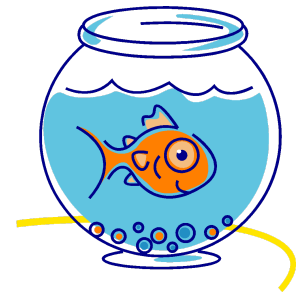


Fishbowl Discussion



Overview:

Because you are an intelligent, thoughtful group of upperclassmen, I am handing over a large portion of our *Great Gatsby* discussions to you. You will be in charge of what you want to discuss and how you want to discuss it.

Each day, we will have an inner circle composed of 4-5 leaders, 4-5 discussers, 2-4 hot seats.

We also have an outer circle of people reflecting on the class blog. People in this outer circle will have the option of jumping in the discussion via the hot seats. Leaders and discussers will know which chapters they are assigned to in advance.

You need to sign up to be a leader once and a discusser once.

THE INNER CIRCLE

Expectations for Leaders:

1. Create a **syllabus** together in which you do the following:
 - a. Write a short summary of the reading (5-8 sentences).
 - b. Ask 12-20 discussion questions *of your own creation*, most of which are specifically about the assigned reading, to the class syllabus.
 - c. Organize your syllabus into Level 1, 2, and 3 questions (see sample at bottom of this doc).
 - d. At least half of the questions should include a line, paragraph, or page for us to look. The question should be based directly on the passage to which you are directing our attention.
 - e. **I will create a Google doc on the class website, then leaders should paste their syllabus on that document by 10 p.m. the evening prior to the fishbowl.**
 - f. The syllabus will be graded on a 30 point scale. Each leader will receive the same syllabus grade.

Scroll to the bottom of this document for a sample syllabus.

2. **Facilitate** discussion. You will pose the questions, ask people to turn to certain pages in the book, move discussers on to the next question when it seems time to move on, ask people to explain themselves if they're being too general, and generally take on a leadership role. You should also be jumping in to discuss. Verbal participation is a requirement. The facilitation will be worth 10 points. Each leader will be graded individually for this component (see rubric).

Expectations for Discussers:

1. Read your assigned section carefully, annotating thoughtfully to help you feel prepared for the discussion.

You do NOT need to turn in a syllabus or meet with the other discussers in your group ahead of time.

2. Sit in the inner circle throughout the entire discussion and provide thoughtful input, questions, and commentary on at least a few occasions. You can earn up to 10 points for your discussion (see rubric).

The only way to earn your discusser grade is through verbal participation.

Expectations for Hot Seats:

On fishbowl days when we have fewer people in the inner circle, I may randomly choose 1-2 people to participate in the inner circle hot seats. I may add more or subtract this role depending on how the discussions are going.

All people on the outer circle are encouraged to jump into a hot seat at least once during this unit. If you prefer discussing over typing on the blog, you are welcome to sit in a hot seat for many discussions.

THE OUTER CIRCLE

Expectations: The rest of the class will sit in the outer circle. You may receive your daily points by...

- a. Writing a prompted, written response to the discussion or to the text.
- b. Engaging in live blogging with your fellow outer circle members in which you contribute frequently and thoughtfully throughout the entire discussion. You may earn up to 10 points each day for your outer circle blogging.
- c. Joining the discussion by getting in the hot seats and contributing at least a few insightful ideas. If you want to participate less, you can do so and turn in a shorter piece of writing/ blog post.

Expectations for the teacher: I will score the discussion and take notes on your comments. I will refrain from jumping into your discussion unless the conversation needs redirection the leaders are not providing (or unless I just can't help myself because discussion is so good). Remember leaders, this is YOUR job.

I may also take 5-10 minutes at the end of class to recap the discussion and touch on any ideas or issues that have not yet been addressed.

Discussion Scoring Chart: See notes below, as well as the attached rubrics.

How to Earn Points During Discussion

- Taking a position on a question
- Making a relevant comment
- Making a comparison
- Recognizing contradictions
- Backing up an opinion with supporting evidence or factual info.
- Asking a clarifying question or moving the discussion along
- Complimenting your classmates' good ideas or questions

How to Lose Points During a Discussion

- Not paying attention or distracting others
- Engaging in side conversations
- Interrupting
- Making irrelevant comments
- Monopolizing the conversation
- Making a personal attack
- Simply saying, "I agree with..."; "yes", "no", etc.
- Not verbally participating when you are assigned

Leader: _____ / 10

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Verbal participation suggests strong comprehension & analysis of reading.	Verbal participation suggests strong comprehension and, at points, interesting analysis.	Student's verbal participation indicates strong reading comprehension.	Participation captures lack of understanding of text, possibly due to not having completed the reading.
Student supports thinking with text, opening his or her book to refer to specific pages & passage from the reading.	Student frequently comes back to specific passages or plot points to support his or her assertions.	At times, student comes back to text to support his or her assertions.	Student does not support assertions.
Student was valuable to the discussion, contributing developed ideas throughout the discussion's duration without interrupting or dominating.	Student contributed to the discussion, but may have monopolized or interrupted others. Additionally, some comments may have been undeveloped, inappropriate, or tangential.	Student contributed to the discussion, but most ideas were brief, inappropriate, or irrelevant.	Student's contributions were brief, irrelevant, or inappropriate.
Student refrains from distracting from discussion with side conversation or other inappropriate behaviors.	At times, student's side conversation and/ or behavior distract from discussion.	Often, student's side conversation and/ or behavior distract from discussion.	Student's behavior and/ or side conversations distracted from the discussion.
Student exhibits good conversation skills by listening and building on others' ideas.	Most of the time, student exhibits good conversation skills by listening and building on others' ideas.	Some of student's ideas seem tangential to the discussion.	Unclear how student's thoughts connect with the conversation and questions posed.
Student served as an effective leader. Questions were posed with appropriate timing & student contributed to keeping the discussion flowing and on track.	At most points, student served in a leadership capacity by posing questions & keeping discussion flowing. Conversation would have benefitted from greater leadership, but the discussion was effective overall.	On at least 1 or 2 occasions, student facilitated discussion; however, discussion struggled at points due to lack of leadership.	Student did not serve in a leadership capacity in today's discussion, resulting in an ineffective fishbowl discussion.

Discusser: _____ / 10

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Verbal participation suggests strong comprehension & analysis of reading.	Verbal participation suggests strong comprehension and, at points, interesting analysis.	Student's verbal participation indicates strong reading comprehension.	Participation captures lack of understanding of text, possibly due to not having completed the reading.
Student supports thinking with text, opening his or her book to refer to specific pages & passage from the reading.	Student frequently comes back to specific passages or plot points to support his or her assertions.	At times, student comes back to text to support his or her assertions.	Student does not support assertions.
Student was valuable to the discussion, contributing developed ideas throughout the discussion's duration without interrupting or dominating.	Student contributed to the discussion, but may have monopolized or interrupted others. Additionally, some comments may have been undeveloped, inappropriate, or tangential.	Student contributed to the discussion, but most ideas were brief, inappropriate, or irrelevant.	Student's contributions were brief, irrelevant, or inappropriate.
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Student exhibits good conversation skills by listening and building on others' ideas.	Most of the time, student exhibits good conversation skills by listening and building on others' ideas.	Some of student's ideas seem tangential to the discussion.	Unclear how student's thoughts connect with the conversation and questions posed.



Asking good questions...

Part of the reason a discussion may go well or not is because of the types of questions we ask.

Look over the following questions, both the starting place and the place we want to end up, and model your questions for our discussion on the better examples. Consider, too, the question stems & inspirations I've provided.

Good: "Why do you think Creon doesn't act hateful towards Oedipus at the end of the play?"

Better: After Oedipus discovers he fulfilled his ill-fated prophecy, Creon brings Oedipus's daughters to visit him in the king's blind and downtrodden state. When Oedipus inquires as to why Creon has shown the tragic hero this kindness, his brother-in-law replies: "I did this for knowing the joy you always took in them, the joy you feel now" (Sophocles 80). To what extent does Creon behave differently in this interaction than in previous interactions with Oedipus? Why do you think this is?

Notice I took the same sentiment of the previous question, but gave my fellow discussers some more specifics to show the thinking that led to my question. Additionally, I've included a citation so I can actually have my peers open their books and read the passage that inspired my thinking. By establishing a relationship between this passage and previous ones, I've opened this question up to more discussion topics. I've also made it less leading so it has the possibility to inspire disagreement.

Good: "In the end, was Oedipus's decision noble? Why?"

Better: After discovering his fate, Oedipus stabs his eyes out with his wife and mother's dress pins and proceeds to banish himself from Thebes, the punishment he appropriates for his father's murderer before he knows it is, in fact, himself. How would you characterize this act? To what extent can this decision be considered noble? Why?

Again, I took the same interesting question but took care to show the thinking that inspired it. Because predominant plot points instead of a particular passage inspired my thinking, I did not include a quote, but

was sure to refer back to the concrete details that formed my question. I also started with the “how” question, with the hope that my question might, then, inspire some different responses. I included the second question, however, as I want to discuss my possible contention that the act was noble in case my peers don’t arrive at the same conclusion as me.

Question stems or inspiration, adapted from AVID center. *You do not have to use these, but these might help.*

- What does the line _____ reveal about _____?
- What might be some other good titles for this?
- What does this text say about the human race (love, beauty, progress, etc.)? What do you think about it?
- Does the text agree or disagree with the statement _____?
- If _____ were writing today, how would this work differ?
- In recent times, what well-known people are like _____ in this text?
- What does the term _____ mean? How is it important to the text?
- In what way would _____ change if _____ happened differently?
- How do you think something from the text was viewed at the time?
- In what ways are _____ and _____ alike? Different?
- What part of this work provokes the most discussion? The least? Why?
What in the text supports that opinion?
- What important conclusions can we draw from the text? What behaviors does it lead to or justify?
- What does the writer assume? What are you assuming?
- What would a different writer have to say about this part of the text?
- What does the author want us to think about a character or idea?
- What ideas and characters shift throughout the text?

Example syllabus for "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

Summary:

The story starts with an unnamed Grandmother complaining to her son, Bailey, that she and his family have to go to Florida instead of Tennessee, where she would much rather go. When no one listens to her, she dresses in her Sunday best, in case she is killed, so that she'd be found and instantly known as a lady. The Grandmother is rarely quiet throughout the car ride. When the family stops for lunch, she has a conversation with the owner, Red Sammy, about a murderer on the loose, known as The Misfit. She then states that these days good men are hard to find and many people are untrustworthy. When they get back on the road again, the Grandmother manages to convince the family to take a detour to the house of her childhood which, according to her, has secret passages. Intrigued, they take her directions and find themselves on an abandoned road. When the grandma realizes that the house is in Tennessee, and not Georgia, she panics and startles her cat, that then causes Bailey to lose control of the car and roll into a ditch. As they wait on the road for someone to arrive, a car pulls up with two men and a shirtless man holding a gun. As Bailey and the armed man talk, the Grandmother realizes the armed man is The Misfit. The Misfit then orders his partners to murder the family one by one. The Grandmother pleads for her life by telling The Misfit that she is unworthy of dying and trying to flatter him. He ignores her. She then tries to inform The Misfit about Jesus, which he rebukes as well because of his anger and disbelief towards religion. The Grandmother then tries one last time to physically reach out to him, but he recoils and shoots her to death. After The Misfit and his accomplices finish murdering the family, The Misfit comes to the conclusion that, "she would have been a good woman...if there had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life". The Misfit also goes on to say that murdering is "no real pleasure in life" when one of his partners says that murdering the family was fun.

Questions:

Level 1:

- Had the grandmother not recognized the Misfit, would they have helped the family or killed them anyway in a more discreet way?
- When the grandmother reaches out to The Misfit and tries to bring him to God as well as call him son, is this because she is again trying to save herself or is it her attempt to spend her last moments doing something good?

Level 2:

- At the beginning of the story in the 1st paragraph, the grandmother says "I wouldn't take my children in any direction with a criminal like that loose in it. I couldn't answer to my conscience if I did". She is then the one that really ends up leading the family to the killer and to their deaths, with little if any apparent remorse. Why does the author put this in here so specifically? Could it be a comment on religion or the south by the showing the hypocrisy of a "good southern woman"?
- The story is a big commentary on religion. The Misfit says that "You can do one thing or you can do another, kill a man or take a tire off his car, because sooner or later, you're going to forget what it was you done and just be punished for it." (pg. 9, last paragraph). What does this say about the author's view of religion? Does she perhaps believe that it is unjust in its treatment of right and wrong, good and evil?
- Does the grandmother or does she not change from looking like a good Christian to being a good Christian?
- What is the significance of the quote "Don't see no sun but don't see no cloud neither" (pg. 7, 4th to last paragraph)? I think it has something to do with the Misfit's religious views. He can't believe but he can't not believe either. He is in a state of indecisiveness, confusion, etc.
- At the very end of the story, The Misfit says that "She would of been a good woman, if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life" (last page, 3rd to last paragraph). Why does he say this? What is the message the author is trying to get across through this?
- What did the Misfit mean by "Jesus was the only One that ever raised the dead...and He shouldn't have done it. He shown everything off balance." (2nd to last page, 3rd to last paragraph)?
- The eight-year old son is named John Wesley. That is the same name as the man who is credited with founding the Methodist church. Why did the author choose that name? What significance does it have?
- Why is the grandmother silent for the first time when the last of her family is taken into the woods?

Level 3:

- What aspects does the author include throughout the story that make this particular short piece of writing so easy to relate to?
- What message(s) was O'Connor trying to get across in this story? Was religion the main focus/purpose?