## Dialogue and Debate

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

**Socratic Seminar Rules**

- Discuss, do not debate.
- Be courteous, NO PUTDOWNS.
- Goal is the pursuit of deeper understanding.
- Respect different thoughts and ideas.

**Socratic Seminar Tips**

**Your Goal is to Understand…**

- the ideas,
- issues,
- concepts,
- and values reflected in the text.

**Protocol:**

- Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. This is not a test of memory.
- Do not stay confused; as for clarification of both ideas and definitions.
- Discuss ideas, rather than other’s opinions.
- It’s OK to pass when your turn comes; participate at another time instead.
- Do not participate if you are not prepared.
- Stick to the point currently under discussion; write down inspirational ideas so you can bring them up at a more appropriate time in the conversation.
- Listen carefully, especially when you are waiting to speak, as they may be moving on to another point.
- Speak up so that all participants can hear you; don’t speak while others are.
- Remember that this is a conversation between students, not between student and teacher.

**Basic steps to forming opinions:**

1. What is it that I think I know? Or that the author thinks he/she knows? Can I restate his/her ideas in my own words? What needs clarification? Definition?
2. Is it true? Why do I think so? What else do I need to know or understand before deciding?
3. What inferences can be drawn from this? What are the implications of this? So what? How does this change things?
4. What are the underlying assumptions with this claim?
5. What are the reasons I believe this? How do I know what I think I know? Is the evidence credible?
6. How does this happen in other situations? In the world? How does this connect to other stuff?
7. Can I think of a counter example? When this doesn’t happen? Why doesn’t it happen? Are there internal contradictions?
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?