

BEFORE THE SEMINAR

1. I teach the students about the Levels of Questioning using [THIS AVID/COSTA'S PACKET](#).

-Once we have modeled and practiced creating higher level questions, I let the students know that they will be expected to prepare high level questions to ask during the seminar.

-If it is their first time doing a seminar, I might prepare a list of about 5 questions that students create and give students the list ahead of time so that they can prepare responses and evidence. If they are experienced at seminars, I will just give them the reminder.

2. I review synthesis/text connections.

They often need a reminder that simply saying “this text reminds me of this...” is not good enough to get an A for this. They need to say “this text reminds me of this other text/experience in this way, and here is why that is important or here is what that teaches us.”

For an example, [here is the review](#) worksheet we do during 3rd quarter.

-I remind students that they will need to make a good text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connection during the seminar to support their opinion.

3. I remind students that they need to use textual evidence during the seminar discussion to support their responses.

-They must cite the source of their evidence (and a page # so their classmates can flip to that page and form a response).

4. Split students up into two groups (a day 1 inner circle & a day 2 inner circle)

-Depending on the class, I will either choose the groups randomly or put them into groups myself

4. Go over the Socratic Seminar Rubrics again

-See the next page for the rubrics I use.

Textual Evidence (reading)

A	B	C	D	IE
I can cite strong and thorough textual evidence to defend an interpretation of what the text says, both explicitly and inferentially.	I can cite strong and specific textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly.	I can identify details that support the meaning of the text.	I can recall general details that support a main idea within the text.	I cannot recall details from a text.

In order to get an A on the Socratic Seminar, you will need to prepare before-hand to make sure you have found specific textual evidence (page # evidence) to support your opinions and responses. You will need to state this page # evidence during the seminar so other members can turn to that page and understand your reference then form a response.

Synthesis (reading)

A	B	C	D	IE
I can create a new idea and justify it using connections from multiple texts and prior knowledge and experiences.	I can create a new idea using connections from multiple texts.	I can make connections between texts.	I can make obvious connections between texts.	I cannot make connections between texts.

In order to get an A on the Socratic Seminar, you will need to make text connections (text to self, text to text, OR text to society/world) to the book in order to support your opinions and responses. To really secure an A, you should do a little bit of outside inquiry/research to find an article or text that provides some insight into the topics we are discussing.

Effective Discussion (communication)

A	B	C	D	IE
I can actively engage in discussion by generating new ideas and building upon or challenging the ideas of others.	I can engage in discussion by relating new ideas and responding to others.	I can participate in discussion by communicating my ideas.	I can repeat the ideas of others.	No evidence

In order to get an A on the Socratic Seminar, you will need to be actively listening to your classmates and responding to them by building upon their ideas and/or respectfully challenging their ideas. You will need to actively participate in the online session during the day you are not speaking.

Inquiry

A	B	C	D	IE
I can create higher-level questions that go beyond the obvious to encourage critical thinking.	I can create questions that are interesting and relevant to encourage critical thinking.	I can create questions that are relevant.	I can create questions that are general.	I cannot create meaningful questions.

In order to get an A on the Socratic Seminar, you will need to create and ASK higher level thinking questions (Level 3 type questions) in order to encourage your classmates to think critically about the book and move the conversation forward.

DAY OF THE SEMINAR

1. Organize the desks into an inner circle and an outer circle.

-Students will sit according to the groups that were set up ahead of time

2. Set up the outer circle in the online [BACKCHANNEL CHAT](#) discussion.

- Remind students that they must use a recognizable nickname for themselves
- Students in the outer circle will be quietly discussing the following things:
 - How the inner circle discussion is going
 - What the inner circle is doing well & what they could improve on
 - Whether they agree or disagree with the points being made
 - Any other observations

3. Set up your grading sheets.

- I put together a packet of rubrics and label the student names in the order they are sitting in the inner circle. That way, it is easier for me to find their rubric sheet when they are speaking (you could also set this up electronically if you wanted to)
- While the inner circle is speaking, I jot down really quick notes so I can go back and circle the appropriate grade

For example:

- Good level 3 question
- Drew others in
- Responded respectfully
- Page # evidence
- Etc.

4. Once the discussion has started, pause a couple times for two minute “turn and talks”

- During these turn and talks, students can turn to the outer circle and get advice or suggestions from them based on what has been discussed in the Backchannel Chat discussion
- I also use this time to remind them of what they need to do in the discussion in order to earn an A (ask high level questions, make a good text connection, use textual evidence, and respond to questions).

5. Repeat for Day 2 of the Seminar (switch the inner and outer circles)

AFTER THE SEMINAR

Students will self grade based on their TODAYSMEET discussion.

-I will either print out the transcript to the online discussions or put them on BB9. Students will review the discussion and give themselves a grade (and write a rationale for that grade) for the Effective Discussion rubric.

Options for raising grades.

-If this is the first time doing a Socratic Seminar in my class, I might give students an opportunity to raise their grade after the seminar.

-They can type up a response that includes a high level question, a response to that question using textual evidence, and a text connection that supports their response. This could help to raise their grade on 3 out of the 4 rubrics (they will not be able to raise their “Effective Discussion” grade in this way).

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- I do my best to not speak AT ALL during the seminar (other than to pause the group for turn and talks and give them reminders). This makes for some very awkward silences, but it forces kids to turn to their books and look for more things to contribute.
- When there is a lull in the inner circle conversation, I will turn to the Backchannel Chat discussion and ask some leading questions to get them thinking (what is the inner circle doing well...what haven't they talked about that you would like them to...etc.)
- If you are focusing on one rubric skill first more than the others, you could always make one of the rubric strands summative and the others formative
- [EXAMPLE SOCRATIC SEMINAR VIDEO](#)