

Socratic Seminar – How to Get Started  
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Key Elements of Socratic Seminars

Teacher's Role:

- Facilitator – guide the discussion, keep them on track
- Participant – at times it will be appropriate

Format:

- Circle – you want them all to be able to look and speak to each other

Protocols/Procedures:

- No need to raise hands
- Share the air
- All appropriate comments are wanted and encouraged
- There is no competition, no put downs
- Participation is mandatory, but you do not have to speak
- (Other established classroom norms)

Texts:

- Poems
- Text books
- Novels
- Paintings/Pictures/Art
- Films/News

Product or Result:

- Student understanding
- Student use of text support and evidence in their conversation

EU's and EQ's:

- Should be used and made public
  
- Enduring Understandings – What is the core learning that you want your students to know and/or be able to do once you have taught this unit? Ask yourself as the teacher, “Why am I having my students do this activity or lesson? If the answer is not something that is critical to the betterment of their lives or to their education, chances are it is not essential to their learning, therefore not enduring. Once Enduring Understandings are learned, they should be engrained in them forever. Students might remember a fun activity because it was fun, but if they cannot tell you what the core understanding was, then it did not help their overall comprehension.
  
- Essential Questions – Thought-provoking, conversational, discussion-oriented, open-ended questions.