**Socratic Seminar:**

**A Student-Led Dialogue about a Provocative Text**

**Central Questions:**

**What is a Socratic Seminar?**

• A dialogue about a text that all students have read.

• A discussion that involves an exchange and sharing of ideas.

• A discussion in which the teacher has little involvement and only facilitates.

• NOT a debate!

**What is the structure?**

A timed conversation among the students in your Humanities class in which:

• The teacher sits outside the circle and listens.

• Students discuss a text, using clear summaries, quotations and specific examples.

• Every student participates by expressing his/her viewpoint and by encouraging

others to speak.

* Each student will offer two responses before going to the next question

**What will I be assessed on?**

• **Preparation**: You will need to prepare by writing a thesis, collecting evidence from the

text, and writing historical analyses for each piece of evidence.

• **Ideas During Seminar**: You will need to ask the group good questions, make deep

reflections based on your reading, and quote from specific parts of the text.

• **Oral Communication Skills**: During the seminar, you will be assessed on how

clearly you speak, your volume (loud enough) and your eye contact with the other

members of the group.

• **Participation/Group Skills**: During the seminar, you will be graded on how much

you contribute, listen, and encourage others to speak.

**Strategies for Active Classroom Participation**

**Ways to make comments on the central question**

• I believe that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_was the primary motivation for the dropping the atomic bomb because…

• In my opinion, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was the primary motivation for dropping the atomic bomb on Japan because…

• The evidence suggests that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was the primary motivation for the

Dropping the atomic bomb

**Ways to agree or affirm an opinion**

• I agree with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ...

• As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ said, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ....

• My opinion is similar to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s idea. I think that….

* I agree with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ but I want to add another reason why \_\_\_\_\_.

**Ways to disagree**

• I disagree with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ...

• I don’t agree with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_....

• My idea is different from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s idea.

* I understand your point, \_\_\_\_\_, but I want to add/disagree/give another side:\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ways to hold the floor**

• As I was saying…

• If I could finish my thought…

• What I was trying to say was…

**Asking others’ opinions**

• What do you think?

• Do you agree, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

Asking for clarification

• What do you mean, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

• Will you explain that again, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

• I have a question about that.

**Self Review for Socratic Seminar**

Write three things about your performance during the Socratic Seminar

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Things I did well** | **Things I could improve on** |
|  |  |

Adapted fromSource http://teachinghistory.org/system/files/3Socratic\_Seminar\_Sentence\_Starters.pdf