

AVID Socratic Seminar Questions

Opening Questions	Core Questions	Closing
(Level 1)	(Level 2)	(Level 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to text • Uses concrete examples • Open-ended • Is not a yes or no question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops theme • Leads into the abstract • Leads to further questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to self • Relates to reality
<p>EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the author mean when he says... “with torn and bleeding hearts we smile?” • When do you wear a mask? • When do masks “grin and lie?” • What would make the author say “But let the world dream otherwise.” 	<p>EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a time when we can see below the mask people wear? • What is the purpose of wearing a mask? • What is your response to people who wear masks? • Can masks belie the wearer? 	<p>EXAMPLES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think was the wisdom that the author was trying to impart to you? • What in your thinking has changed about the way you treat people who wear masks?

Dialogue and Debate

Dialogue	Debate and/or Discussion
Dialogue is collaborative; multiple sides work toward a shared understanding.	Debate is competitive and/or oppositional; two opposing sides try to prove each other wrong.
In dialogue, one listens to understand, to make meaning, and to find common ground.	In debate, one listens to find flaws, to spot differences, and to counter arguments.
Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's point of view.
Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude; an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.	Debate defends assumptions as truths.
In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, expecting that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than threaten it.	In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.
Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending of one's beliefs.	Debate, calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In dialogue, one searches for strengths in all positions.	In debate, one searches for weaknesses in the other positions.
Dialogue respects all the other participants and seeks not to alienate or offend.	Debate rebuts contrary positions and <i>may</i> belittle or deprecate other participants.
Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of answers and that cooperation can lead to workable solutions.	Debate assumes a single right answer that somebody already has.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate demands a conclusion.
Dialogue is mutual inquiry; collective knowledge.	Discussion is individual opinions; individual knowledge.

Seminar Questioning Cheat Sheet

Clarification Questions:

- What do you mean by _____?
- What is your main point?
- How does _ relate to _____?
- Could you put that another way?
- What do you think is the main issue here?
- Let me see if I understand you; do you mean ___ or _____?
- Jane, would you summarize in your own words what Juan has said?... Juan, is that what you meant?
- Could you give me an example?
- Would this be an example: _____?
- Could you explain that further?
- Could you expand upon that?

Questions About the Initial Question or Issue:

- How can we find out?
- What does this question assume?
- Would _____ put the question differently?
- How could someone settle this question?
- Can we break this question down at all?
- Is the question clear? Do we understand it?
- Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?
- Does this question ask us to evaluate something?
- Do we all agree that this is the question?
- To answer this question, what question would we have to answer first?
- I'm not sure I understand how you are interpreting the main question at issue.
- Is this the same issue as _?
- How would _____ put this issue?
- Why is this question important?
- Does this question lead to other questions or issues?

Assumption Probes:

- What are you assuming?
- What is Erika assuming?
- What could we assume instead?
- You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly?
- All of your reasoning depends on the idea that _____. Why have you based your reasoning on ___ rather than _____?
- You seem to be assuming _____. How would you justify taking this for granted?
- Why would someone make this assumption?

Reason and Evidence Probes:

- What would be an example?
- How do you know?
- Why do you think that is true?
- Do you have any evidence for that?
- What difference does that make?
- What are your reasons for saying that?
- What other information do we need?
- Could you explain your reason to use?

Reason and Evidence Probes (continued):

- Are these reasons adequate?
- Can you explain how you logically got from _____ to ____?
- Do you see any difficulties with their reasoning here?
- Why did you say that?
- What led you to that belief?
- How does that apply to this case?
- What would change your mind?
- But is that good evidence to believe that?
- Is there a reason to doubt that evidence?
- Who is in a position to know if that is so?
- What would you say to someone who said _____?
- Can someone else give evidence to support that response?
- By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?
- How could we find out whether that is true?

Origin or Source Questions:

- Where did you get this idea?
- Do your friends or family feel the same way?
- Has the media influenced you?
- Have you always felt this way?
- What caused you to feel this way?
- Did you originate this idea or get it from someone else?

Implication and Consequence Probes:

- What are you implying by that?
- When you say _____, are you implying _____?
- But if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?
- What effect would that have?
- Would that necessarily happen or only probably happen?
- What is the probability of this result?
- What is an alternative?
- If this and this are the case, then what else must also be true?
- If we say that this is unethical, how about that?

Viewpoint Questions:

- You seem to be approaching this issue from _____ perspective. Why have you chosen this rather than that perspective?
- How would other groups/types of people respond? Why? What would influence them?
- How could you answer the objection that _____ would make?
- What might someone who believed _____ think?
- Can/did anyone see this another way?
- What would someone who disagrees say?
- What is an alternative?
- How are Hillary and Tom's ideas alike? Different?