

# Fish in a Tree: Socratic Seminar Preparation

The **purpose** of a Socratic Seminar is to achieve a deeper understanding about the ideas and values in a text.

**Before:** Read closely, take notes, answer and develop high level questions before the seminar.

**Type your answers in Google Docs and print for class on Thursday.** Staple your answers to this paper before turning them in on Thursday, November 30. Questions should be thoughtfully and completely answered in **at least three sentences.** Use the examples in Google Classroom to help you.

1. *“And I think of words. The power they have. How they can be waved around like a wand - sometimes for good, like how Mr. Daniels uses them. How he makes kids like me and Oliver feel better about ourselves. And how words can also be used for bad. To hurt” (184).*  
Choose an example from the story where words were powerful. **Cite the text evidence AND explain what impact the words had.**
2. *When you make a deep connection, you are reminded of something in your own life, another text, or the world and you use it to help you understand the text on a deeper level.*  
What is one **deep connection** you can make to Fish in a Tree? **Cite the passage from the text AND clearly explain the connection.**
3. The author uses figurative language throughout the novel to help the reader understand the characters and the plot. **Cite one example of figurative language from the novel AND explain how it helps you understand the situation on a deeper level.** Choose your example wisely - find a strong example.
4. Ally and Jessica are both **dynamic characters**, which means they undergo a significant change through the story. **Choose one character** - either Ally or Jessica. **What does she learn about herself? Explain your answer AND support it with text evidence.**
5. What is one message or **theme** you think the author is trying to convey in the Fish in a Tree? **Explain your answer AND support it with text evidence.**
6. **Write a 5-7 sentence epilogue**, telling what happens after the story ends. *Consider the last lines, “Things are going to be different. It’s like birds can swim and fish can fly. Impossible to possible” (266).* Your epilogue should be believable and based on events from the story.
7. Write at least one **level two or level three** question of your own (about Fish in a Tree) to ask during the seminar.

**All questions must be answered thoughtfully and thoroughly and turned in on time in order for you to participate in the Socratic Seminar.**  
**Failing to do so will result in taking a test in the testing center instead of participating in the seminar.**

The Socratic seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the students talk about open-ended questions. 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. They learn to articulate their ideas and to question intelligently and civilly.

### How does a Socratic Seminar work?

1. Students prepare for the Socratic seminar by answering the questions over the text.
2. On the day of the seminar, students are divided into two concentric circles:  
an inner circle and an outer circle.
3. Students in the inner circle engage in a discussion of the text, while the outer circle observes and documents  
the performance of the inner circle **but does not talk!!!**
4. Students in the inner and outer circle now exchange roles and positions within the classroom.
6. The new inner circle (the students who began in the outer circle) holds a discussion while the new outer circle  
observes and documents the inner circle.

**During:** YOU guide the discussion! Good discussions occur when participants have read the text closely and answered questions beforehand, listen actively, share their ideas and questions in response to the ideas and questions of others, and search for evidence in the text to support their ideas. You are encouraged to think out loud and to exchange ideas openly while examining ideas in a rigorous, thoughtful, manner. You may even change your mind based on the ideas of a classmate. The seminar discussion will be in class on Monday, December 4.

### Guidelines for Participating:

- **Come prepared.** Bring notes, ideas, and information that is relevant to the discussion.
- **Participate, participate, participate!**
- Back up your comments with **text evidence/facts**.
- Try to **comment on someone else's previous statement before you give yours**.
- Personal stories should have a direct connection to the facts.
- Keep discussion alive by **asking open-ended, thought-provoking questions**.
- Disagree with comments, not individuals. **NEVER put anyone down.**
- **Use your speaking time fairly** - contribute but do not control. Everyone must speak (share a thoughtful, complete comment or question) at least 3 times. A record will be kept of the times you speak.
- Be brave in presenting your own thoughts and reasoning, but also be willing to change your mind!

