

# **AP 11 – Socratic Circle Class Discussion**

The Socratic Circle Class Discussion is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the students discuss their interpretations, findings, and points of view based on evidence found directly from the text. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others. Students learn to work cooperatively and to question intelligently and civilly. The goal of the discussion is not to get the “right answer,” but to engage in a thought provoking discourse that allows students to reconsider their points of view and build on their current understanding of a text.

## **Socratic Circle Format**

- **Inner Circle** – The inner circle uses relevant textual evidence to support their interpretations and ideas about the text or discussion question that has been raised. These comments can express a new idea about the text or expand on someone else’s ideas from the inner circle. The inner circle should focus on exploring the depth and breadth of a text in order to achieve a deeper understanding about the ideas and values in a text.
- **Outer Circle** – The outer circle should focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of the inner discussion and what helped or hindered the goal to achieve a deeper understanding of the text. The outer circle takes notes on the depth and insightfulness of ideas from inner circle members, the accuracy and relevance of textual evidence, the relevancy of comments. Outer circle members will also be able to mention any pertinent information that was not covered in the inner circle’s discussion.

## **Socratic Circle Scoring**

Students are expected to make a minimum of three inner circle comments during the inner discussion. The score they receive for each comment will be based on its relevance to the topic (1 point), the accuracy of the textual evidence (1 point), and the significance of the comment (3 points). Significance is determined by a comment’s usefulness and importance to the discussion: Does the comment add a different point of view or add depth to an existing point of view? Or does the comment mirror a similar perspective already stated? Does a comment use the best evidence to support a point, or bring up new evidence to support an existing perspective? Or does a comment state a surface level idea that is based on weak evidence?

Inner Circle Comments: 3 graded comments (5 points each)

Outer Circle Notes: The outer circle notes are worth 15 points and are scored based on the categories on the handout.

**30 points total**

# Socratic Circle Goals and Objectives

- \*The purpose is to engage in a thought provoking discourse that allows students to reconsider their points of view and build on their current understanding of a text – not a right answer.
- \*Make sure you have some sort of textual evidence to support your point.
- \*Don't just drop quotes – Tie quotes to your idea or to other people's POV that have been raised.
- \*Pay close attention to the comments before you and the direction of the conversation.
- \*Do NOT abruptly change the topic if the conversation is moving strongly in one direction.
- \*Use Reading Notes to drive the discussion, but DON'T simply read answers to the group.
- \*Once you've made your point give others an opportunity to talk. DON'T dominate the convo.
- \*Ask questions to clarify someone's POV and to get better understanding of their ideas.
- \*Acknowledge prior comments if adding to a POV or opposing a POV.
- \*Once serious points have been made about the text, use personal connections to add more depth

## Gradebook Scoring - Teacher Notes and Grading

1 <sup>st</sup> inner Comment Max: 5 pnts	2 <sup>nd</sup> inner Comment Max: 5 pnts	Outer Circle Notes
3 <sup>rd</sup> inner Comment Max: 5 pnts	1 <sup>st</sup> outer comment Max: 5 pnts	Max: 4 pnts

**R/R - Relevance to the topic – Redundant/Repetitive (1 point)**

**A/E - Accuracy of the textual evidence (2 points)**

**S/D - Significance of the comment – Depth of Disc. (3 points).**

Significance is determined by a comment's usefulness and importance to the discussion, including depth of explanation

**Does the comment add a different point of view or add depth to an existing point of view?**

**Does a comment bring up new evidence to support an existing perspective?**

**Does the comment mirror a similar perspective already stated?**

**Does a comment use the best evidence to support a point?**

**Does your comment add breadth to the discussion?**