

# “THAT’S NOT FAIR” | SOCRATIC SEMINARS

## *What is a socratic seminar?*

“... a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks 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 work cooperatively and to question intelligently and civilly.”<sup>1</sup>

- Traditionally used in English/Literature contexts
- Classroom arranged in a circle or in small groups where every student has a seat at the table and is facing each other
- Sometimes uses a “talking stick”
- Second Grade Teacher Example: <https://vimeo.com/105397457>

## *Socratic Seminar Norms*

- Use relevant evidence from the book when talking or making a claim
- Build on what others have said using linking prompts
- Make eye contact & speak loudly and clearly
- Raise your hand to speak and call on the next student when you are done
- Stay on topic
- Be an active listener
- Be mindful of how often and how long you speak

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1

Israel, Elfie. “Examining Multiple Perspectives in Literature.” In *Inquiry and the Literary Text: Constructing Discussions in the English Classroom*. James Holden and John S. Schmit, eds. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2002.

