**Socratic Seminar Rules & Guidelines**

A Socratic Seminar is meant to be a place where you can talk and discuss a reading with your peers so as to gain a deeper understanding. Seminar is not meant to test your knowledge of a certain reading but to help you better understand it.

You are expected to come prepared for seminar by having read and highlighted the text. You should bring any questions you may have had about the reading (things you didn’t understand, things you are curious to know how others felt) and ask those questions to one another during seminar.

**As you go into the seminar, keep the following guidelines in mind:**

* Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. Your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text. To that end, it is important to refer to the text directly.
* It’s OKAY to “pass” when asked to contribute, but your participation is required (you must speak at least once).
* Participation includes listening and talking. Build on the ideas of others.
* Simple agreement or disagreement is not substantive participation. Your comments should lead the class into new thinking.
* Ask for clarification if you don’t understand something in the text or something one of your peers is saying.
* Stick to the point currently under discussion. Make notes if you have an idea you want to come back to.
* Take turns speaking. Allow others a chance to participate. Try not to dominate the conversation.
* Listen carefully.
* Address the group when you are speaking, not the teacher or facilitator.
* In seminar, we agree to disagree. It is a discussion, not a debate.

Pre-Discussion:

* While reading, underline important words/sentences/paragraphs.
* When finished, on a separate sheet of notebook paper, free write for about 5 minutes on your thoughts and ideas about the article you just read. Be ready to discuss.

Helpful Questions:

* What are your initial thoughts?
* What is the main idea or underlying value in the article?
* What are the ethical concerns raised by the text?
* What does a (particular phrase) mean?
* What is the most important word/sentence/paragraph and why?
* How doe the ideas in the text relate to our lives personally?
* Do you agree or disagree with the author’s statement? Why?

**Socratic Seminar Evaluation Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. Rewrite the central question in your own words.
2. Describe something about the discussion that pleased you and something that frustrated you.
3. Give an example of someone else’s “thinking” that you found yourself actually thinking about (identify that person by name).
4. Describe how the above example affected your opinion.
5. Briefly summarize the main points of today’s discussion.
6. What was the most interesting question?
7. What was the most interesting idea to come from a participant?
8. What was the best thing you observed?
9. What was the most troubling thing you observed?
10. What do you think should be done differently in the next seminar?
11. What do you wish you had said?