

# Creating a Language-Rich Environment with Academic Language Scripts

## Requesting Assistance

- Could you please help me?
- I'm having trouble with this. Would you mind helping me?
- Could you please show me how to do/write/draw/pronounce/solve. . . ?

## Interrupting

- Excuse me, but. . . (I don't understand.)
- Sorry for interrupting, but. . . (I missed what you said.)
- May I interrupt for a moment?
- May I add something here?

## Asking for Clarification

- Could you repeat that?
- Could you give me an example of that?
- I have a question about that: . . . ?
- Could you please explain what \_\_\_\_\_ means?
- Would you mind repeating that?
- I'm not sure I understood \_\_\_\_\_. Could you please give us another example?
- So, do you mean. . . ?

## Probing for Higher Level Thinking

- What examples do you have of. . . ?
- Where in the text can we find. . . ?
- I understand \_\_\_\_\_, but I wonder about. . .
- How does this idea connect to. . . ?
- If \_\_\_\_\_ is true, then. . . ?
- What would happen if. . . ?
- Do you agree or disagree with his/her statement? Why?
- What is another way to look at it?
- How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
- Why is \_\_\_\_\_ important?
- How do you know that? Can you give an example?
- Is there another way to look at this?

## Expressing an Opinion

- I think/believe/predict/imagine that. . .
- In my opinion. . .
- It seems to me that. . .
- Not everyone will agree with me, but. . .

## Building on What Others Say

- I agree with what \_\_\_\_\_ said because. . .
- You bring up an interesting point, and I also think. . .
- That's an interesting idea. I wonder. . . ? I think. . . Do you think. . . ?
- I thought about that also, and I'm wondering why?
- I hadn't thought of that before. You make me wonder if. . . ? Do you think. . . ?
- \_\_\_\_\_ said that. . . I agree and also think. . .
- Based on the ideas from \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, it seems like we all think that. . . ."
- That's an excellent point, and I would add. . .

## Soliciting a Response

- Do you agree?
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name), what do you think?
- Can someone else ask a question or offer an opinion?
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name), what did you understand from that answer?

## Disagreeing

- I don't really agree with you because. . .
- I see it another way. I think. . .
- My idea is slightly different from yours. I believe that \_\_\_\_\_ I think that. . .
- I have a different answer than you. . .

## Offering a Suggestion

- Maybe you/we could. . .
- Here's something you/we might try: . . .
- What if you/we. . . ?

## Classroom Reporting

- \_\_\_\_\_ (name) explained to me that. . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name) pointed out that. . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name) mentioned that. . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name) shared with me that. . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name) brought to my attention that. . .
- \_\_\_\_\_ (name) pointed out something (interesting/intriguing/surprising);. . .

Dialogue	Debate
Dialogue is collaborative, with multiple sides working toward a shared understanding.	Debate is oppositional, with two opposing sides trying to prove each other wrong.
In dialogue, one listens to understand, to make meaning, and to find common ground.	In debate, one listens to find flaws, to spot differences, and to counter arguments.
Dialogue broadens, and possibly changes, a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's point of view.
Dialogue thrives on an open-minded attitude and openness to being wrong and to changing.	Debate fosters a close-minded attitude and a determination to be right and defends assumptions as truth.
In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, expecting that other people's reflections will help improve it, rather than threaten it.	In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenges to show that it is right.
Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In dialogue, one searches for strengths in all positions.	In debate, one searches for weaknesses in opposing positions.
Dialogue respects all of the other participants and seeks not to alienate or offend.	Debate rebuts contrary positions and may belittle or deprecate other participants.
Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of answers and that cooperation can lead to workable solutions.	Debate assumes that someone already has a single right answer.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate demands a conclusion and a winner.

# Discussion Feedback

This scoring guide provides feedback to the participants in the discussion group. One student will score another student in the discussion group. After the discussion, both students confer and discuss strengths and areas to improve. This feedback is important if students are going to improve their discussion skills.

POSITIVE	
POINTS	
2	Taking a position on a question
1	Making a relevant comment
2	Using evidence to support a position or presenting factual information
1	Asking a clarifying question or moving the discussion along
1	Drawing another person into the discussion
2	Making an analogy
2	Recognizing contradictions
3	Recognizing irrelevant comments

NEGATIVE	
POINTS	
-2	Not paying attention or distracting others
-2	Interruption
-1	Irrelevant comment
-3	Monopolizing
-3	Personal attack
-2	Inappropriate comments

TOTAL POINTS	
GRADE	

Record relevant comments made by speaker here:

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# Socratic Seminar Discussion Debrief

The questions on the previous page focus more on the process. These questions are designed to help participants and observers reflect on the content of the seminar dialogue. They may be used in discussion only, or students may write their answers first and then engage in a discussion.

1. What was the best point made during the seminar?
2. What ideas did you agree with?
3. What ideas did you disagree with?
4. What questions were left unanswered?
5. What did you contribute to the discussion?
6. What do you wish you had said in the discussion?
7. Who were the top three contributors to the discussion?
8. What is your overall evaluation of the seminar?

# Activities

There are 10 discussion activities.

## 1 Think, Pair, Share

In this follow-up activity to a reading or video, students are asked to share opinions with one another, improving both their analytical and listening skills.

## 2 Character Corners

Students make judgments about people from the past and view the past through multiple perspectives.

## 3 Four Corner Discussion

Students take a position on a given question and then share with other students having similar and opposing views. This activity helps students understand multiple perspectives and develop supporting evidence.

## 4 Fishbowl Discussion

Students are divided into two groups to discuss primary and secondary sources: participants and observers. This activity develops student facilitators, encourages total student participation, and promotes active listening skills.

## 5 Inner-Outer Circle

This discussion strategy requires both the inner and outer groups to create open-ended questions from a reading and then respond to one another. This activity helps develop student facilitators, while encouraging total student participation and promoting active listening skills.

## 6 Socratic Seminar

Students explore a text by discussing their own questions and referring to passages in the text to find answers. Students support opinions with specific evidence and develop academic language.

## 7 Philosophical Chairs

Presented with a controversial issue, students give careful attention to the comments of others, assess the validity of the ideas presented, and choose whether to change their opinion or not.

## 8 Debate

Students use facts and logic to support their viewpoint. This activity encourages students to respond to opposing viewpoints with logical and reasoned arguments supported by research.

## 9 Newspaper Bureau

Students research and create a newscast from a contemporary newspaper.

## 10 Discussions from Different Perspectives

Students take on the persona of characters from history and discuss events through their perspectives.

## Supportive Behavior

## Defensive Behavior

*Equality*—Doing or saying things that value the other person as an equal

*Superiority*—Establishing your own dominant position in the group

*Description*—Seeking to obtain information and describe it in an objective manner

*Evaluation*—Passing judgment or otherwise personalizing the information obtained

*Spontaneity*—Allowing ideas to emerge without attempting to control them

*Strategy*—Planning the work of the group so extensively that group members perceive manipulation

*Problem orientation*—Focusing on the problem at hand

*Control*—Focusing on the behavior of the other group member and pushing your preferred solution

*Provisionalism*—A willingness to genuinely explore alternatives

*Certainty*—Proposing your solution and being unwilling to deviate from it

*Empathy*—A personal concern for the other group members

*Neutrality*—Lack of concern for other group members even if the behavior is not hostile