

Socratic Seminar Question Stems

As you prepare your questions for the Socratic Seminar, consider using these question stems to help you develop critical thinking questions instead of just comprehension questions.

Clarification

- I'm not sure I understand (character, action, event, description, purpose).
- Tell me more about (character, action, event).

Cause and Effect

- Why do you think (event, reaction) happened?
- How could (event, reaction) have been prevented?
- Do you think (event, reaction) would happen that way again? Why?
- What are some reasons (character) (action)?
- Based on the information in the story, predict what will most likely happen if (character) (action).
- What will (character) do now that (event)?

Compare / Contrast

- How are (character) and (character) alike? Different?
- What is (event) similar to in our own time?
- How does this (incident) remind you of (current event)?

Benefits / Burdens

- What are some of the reasons (character's decision, reaction) wouldn't (would) be a good idea?
- Based on the information in the story, what inference/ assumption can you make about (event/theme/character)?

Point of View / Perspective

- How might (character) have felt during (event)?
- What do you think (character) was thinking during (event)?
- How does (character) feel about (character/event, etc)?
- How did (character's experience) influence (character's development, event)?

Structure / Function

- What was the goal when (character) (action)?
- What were (character)'s choices of how to (respond to a situation)?
- What do you think of (character)'s approach to (problem, situation)?
- What better choices could (character) have made concerning (problem, situation)?
- How does (character's action or trait) contribute to the conflict in the story?
- What is the author's purpose for including (character, event, detail)?

Different Situation

- Can you describe a situation in which (character's action) would be acceptable/unacceptable?
- Suppose (event) had happened differently. How would that change the outcome of (event)?

Evaluate

- The author of the story states "_____." Do you agree with his/her statement?
- What is wrong with (character's) reasoning concerning (character, situation, event)?
- Does (character's) treatment of (other character/s) seem fair?
- What conclusion can the reader draw about (character/event, etc)?

Support Questions/Responses

- Can you give us an example of . . . ?
- Where in the story . . . ?
- What would be a good reason for . . . ?
- What is some evidence for . . . ?
- I saw it a slightly different way . . .
- That's a good point. What about . . . ?
- I disagree a little. To me, . . .

