



Animal Farm

Socratic Seminar Assignment

Here's your chance to put your literary analysis, listening, and speaking skills to the test – as well as do some preparation for your final on Animal Farm.

What is it?

A Socratic Seminar is a student-led discussion that is based on an "essential question." Socrates, an Athenian 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** – George Orwell's Animal Farm
 - **The question** – **How does the desire for power corrupt humans' desire for social ideals? How does human nature undermine our desire for peace, equality, and justice?**
 - **The leader** - 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.
- ❖ **Your task:** Answer the essential question above by focusing specifically on one chapter of the book; you may refer back to other chapters in your discussion as well.

In order to prepare for the upcoming Socratic Seminar and your final essay for Animal Farm you will need to gather significant quotations and examples from the book. I will be grading you on your level of preparedness.

Step #1: Finding Evidence from Animal Farm:

Find specific examples from the book that help to answer the above "essential" question. For the seminar, you must have a total of 3 "quote sandwiches"

- ❖ **Suggested examples or ideas:**
- How does the issue of power appear in your chapter? Who has it? Who doesn't? Who abuses it?
 - How does Orwell want you to feel about power in this chapter? How do you know?
 - How do things go wrong in this chapter? Why do the animals' original utopian ideas fail?

Quote Sandwich #1 (introduction, quote, context, commentary)

Quote Sandwich #2 (introduction, quote, paraphrase, commentary)

Quote Sandwich #3 (introduction, quote, paraphrase, commentary)

Discussion Questions: Write down 5 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 book. **Ask deep, "so what" questions to enrich your discussion!**

❖ Question:

❖ Question:

❖ Question:

❖ Question:

❖ Question:



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
- It's OK to "pass" when asked to contribute.
- Do not participate if you are not prepared. A seminar should not be a bull session.
- 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 leader 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 interrupting someone when he or she is speaking and avoid side conversations.

How will you be graded?

- Come to the seminar prepared with five excellent discussion questions, three quote "sandwiches", and an annotated (marked with post-its) copy of Animal Farm (10 points)
- Participate five times in a **meaningful** way during the seminar. To participate in a meaningful way means to make a comment, make a connection to the text, ask a question that builds on what other participants are saying (25 points)
- Being an academic participant. I will be watching your conduct and grading you accordingly (15 points). Do you...

*Speak loudly and clearly

*Stick with the subject

*Avoid inappropriate language (slang, technical terms, sloppy diction, etc.)

*Seem prepared/interested

*Listen to others respectfully