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Ms. Marciano

**The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet**

**Socratic Seminar Project**

**What is a Socratic Seminar discussion?**

A Socratic Seminar is a student-led dialogue that is based on essential questions. Socrates, a Greek philosopher born in 469 BC, is credited with formulating this method of discussion. Encouraging participants to sit in a circle, Socrates would draw knowledge from the group by presenting a series of deeply philosophical questions. A seminar consists of four elements:

**• The text** - Romeo and Juliet

**• The questions** - Ex: Which character(s) is(are) most to blame for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?

**• The facilitator** - Offers the initial question then plays a dual role as leader and participant

**• The participants** - Study the text in advance, listen actively and share ideas using evidence from the text for support.

**What am I supposed to do when I’m in a Socratic Seminar?**

• Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. You are not "learning a subject"; your goal is to understand the ideas, issues and values reflected in the text.

• Ask questions about the reading or issues related to the reading.

• Ask for clarification of something you don’t understand.

• Make judgments that can be defended with the text.

• Locate facts and examples that can be cited as evidence for an argument.

• Connect the reading to the real world.

• Stick to the point currently under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to come back to.

• Move the seminar forward—avoid repetitions.

• Don't raise hands; take turns speaking.

• Listen attentively and patiently.

• Exhibit mature behavior with patience and self-control.

• Speak up so that all can hear you.

• Talk to each other, not just to the facilitator or teacher.

• Be aware of time in terms of how long you speak and in terms of the needs of others to speak.

• Use specific examples when you speak and avoid generalizations.

• Avoid speaking for the group; use “I statements” when possible.

• Avoid accusatory language, such as “you’re wrong because…”

• Avoid interrupting someone when he or she is speaking and avoid side conversations.

You will participate in a class Socratic Seminar focused on themes and events related to Romeo and Juliet.. At the start of the event, you will be placed in Group A or Group B. Prepare for both. The final step is a typed reflection response due **Thursday, April 30th**.

**Group A:**

1. How do we choose who we love? Do we choose who we love?

2. Romeo and Juliet are the most famous pair of lovers in Western literature, but is their love real, or is it just infatuation? Some people claim that Romeo and Juliet are just melodramatic teenagers. Others argue that the Romeo and Juliet's love is the kind of love everyone should aspire to find. What proof (evidence) does the play provide that their love is "real love," not just infatuation?

3. Through words and actions, Shakespeare’s characters show how adults respond to the needs and problems of teenagers. Analyze the ways in which any two adults in the play react to teenagers, and comment on their words and actions.

4. In your opinion, what is the job of a good parent? Explain.

5. The question of responsibility is an important one in Romeo and Juliet. Analyze who is most responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet and support your stand with examples from the play.

6. How are love and conflict related?

**Group B:**

1. What is love? Are there different types of love?

2. Do you think Romeo and Juliet were really in love? Why or why not?

3. How is loved portrayed in the media? How is this similar to or different from how love is portrayed in Romeo and Juliet? How accurate is this portrayal?

4. Some characters in the play are static and do not change very much; others are quite dynamic and change a great deal. Choose one character and analyze how he or she changes in the course of the play.

5. Does loving someone make us better people or more selfish? How does it affect us?

6. What responsibility should the Nurse and the Friar bear for the play's tragic ending? The Prince announces that "some shall be pardoned and some punished." Do either the Nurse or the Friar deserve punishment? Who else, in your opinion, might bear some responsibility for the two lovers' deaths?

**Everyone must also…**

Write 2-3 discussion questions that you might introduce to the group. Remember, good discussion questions are “open ended” and produce more than just “yes/no” answers or answers that are easily found in the article. **Ask deep, “so what” questions to enrich your discussion!**

**Question:**

**Question:**

**Question:**

**Socratic Seminar Self Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Description** | **Excellent 10** | **Good 8.5** | **Fair****7** | **Unsatisfactory****5** |
| **Accountability** | Punctuality;Professionalism;Completed Reading | Is on time; in dress code; has questions ready  | Has read the text and comes with ideas from it. May not be written in advance | Has not marked the text or made meaningful notes or questions | Arrives late and/or unprepared without notes, pencil/pen or perhaps even without text |
| **Quality** | Conduct | Demonstrates respect for the learning process; has patience with different opinions and complexity; shows initiative by asking other for clarification; brings others into the conversation, moves the conversation forward; speaks to all of the participants; avoids talking too much. | Generally shows composure but may display impatience with contradictory or confusing ideas; comments, but does not necessarily encourage others to participate; may tend to address only the teacher or get into debates. | Participates and expresses a belief that his/her ideas are important in understanding the text; mat make insightful comments but is either too forceful or too shy and does not contribute to the conversation; tends to debate, not dialogue.  | Displays little respect for the learning process; argumentative; takes advantage of minor distractions; uses inappropriate language; speaks to individuals rather than ideas. |
| **Connection** | Speaking | Understands questions before answering; cites evidence from text; expresses thoughts in complete sentences and uses academic language; makes connections between ideas; considers others’ view points; shares at least 5 original responses. | Responds to questions voluntarily; comments are logical but not connected to other speakers;; ideas interesting enough that others respond to them; shares at least 3 original responses.  | Responds to questions but may have to be called upon by others; has read the text, but not put much effort into preparing for the seminar; comments take details into account but may not flow logically in conversation; shares at least 1 original response. | Extremely reluctant to participate even when called upon; comments illogical and meaningless; may express incomplete ideas; little or no account taken of previous comments or important ideas in the text. |
| **Connection** | Reasoning | Pays attention to details; responses take into account all participants; demonstrates that he/she has kept up; overcomes distractions | Generally pays attention and responds thoughtfully to ideas and questions of other participants and the leader.  | Appears to find some ideas unimportant while responding to others; may have to have questions repeated due to inattention.  | Appears uninvolved in the seminar; comments display complete misinterpretation of questions or comments of others participants.  |
| **Connection** | Listening and Reading | Thoroughly familiar with the text; possible contradictions identified. | Good understanding of the vocabulary.  | Appears to have read but shows difficulty; key concepts misunderstood; little evidence of serious reflection prior to the seminar. | Student is unprepared; important words, phrases, ideas in the text are unfamiliar |

**Socratic Seminar Reflection**

MLA Format: Typed, double-spaced, 1-2 pages, 12 pt. legible font, 1” margins, due **Thursday, April 30th**.

In your reflection, you should discuss the following categories:

**Specific ideas** you found particularly **interesting** and **why**. Give specific examples and explain your reasoning. Please include who said the idea (this shows me you were listening carefully).

For example, “I found Brad’s speculation that not wearing white after Labor Day is connected to the Puritan’s dress code for wearing somber outfits interesting because I had not made that connection myself. However, I am not sure I agree with this connection because I am wondering whether those arbitrary color rules have more to do with Southern etiquette and Emily Post rather than Puritanism. I need more information on this; however, Brad’s comment jumpstarted my thinking on the ways in which we dress in America today and how they might be connected to Puritanism.”

2. **Unanswered questions** or **ideas** you are **still grappling with** regarding the topic. **Explain** **why** you still have these questions or intellectual tensions.

For example, “I question George Will’s argument that Puritan asceticism has led to the gross accumulation of “material delights” in our society today. Were people truly rebelling against the Puritan way of life or was capitalism in and of itself a driving force? Can we really link the two? I am not convinced by Will’s reasoning. I need more evidence suggesting that people’s extravagant spending is a response to Puritanical austerity.”

3. **Discussion** of **why** you **scored** **yourself** on the rubric for each category the way you did and **specific examples** supporting your self-score.

For example, “I responded to Oscar V’s question regarding whether President Bush is a modern-day Puritan. I referred to the Puritan Moral Code’s rule that all sins should be punished and connected this code to Bush’s references to evil in the Middle East needing to b e crushed. This example reflects how I was listening intently to the conversation, following the ideas, and extending them by providing a relevant example that pushed the discussion forward, which is why I gave myself a “9” in both Quality and Connection.”

4. The **class’ overall participation** and **assessment** of your **assigned partner–** strengths and areas of improvement. Please provide **specific examples** supporting your point.

For example, don’t say: “Everyone was nice.” Instead say, “Generally, everyone listened carefully to the speaker. For example, I noticed that when Luis was speaking, every student was looking at him and taking notes. This also happened when Stephanie talked about Edwards’s simile about God’s wrath being bent like a bow. However, when Garrett was talking, I saw two people whispering. This happened several other times. Due to our class’ inconsistent listening, I would say it was a strength at times as well as an area of improvement. Additionally, I observed [student’s name]. She was prepared because…”