

A SAMPLER OF GENERIC QUESTIONS FOR SOCRATIC SEMINARS

1. What are the assumptions (explicit or underlying) of this text?
2. Is it self-contradictory to state _____ in one part of the text and _____ in another part?
3. What if _____ happened (or were true) instead of _____?
4. What would you do (or say) if you were _____? (Put the student into the action.)
5. What might be some other good titles for this?
6. Here is a question: _____?
What does the text say about this issue?
What do you think about it?
7. Does the text agree or disagree with this statement: _____?
8. If _____ were writing (composing, painting, etc.) today, what would be different about this work?
9. Look at this list of key words and rank them according to their importance to this work. Then explain your reasons for the ranking.
10. In recent times, what well-known people are (were) like _____?
11. Which of the following statements (phrases) fits with _____ 's point of view of humankind (or some other object of comparison, e.g., conflict, love, beauty, progress)?
12. Would the meaning of this work change, if what the author (or artist, composer, etc.) said were changed as follows? (For example, change a key word, substituting a word with a different connotation; or change a key idea, character, or event.)
13. In what way would _____ change, if _____ happened differently?
14. How do you think _____ was viewed (or would be viewed) by _____?
15. In what ways are _____ and _____ alike (or different)?
16. What part of this work is most discussible? Least discussible?
17. Why do you say that?

18. How do you support that position from the work?
19. What is puzzling to you?
20. Ricardo and Jane said _____. What do you think?
21. To check on listening: Tanya, what did John just say? What is your reaction to his idea?
22. Inference – Fill in missing information based on a reasonable extrapolation of evidence in the text.
23. Implications – Explain the consequences of information or ideas in the text.
24. Hypothesis – Predict and justify future developments.
25. Reflection – How do you know what you think you know? What are you left not knowing? What are you assuming?
26. Can you think of an example to illustrate the point?
27. Is the writer's example a good one? Why? Why not?
28. Here is a counter-example: _____. Can it be reconciled with your (or the author's) example? How?
29. How does this idea connect to _____ ? (Refer to another passage in the text or to another text.)
30. Is this passage (idea, statement, etc.) contradicted by what is presented elsewhere in the text?
31. This passage seems to contradict _____. Do you agree or disagree?