



Lord of the Flies

Socratic Seminar Assignment

Here's your chance to put your literary analysis, listening, and speaking skills to the test – as well as do some crucial preparation for your final project on Lord of the Flies.

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: **a text, essential questions, a leader, and active participants.**

**The essential questions:

1. **Is Golding right? Do all human beings have the capacity to be evil, particularly when they are empowered as part of a group?**
2. **What does it mean to be civilized? Are modern civilizations more civilized than ancient ones?**
3. **How does Golding use figurative language to communicate his personal or political beliefs to the reader?**

What are your responsibilities?

- o 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.
- o Ask questions about the reading or issues related to the reading.
- o Ask for clarification of something you don't understand.
- o Make judgments that can be defended with the text.
- o Locate facts and examples that can be cited as evidence for an argument.
- o Connect the reading to the real world
- o It's OK to "pass" when asked to contribute.
- o Do not participate if you are not prepared. A seminar should not be a bull session.
- o Stick to the point currently under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to come back to.
- o Move the seminar forward—avoid repetitions.
- o Don't raise hands; take turns speaking.
- o Listen attentively and patiently.
- o Exhibit mature behavior with patience and self-control.
- o Speak up so that all can hear you.
- o Talk to each other, not just to the leader or teacher.
- o Be aware of time in terms of how long you speak and in terms of the needs of others to speak
- o Use specific examples when you speak and avoid generalizations.
- o Avoid speaking for the group; use "I statements" when possible.
- o 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 essential quotes from the text, and an annotated (marked) copy of Lord of the Flies (**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 (**15 points**). Do you...

*Speak loudly and clearly?

*Listen to others respectfully?

*Stick with the subject?

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

*Seem prepared/interested?



Socratic Seminar Worksheet

My seminar will be on: (date) _____ up to end of novel with _____

group members

Group leader: _____ (the group leader still participates in the discussion, but is also responsible for moving things along ☺)

In order to prepare for the upcoming Socratic seminar and your final project for Lord of the Flies 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 Lord of the Flies: Find specific examples from the book that help to answer each "essential" question.

Essential questions #1: Is Golding right? Do all human beings have the capacity to be evil, particularly when they are empowered as part of a group?

*To consider: how does Golding communicate his answer? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?

- I. What you think:
- II. 3 supporting quotes (include page numbers):

Essential questions #2: A. What does it mean to be civilized? B. Are modern civilizations more civilized than ancient ones?

*To consider: how does Golding communicate his answer? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why? To answer question B, you should include examples from modern and ancient civilizations AND make connections to the text (LOF).

- I. What you think:
- II. 3 supporting quotes (include page numbers):

Essential questions #3: How does Golding use figurative language to communicate his personal or political beliefs to the reader?

*To consider: what are the connotations of the words Golding chooses? What words or descriptions seem to be repeated? When he uses similes and metaphors, what does he compare? Why does he choose to make these comparisons? What is he trying to make you, the reader, feel?

- I. What you think:
- II. 3 supporting quotes (include page numbers):

Step 1: 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!