</u></b> Respond to ideas in the text as you read. Your responses can be personal or analytical in nature. Thoughtful responses will increase engagement and comprehension.</p> <p>Readers will often respond to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• interesting ideas.</li><li>• emotional arguments.</li><li>• provocative statements.</li><li>• author's claims.</li><li>• facts, data, and other support.</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Question</u></b> Question both the ideas in the text and your own understanding of the text. Asking good questions while reading will help you become a more critical reader.</p> <p>While reading you might ask...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the author saying here?</li><li>• What is the author doing?</li><li>• What do I understand so far?</li><li>• What is the purpose of this section?</li><li>• What do I agree/disagree with?</li></ul>





# Observation Form

## Inner-Outer Discussion Circle



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

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Partner \_\_\_\_\_

<b>SPEAKS IN THE DISCUSSION</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>LOOKS AT PERSON WHO IS SPEAKING</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REFERS TO THE TEXT</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ASKS A QUESTION</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RESPONDS TO ANOTHER SPEAKER</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>INTERRUPTS ANOTHER SPEAKER</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ENGAGES IN SIDE CONVERSATION</b>											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>AFTER DISCUSSION: What is the most interesting thing your partner said?</b>											
<b>AFTER DISCUSSION: What would you like to have said in the discussion?</b>											

## Socratic Seminar Rubric

This rubric gives a holistic assessment of a participant's behavior in a seminar. It can be used by observers or a teacher to give individual feedback to students.

Exemplary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates patience with others' opinions</li> <li>• Moves the conversation forward</li> <li>• Speaks to all participants</li> <li>• Thinks before answering</li> <li>• Refers directly to the text</li> <li>• Makes connections to other speakers</li> <li>• Considers all opinions</li> <li>• Builds on others' comments</li> <li>• Asks for clarification when needed</li> <li>• Identifies key words/phrases/details in the text</li> </ul>
Commanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments often</li> <li>• Responds to questions</li> <li>• Refers to the text</li> <li>• Offers interesting ideas</li> <li>• Pays attention</li> <li>• Asks a few questions</li> </ul>
Competent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizes only own ideas</li> <li>• Ideas not always connected</li> <li>• Refers to text</li> <li>• Loses track of the conversation</li> <li>• Judges others' ideas</li> <li>• May ask questions</li> </ul>
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leans toward debate, not dialogue</li> <li>• Disruptive or argumentative</li> <li>• Mumbles or is silent</li> <li>• Repeats some ideas</li> <li>• Does not ask questions</li> </ul>
Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is not participating</li> <li>• May be lost or overwhelmed with seminar</li> </ul>

## Socratic Seminar Discussion Debrief

The questions on the previous page focus more on the process. These questions are designed to help participants and observers reflect on the content of the seminar dialogue. They may be used in discussion only, or students may write their answers first and then engage in a discussion.

1. What was the best point made during the 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 in the discussion?
7. Who were the top three contributors to the discussion?
8. What is your overall evaluation of the seminar?