



# Socratic Seminar Student Assessment Tool

Use the following checklists and rubrics with your students to help prepare them for the Socratic Seminar. Using these checklists and rubrics, and having them assess themselves and others, will keep them honest and understand the skills and benefits of letting their voice be heard, and hearing others' voices.

**Tell Students:** Here are the general guidelines for participating in a Socratic seminar and checklists/rubrics that will be used to assess your participation.

## Guidelines for Participating

- Come prepared. Bring notes and your research that are relevant to the discussion.
- Participate as much as possible!
- Relate your comments to the topic.
- Back up comments with evidence from your research.
- Try to comment on someone else's previous statement before you give yours.
- If telling a personal story, be sure it has direct connection to the text.
- Ask open-ended, thought-provoking questions.
- Disagree with comments, not individuals. Never put anyone down.
- Use your speaking time fairly (contribute but do not control).

Reprinted, with permission, from *Socratic Seminars Observation Checklist* by Spokane Public Schools, 2015, Spokane, Washington: Spokane Public Schools.



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## Socratic Seminar Observation Checklist

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Each time your partner does one of the following put a check in the box.

**Speaks in the discussion**

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**Makes eye contact with other speakers or as she/he speaks**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Refers to the text**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Asks a new or follow-up question**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Responds to another speaker**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Paraphrases and adds to another speaker's ideas**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Encourages another participant to speak**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Interrupts another speaker**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Engages in side conversation**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Dominates the conversation**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



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**AFTER the discussion:** What is the most interesting thing your partner said?

**AFTER the discussion:** What would you like to have said in the discussion?





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## Socratic Seminar Observation Notes

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Choose three participants in the seminar to observe. Write examples of the behaviors listed below as you see or hear them occur.

Participant Name	Offers New Idea	Asks a Question	Refers to Text	Builds on Other's Idea	Distracting Behavior	Other Notes/Observations
1.						
2.						
3.						



# Socratic Seminar Student Assessment Tool

## Socratic Seminar Self-Assessment: Participant

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar Text: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Score your performance in today's seminar using the following criteria: 4 = Excellent  
3 = Good      2 = Showing Progress      1 = Needs Improvement**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I read the text closely, marked the text, and took notes in advance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I came prepared with higher level questions related to the text.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I contributed several relevant comments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I cited specific evidence from the text to support an idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I asked at least one thoughtful, probing question.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I questioned or asked someone to clarify their comment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I built on another person's idea by restating, paraphrasing, or synthesizing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I encouraged other participants to enter the conversation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I treated all other participants with dignity and respect.

**Overall Score (circle one):** 1    1.5    2    2.5    3    3.5    4

**Two goals I have for our next seminar are:**

- 1.
- 2.

**An area where I would like help:**





# Socratic Seminar Student Assessment Tool

## Socratic Seminar Self-Assessment: Leader

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Group \_\_\_\_\_

Members: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Score your performance in today's seminar using the following criteria: 4 = Excellent  
3 = Good      2 = Showing Progress      1 = Needs Improvement**

\_\_\_\_\_ I listened carefully and helped clear up confusion.

\_\_\_\_\_ I asked questions to clarify or probe for higher-level thinking.

\_\_\_\_\_ I helped the group get back on track if they strayed from the text or moved to debate.

\_\_\_\_\_ I helped participants work together cooperatively.

\_\_\_\_\_ I did not dominate the conversation.

\_\_\_\_\_ I encouraged other participants to enter the conversation.

\_\_\_\_\_ I treated all other participants with dignity and respect.

\_\_\_\_\_ The group used the text as a reference throughout the Socratic Seminar.

\_\_\_\_\_ Group members shared in the discussion of the topic.

\_\_\_\_\_ The group asked in-depth questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Everyone in the group was respectful of other ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ The group was able to take the Socratic Seminar to a high level of understanding.

**Overall Score (circle one):** 1    1.5    2    2.5    3    3.5    4

**Two goals I have for my leadership development are:**

1.

2.

**An area where I would like help:**





# Socratic Seminar Student Assessment Tool

## Socratic Seminar Rubric for Individual Participants

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar Text: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Exemplary

- reads closely, takes notes, and develops high-level questions before the seminar
  - uses prepared text, notes, and questions to contribute to the dialogue
  - moves the conversation forward
  - asks for clarification when needed
  - asks probing questions for higher level thinking
  - speaks to all participants and is heard clearly
  - thinks before answering
  - refers directly to the text
  - makes connections to other speakers
  - builds on others' comments
  - considers all opinions
  - writes down thoughts and questions
  - listens actively
  - demonstrates patience and respect toward others' opinions/ideas
- 

### Competent

- comes prepared with marked text, notes, and questions
  - contributes to the dialogue
  - responds to questions
  - refers to text
  - offers interesting ideas
  - asks questions
  - takes notes
  - pays attention
  - is respectful of others' ideas
- 

### Developing

- comes with some text preparation
- emphasizes own ideas; may lean toward debate rather than dialogue
- ideas not always connected
- refers to text
- repeats some ideas
- asks a few questions and/or questions are lower level
- takes some notes
- loses track of conversation
- judges others' ideas



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## Needs Improvement

- does not participate or participation is inappropriate
- repeats same ideas
- few or no notes taken
- no questions asked
- seems lost/overwhelmed with the seminar





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## Evaluating a Socratic Seminar as a Whole

*Consider the following questions as you prepare to talk about the strengths of a seminar and the areas for growth.*

### Did the participants . . .

- ┌ seem prepared?
- ┌ speak loudly and clearly?
- ┌ cite reasons and evidence for their statements?
- ┌ use the text to find support?
- ┌ build on each other's ideas?
- ┌ paraphrase accurately?
- ┌ ask for help to clear up confusion?
- ┌ ask higher level questions to move the dialogue forward?
- ┌ stick with the subject?
- ┌ listen to others respectfully?
- ┌ talk to each other, not just the leader?
- ┌ encourage everyone's involvement and avoid dominating the conversation?
- ┌ avoid hostile exchanges and debate?
- ┌ question each other in a civil manner?

### Did the leader . . .

- ┌ get participants engaged early? How?
- ┌ make sure that questions were understood?
- ┌ ask questions that led to further questions?
- ┌ draw out reasons and implications?
- ┌ keep attention on ideas in the text being discussed?
- ┌ question misreadings of the text?
- ┌ allow time (pauses) for thinking?
- ┌ draw in all participants?
- ┌ listen carefully to participants' statements?
- ┌ accept participants' answers without judgment?
- ┌ allow for discussion of disagreements?





# Socratic Seminar Student Assessment Tool

**Our class/seminar group demonstrated these major strengths:**

**Our class/seminar group can grow in the following ways:**

