

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### Generic Template

A Socratic Seminar (named after Socrates) is a deep discourse led by questioning. You will engage in one as an assessment over \_\_\_\_\_. You will prepare your thoughts on several different questions. You will come to school in your formal uniform or formal attire. The Seminar will take one period.

### Why Do Socratic Seminars?

- To think out loud
- To share ideas
- To investigate what we may not get to talk about in a traditional assessment
- To reflect on the way things are or the way they could be
- To learn from each other
- To enjoy ourselves as scholars
- To use vocabulary more precisely
- To discover the power of many minds at work
- To change our minds

### Guidelines for Socratic Seminars

-Listen carefully! This is crucial. Much of your grade is based on your ability to **listen** and **respond** to what was just said.

-Be respectful! Sit up straight in your seat. Use Mr. or Miss when addressing another student. Raise your hand to speak. You may want to keep track of your participation by holding up a number of fingers to represent the number of times you have added to the conversation. If you notice someone is not participating, you may call on him/her to get him/her active in the seminar. Do this by calling the student by name and stating your opinion first so the student has something about which to react. Everyone must have a nameplate.

-Speak loudly and clearly.

-Take turns speaking. You cannot call on the same person who called on you. If you disagree with a person, do so in a thoughtful, appropriate manner. Ask questions without attacking. Ask people to explain what they mean. There are no right or wrong answers. Don't worry if the conversation takes a different direction. When a discussion of a particular question seems to have ended and no one has anything to say, any student may ask, "Are we done?" and/or "Shall we go to another question?"

-Refer to your \_\_\_\_\_ when necessary. A seminar is not a test of memory. You are not learning a subject; you are aiming at understanding ideas and issues.

-Don't look at the teacher. Discourse is for you the students. You are teaching each other. We are a community of scholars. Teachers will only intervene when absolutely necessary.

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### Seminar Preparation

Using these big questions, prepare responses to \_\_\_ of them on note cards. You will likely need several note cards. Make a point on the front of the note card and put your proof on the back. All points must be backed up with proof in the forms of text, research, packet information, etc. Label your proof so that you can direct the other seminar members where to find it. Gain extra depth when you work the vocabulary words into your answers.

### Seminar Big Questions

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
11. COME UP WITH YOUR OWN QUESTION TO USE DURING THE SEMINAR. It must be open-ended and text-dependent, i. e. it can be answered in many ways and can be backed up with text.

### Seminar Discussion Helpers

- Can you say something similar using other words?
- What did you like about the previous contribution?
- What new ideas did that contribution give?
- What puzzled you the most about that last statement?
- Can you elaborate, explain, or give another example?
- What in the last statement had not occurred to you before?
- How did the person who made the last statement arrive that that conclusion?

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### ELA Sample

A Socratic Seminar (named after Socrates) is a deep discourse led by questioning. You will engage in one as an assessment over Julius Caesar. You will prepare your thoughts on several different questions. You will come to school in your formal uniform. The Seminar will take one period.

### Why Do Socratic Seminars?

- To think out loud
- To share ideas
- To investigate what we may not get to talk about in a traditional assessment
- To reflect on the way things are or the way they could be
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- To enjoy ourselves as scholars
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- To change our minds

### Guidelines for Socratic Seminars

- Listen carefully! This is crucial. Much of your grade is based on your ability to **listen** and **respond** to what was just said.
- Be respectful! Sit up straight in your seat. Use Mr. or Miss when addressing another student. Raise your hand to speak. You may want to keep track of your participation by holding up a number of fingers to represent the number of times you have added to the conversation. If you notice someone is not participating, you may call on him/her to get him/her active in the seminar. Do this by calling the student by name and stating your opinion first so the student has something about which to react. Everyone must have a nameplate.
- Speak loudly and clearly.
- Take turns speaking. You cannot call on the same person who called on you. If you disagree with a person, do so in a thoughtful, appropriate manner. Ask questions without attacking. Ask people to explain what they mean. There are no right or wrong answers. Don't worry if the conversation takes a different direction. When a discussion of a particular question seems to have ended and no one has anything to say, any student may ask, "Are we done?" and/or "Shall we go to another question?".
- Refer to your note cards, Julius Caesar text, Julius Caesar background, Julius Caesar packets, and Julius Caesar quizzes when necessary. A seminar is not a test of memory. You are not learning a subject; you are aiming at understanding ideas and issues.
- Don't look at the teacher. Discourse is for you the students. You are teaching each other. We are a community of scholars. Teachers will only intervene when absolutely necessary.

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### Seminar Preparation

Using these big questions, prepare responses to **10** of them on note cards. You will likely need several note cards. Make a point on the front of the note card and put your proof on the back. All points must be backed up with proof in the forms of text, research, packet information, etc. Label your proof so that you can direct the other seminar members where to find it. Gain extra depth when you work the vocabulary words into your answers.

### Seminar Big Questions

1. **How** does Act I establish the main themes, conflicts, and mood of the play?
2. What is the **function** of minor characters such as Lucius, Titinius, Popilius, Pindarus, Artemidorus, etc.?
3. What is the **function** of the many literary devices in the play such as apostrophes, anachronisms, soliloquies, monologues, dialogues, similes, metaphors, synecdoches, metonymies, allusions, etc.?
4. Which is greater, Caesar or the spirit of Caesar?
5. What real or fictional character is a parallel for Brutus? How are they parallel?
6. What connections can be made between *Julius Caesar* and other Unit One topics such as The Enlightenment and Revolutions?
7. A tragic hero is a basically good and admirable person who, because of a fault or flaw in his character, fails in opposing the forces that bring about his downfall. Who in *Julius Caesar* qualifies as a tragic hero: Caesar, Cassius, or Brutus? Why?
8. What roles do the supernatural and superstition play in *Julius Caesar*?
9. Shakespeare is a man for all ages because he can understand what it means to be human--our hopes, dreams, fears, anxieties, etc. What is there in the play that speaks directly to students in the 21st century?
10. Concerning the seven aspects of culture, what do we learn about Ancient Rome from studying the play *Julius Caesar*?
11. Concerning the seven aspects of culture, what do we learn about Shakespeare's time period (Elizabethan Renaissance) from studying the play *Julius Caesar*?
12. What can be learned when you apply two of the issues from the Act Packets to both the play and present day?
13. COME UP WITH YOUR OWN QUESTION TO USE DURING THE SEMINAR. It must be open-ended and text-dependent, i. e. it can be answered in many ways and can be backed up with text.

### Seminar Discussion Helpers

- Can you say something similar using other words?
- What did you like about the previous contribution?
- What new ideas did that contribution give?
- What puzzled you the most about that last statement?
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- What in the last statement had not occurred to you before?
- How did the person who made the last statement arrive at that conclusion?

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### Social Studies/Humanities Sample

A Socratic Seminar (named after Socrates) is a deep discourse led by questioning. You will engage in one as an assessment over Postmodernism and the Information Age. You will prepare your thoughts on several different questions. You will come to school in your formal uniform. The Seminar will take one to two periods.

#### Why Do Socratic Seminars?

- To think out loud
- To share ideas
- To investigate what we may not get to talk about in a traditional assessment
- To reflect on the way things are or the way they could be
- To learn from each other
- To enjoy ourselves as scholars
- To use vocabulary more precisely
- To discover the power of many minds at work
- To change our minds

#### Guidelines for Socratic Seminars

-Listen carefully! This is crucial. Much of your grade is based on your ability to **listen** and **respond** to what was just said.

-Be respectful! Sit up straight in your seat. Use Mr. or Miss when addressing another student. Raise your hand to speak. You may want to keep track of your participation by holding up a number of fingers to represent the number of times you have added to the conversation. If you notice someone is not participating, you may call on him/her to get him/her active in the seminar. Do this by calling the student by name and stating your opinion first so the student has something on which to react. Everyone must have a nameplate with "Mr." or "Miss" and your last name.

-Speak loudly and clearly.

-Take turns speaking. You cannot call on the same person who called on you. If you disagree with a person, do so in a thoughtful, appropriate manner. Ask questions without attacking. Ask people to explain what they mean. There are no right or wrong answers. Don't worry if the conversation takes a different direction. When a discussion of a particular question seems to have ended and no one has anything to say, any student may ask, "Are we done?" and/or "Shall we go to another question?".

-Refer to your note cards, Prezi notes, Information Age readings, Terrorism assignments, etc. when necessary. A seminar is not a test of memory. You are not learning a subject; you are aiming at understanding ideas and issues.

-Don't look at the teacher. Discourse is for you the students. You are teaching each other. We are a community of scholars. Teachers will only intervene when absolutely necessary.

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### Seminar Preparation

Using these big questions, prepare responses on note cards. PREPARE FOR TWELVE QUESTIONS. You may use one or several note cards for each question. Make a point on the front of the note card and put your proof on the back. All points must be backed up with proof in the forms of text, research, packet information, etc. Label your proof so that you can direct the other seminar members where to find it. Gain extra depth when you work the vocabulary words into your answers.

### Seminar Big Questions

1. Is Milan Kundera correct? Have all ideologies been defeated? Was ideology surpassed by reality, and reality replaced by imagology? (Back up your answers with examples used by Kundera and other authors, as well as a present day example.)
2. Do the “anthropic cosmological principle” and the Gaia hypothesis hold inspiration or condemnation for human rights and freedoms? Be sure to explain each idea fully in your answer.
3. Do you agree or disagree with Gabriel Garcia Marquez when he says that in order to deal with colliding languages in the information age we should discard standardized spellings, assimilate new expressions quickly, humanize grammar rules, make language more musical, and get rid of outdated rules. Why?
4. Octavio Paz’s “To Talk,” Bei Dao’s “Language,” and John Ashbery’s “Paradoxes and Oxymorons” all center upon language. According to each, what are the functions and power of language? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. The clash of cultures is a topic for the unit and each of the following pieces of literature: Gary Snyder’s “Smokey the Bear Sutra,” Wislawa Szymborska’s “The Terrorist, He Watches,” An Account of Tourist Terrorism,” and “Rethinking the War on American Culture.” Turn the topic “clash of cultures” into a theme (what insight is gained about humanity concerning the topic) and support your theme with the four works of literature.
6. According to critics, Joyce Carol Oates focuses upon the spiritual, sexual, and intellectual decline of modern American society. In what ways does her short story “Ace” comment on the decline of modern American society? Is she accurate?
7. Which artist best typifies Postmodernism and the Information Age? Why? (Be sure to talk about his art style and its connections to today’s society.)
8. What are the three most important contributions to music in the Information Age? Why?
9. Consider all of the examples of terrorism from the “Early Terrorism” readings. Which one is the most shocking? Why?
10. What lessons should we learn from past incidents of terrorism? How can we win the “war on terror”?
11. It is often said that, “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” What distinguishes between the two? Are acts of terrorism ever justifiable?
12. What is the proper balance between individual liberties and collective security in regard to the threat posed by terrorism?
13. In his film *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore argues that we have a “moral imperative.” What does this mean and what actions does it demand?
14. There are a wide range of environmental threats facing our planet. Which of them is the most serious and should be confronted first?
15. Thomas Friedman maintains that “the world is flat” when he alludes to the growing economic power of China and India and the competitor they present for the world’s resources and markets. How should the USA respond to these new challenges?

### **Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES**

16. Economic, political, and even ecological forces are fueling the migration of people from the developing world to developed countries. What should be America's policies regarding immigration in the 21st century?
17. COME UP WITH YOUR OWN QUESTION TO USE DURING THE SEMINAR. It must be open-ended and text-dependent, i. e. it can be answered in many ways and can be backed up with text.

#### Seminar Discussion Helpers

- Can you say something similar using other words?
- What did you like about the previous contribution?
- What new ideas did that contribution give?
- What puzzled you the most about that last statement?
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- How did the person who made the last statement arrive at that conclusion?

# Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

Fold

Your Name

Fold

Name plate Instructions:

1. Print your name in large letters within in the frame.
2. Fold vertical lines to form a free standing name plate.

# Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

## Socratic Seminar Evaluation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Level four is an A

- Listens actively: student's posture is oriented to the group at all times.
- Is considerate all the time
- Frequently expands the discussion by:
  - alluding to previously shared readings
  - offering analogies
  - Involving others
  - raising questions
  - clarifying the contribution of others
- Maintains focus : pencil/highlighter/text in hand
- Contributes significantly: This includes citing and interpreting the text at least three times
- Uses proper English--voice is loud and clear
- Responds thoughtfully to ideas of others

This person is very much involved in the seminar.

Level three is a B

- Listens actively: student's posture is usually oriented to the group at all times.
- Is considerate
- Expanded the discussion by:
  - raising questions
- Maintains focus : pencil/highlighter/text in hand
- Contributes frequently : this includes citing the text 1 or 2 times.
- Uses proper English--voice is usually loud and clear
- Responds thoughtfully to ideas of others

This person is involved in seminar

Level two is a C

- Listens actively: student's posture is sometimes oriented toward the group.
- Is considerate
- Maintains focus : pencil, highlighter, and text in hand
- Uses proper English--voice is understandable
- Contributes occasionally: makes at least one oral contribution

This person is a participant of seminar.

Level one is a D and below

- This person is a passive member of seminar. He or she is polite and attentive but makes no oral contribution to discussion.
  - Does not have text.
  - Engages in side talk or other activities/inappropriate remarks
- This person is minimally involved in the seminar

Rate yourself using criteria at each level  
Then write the grade in the box.

**Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES**  
**Lesson Plan Form**

<b>Subject:</b> ELA/SS/SCI	<b>Lesson Day (Length of Instructional Time)</b> Socratic Seminar-Day Five (One Class Period)
<p><b>Objectives/Goals/Skills/Targets/Essential Questions:</b> Students will be able to:</p> <p><b>RI/RL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cite textual evidence to support analysis of text</li> <li>○ Read and Comprehend literary nonfiction</li> </ul> <p><b>RI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Integrate information presented in different media or formats</li> <li>○ Analyze differences/similarities among two or more texts on the same topic</li> </ul> <p><b>RH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources</li> </ul> <p><b>RST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts</li> </ul> <p><b>SL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engage effectively in a seminar/Follow rules for Socratic Seminar</li> <li>○ Come to seminar prepared, having read or studied required material</li> <li>○ Explicitly draw on your preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, issue, text, or issue to probe</li> <li>○ Reflect on ideas under discussion</li> <li>○ Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to topic, text, or issue under discussion</li> <li>○ Demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing</li> <li>○ Explain how information presented in diverse media and formats contribute to a topic, text, or issue under study</li> <li>○ Adapt speech to a formal context</li> </ul> <p><b>L</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain consistency in style and tone</li> <li>○ Accurately use grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases</li> </ul> <p><b>W</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence</li> </ul> <p><b>WHST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Write arguments that introduce and support claims with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data, and evidence</li> <li>○ Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Shifts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Balance Literary &amp; Informational</li> <li>○ Build Knowledge in Disciplines</li> <li>○ Staircase of Complexity</li> <li>○ Text-based Answers</li> <li>○ Writing from Sources</li> <li>○ Academic Vocabulary</li> </ul>	<p><b>Standards (More May Apply)</b></p> <p>RI/L.6-12.1    RI.6-12.7    RI.6-12.9    RI/L.6-12.10</p> <p>RH.6-12.1    RST.6-12.1    SL.6-12.1    SL.6-12.2</p> <p>SL.6-12.4    SL.6-12.6    L. 6-12.1    L.6-12.2</p> <p>L.6-12.3b    L.6-12.6    W.6-12.1a-b    W.6-12.8</p> <p>WHST.6-12.1    WHST.6-12.9</p>
<p><b>Evaluation/Evidence of Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rubric*</li> <li>○ Constructed Response*</li> <li>○ Performance Based*</li> <li>○ Multiple Choice/Evidence Based</li> <li>○ Short Answer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Informal:</b> Body language and engagement during the seminar; amount/quality of prepared materials used for reference</p> <p><b>Formal:</b> Rubrics (Self and Teacher) filled out during seminar; Note cards with prepared answers</p>

## Socratic Seminar TEMPLATE and SAMPLES

### Materials/Resources/Media/Technology

Articles, Literature, Media, etc. on a Topic/Unit; Socratic Seminar Prep Page with Text-Dependent Seminar Questions; Note cards; Area where students can sit in a circle with tables or desks, Student Self-Assessment Rubrics, Rubrics or Blank Gradebook Sheet for Teacher, Nameplates for each student; Markers for putting formal names on nameplates, e.g. Miss Samson or Mr. Jones; Collection Box/Folder for note cards and self-assessments after the seminar

### Lesson Introduction/Anticipatory Set

*Prior to the Socratic seminar day, students have read texts, watched videos, attended lessons, etc. on a topic. They have been given a seminar prep page with several text-dependent Socratic seminar questions related to the texts, videos, or other input on the topic. They have prepared text-dependent answers on note cards for a set number of those questions.*

**Have the students sit in a circle with all textual materials, seminar prep sheet, note cards with prepared answers, and nameplate on the desk/table in front of each of them. Remind them of the protocols for the seminar. You may want to put the list of what to do each time they speak\* (see below) somewhere in the room that can be seen by all students during the seminar for easy reference. Choose a volunteer to begin the seminar by selecting one of the seminar questions and responding to it. (At this point, the students are in control and the teacher only intervenes if necessary.)**

--During the Socratic seminar each student should speak at least three times. Each time they speak they need to: \*Respond to the person/answers given prior to them on a given question (I agree/disagree/hadn't thought of that/found that interesting . . . ); Give their own answer to the question on the floor; Back up their answer by citing/referencing text, video, other input; Choose another student to continue the seminar.

### Daily Best Practices

- Explaining
- Demonstrating
- Collaborating/Discussions
- Learning by Teaching
- Whole Group
- Small Group
- One-to-One
- Modeling & Structured Practice
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice
- Real-World Prompts

### Collaborative Learning, Discussion, and Performance

**Seminar: Students have collaborative discussion building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly following the speaking requirements listed above\* and the Socratic seminar protocols:**

**Only speak when you have the floor by being addressed formally by another student, i.e. "Mr. Jones";**

**When you have the floor, complete all four speaking requirements from above (respond, answer, cite, give floor to another student);**

**Exhaust one topic before moving to the next;**

**Keep track of your additions to the seminar by physically holding up the number of times you have already spoken when you want to speak again;**

**Do not call on the same person who gave you the floor; and Keep everyone involved by calling on those who have spoken the least.**

--During the seminar the teacher keeps track of student participation (quantity and quality) by either using the attached rubric or a system of check/check plusses on a blank grade book page.

### Closing/Deeper Analysis:

Students fill out the Self Assessment Rubric (attached)

NOTE: This is the same rubric that the teacher may use to keep track of student participation.