

WHO QUESTIONS? P R E P A R A T I O N

What is a Socratic Seminar?

A Socratic seminar is a discussion in which you and your classmates will take part. Your teacher will ask a question and your role as student is to answer the question, using what you have studied so far. Read through the guidelines below and consider what you have read so far.

Guidelines for Participants in a Socratic Seminar

1. Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. You're not "learning a subject"; your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text.
2. It's okay to "pass" when asked to contribute.
3. Don't participate if you're not prepared.
4. Don't stay confused. If you don't understand what someone is saying, ask them to explain further.
5. Stay on the topic currently being discussed. If another idea comes to your mind, make a note about it so that you can come back to it later.
6. Don't raise your hand. Instead, take turns speaking.
7. Listen carefully to what everyone has to say. Respect others- you may disagree with their points or opinions but the seminar is for discussion, not argument.
8. Speak up so that everyone can hear you.
9. Talk to the rest of your class, not just to the leader or teacher.
10. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.
11. You are responsible for the seminar.

Before you come to the seminar, write at least one question in each of the following categories to share:

CONNECTION TO THE PRESENT: Write a question connecting these events to the world you live in today.

CLOSE-ENDED QUESTION: Write a question that will help everyone in the class come to an agreement about events or characters in the text. This question usually has a "correct" answer.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION: Write an insightful question that will require proof and discussion to discover or explore the answer to the question.
