



INQUIRY FIELD GUIDE

*20+ PRACTICAL STRATEGIES AND
PROTOCOLS TO PROMPT QUESTIONS
AND FACILITATE INVESTIGATIONS*

Socratic Seminar

The What

Socratic Seminars require students to collaboratively grapple with complex topics. Through the process, students closely read a teacher-selected article, draw evidence from that reading, and then discuss their responses through a structured seminar with peers. Use this format to promote communication skills and encourage student agency in discussing issues from multiple perspectives.

The How

1. Prepare for the activity by establishing discussion questions for the seminar, and record each question at the top of its own chart paper.
 - Questions should be open-ended and geared toward exploring ideas, not finding answers.
2. Remind students that they can use evidence discovered in another lesson during this Socratic Seminar activity.
3. Distribute the selected article to each student and facilitate the first read by reading the text aloud as students follow along and make annotations in response to the discussion questions.
4. Divide students into pairs.
5. Facilitate the second read of the article:
 - Student pairs reread the article, comparing their annotations as they read.
6. Regroup as a whole class and set expectations for the seminar.
 - Students may use a 3 Before Me mindset, allowing 3 other students to speak before they share again.
 - Guide students to assess the body language of classmates to see if others are about to share.
 - Give guidance about what students can do if 2 students begin speaking at the same time; they can decide who will continue and who will go second.
7. Facilitate the discussion:

- Present the first discussion question. Take notes on the chart paper as students discuss their responses.
- When discussion about the first question winds down, review the notes on the chart paper for accuracy.
- Repeat these steps with the remaining questions as time allows.

Visit inquired.org/fieldguide for the following resource(s):

1. *Socratic Seminar* guide: This tool outlines various Socratic Seminar strategies teachers may utilize to support discussion skills.
2. *Socratic Seminar* poster: This resource is for teacher and student guidance during the activity.