

Fish in a Tree: Socratic Seminar Preparation

The purpose of a Socratic Seminar is to achieve a deeper understanding about the ideas and values in a text.

Before: Read closely, take notes, answer and develop high level questions before the seminar.

Write or type your answers on a separate sheet of paper. Staple your answers to this paper before turning them in on Thursday, November 30.

1. *“And I think of words. The power they have. How they can be waved around like a wand - sometimes for good, like how Mr. Daniels uses them. How he makes kids like me and Oliver feel better about ourselves. And how words can also be used for bad. To hurt” (184).*

Choose an example from the story where words were powerful. Cite the text evidence and explain what impact the words had.

2. *When you make a deep connection, you are reminded of something in your own life, another text, or the world and you use it to help you understand the text on a deeper level.*

What is one deep connection you can make to Fish in a Tree? Cite the excerpt from the text and clearly explain the connection.

3. **The author uses figurative language throughout the novel to help the reader understand the characters and the plot. Cite one example of figurative language from the novel and explain how it helps you understand on a deeper level. Choose your example wisely - find a strong example.**

4. **Ally and Jessica are both dynamic characters, which means they undergo a significant change through the story. Choose one character - either Ally or Jessica. What does she learn about herself? Explain your answer and support it with text evidence.**

5. **What is one message or theme you think the author is trying to convey in the Fish in a Tree? Explain your answer and support it with text evidence.**

6. **Write a 5-7 sentence epilogue, telling what happens after the story ends. Consider the last lines, “Things are going to be different. It’s like birds can swim and fish can fly. Impossible to possible” (266). Your epilogue should be believable and based on events from the story.**

7. **Write at least one level two or level three question of your own (about Fish in a Tree) to ask during the seminar.**

All questions must be answered thoughtfully and thoroughly and turned in on time in order for you to participate in the Socratic Seminar.

Failing to do so will result in taking a test in the testing center instead of participating in the seminar.

During: YOU guide the discussion! Good discussions occur when participants have read the text closely and answered questions beforehand, listen actively, share their ideas and questions in response to the ideas and questions of others, and search for evidence in the text to support their ideas. The discussion is not about right answer; *it is not a debate*. You are encouraged to think out loud and to exchange ideas openly while examining ideas in a rigorous, thoughtful, manner. The fishbowl discussion will be in class on Monday, December 4.

Guidelines for Participating:

- Come prepared. Bring notes, ideas, and information that is relevant to the discussion.
- Participate, participate, participate!
- Back up your comments with text evidence/facts.
- Try to comment on someone else’s previous statement before you give yours.
- Personal stories should have a direct connection to the facts.
- Keep discussion alive by asking open-ended, thought-provoking questions.
- Disagree with comments, not individuals. **NEVER** put anyone down.
- Use your speaking time fairly - contribute but do not control. Everyone must speak (share a thoughtful, complete comment or question) at least 3 times.
- Be brave in presenting your own thoughts and reasoning, but also be willing to change your mind!

After: You will be graded based on the following rubric:

| Exemplary | Competent | Developing | Needs Improvement |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - takes notes and develops high-level questions before the seminar - uses prepared notes to contribute to the dialogue - moves the conversation forward - refers directly to the text - makes connections to other speakers - listens actively - demonstrates patience and respect toward others’ opinions and ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comes prepared with marked text, notes, and questions - contributes to the dialogue - responds to questions - refers to text - asks questions - pays attention - is respectful of others’ ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comes with some text preparation - emphasizes own ideas; may lean toward debate rather than dialogue - ideas not always connected - refers to text - loses track of conversation - judges others’ ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - does not participate or participation is inappropriate - repeats same ideas - no questions asked - seems overwhelmed with the seminar |