**Purpose of a Socratic Seminar**

To create an academic discussion facilitated by the students to further the understanding of key ideas, issues, and values reflected in a specific text.

**The Steps of the Socratic Seminar** (*SOCRATIC\_Steps.docx*)

1. Students read the text (ELA), or experience a lesson (all subjects)
2. Students come up with high level questions that promote conversation- from Bloom’s or Costa’s or on their own
3. Students are told the norms (*Socratic\_5\_P’s.doc* (coming soon))   
   and instructed on how it works (*socratic\_seminar\_begginers.ppt*)
4. Students are divided into two circles
   1. Inner circle (pilots)- starts the conversation.   
      (typically it will go 1 question, 2-3 responses, 1 question, 2-3 responses)
   2. Outer circle (co-pilots) – take notes/grades peers
   3. Teacher tallies for grades or charts the conversation flow

(only interrupts if absolutely necessary i.e. extended silence/off topic)

1. Variations:   
   - fire seat if a student has a burning question

- one large socratic at one time without inner/outer circles  
-student rubrics / partner grading

Note: This is not about picking a side and defending it. It is a conversation that that discusses all sides, ideas, etc. and is just a structured way to have an academic conversation. For “debate” style lessons, check out philosophical chairs. (*How-to Philosophical Chairs link)*