



DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING AND SPEAKING

This activity can help students investigate **multiple perspectives** in a text and encourage them to express their opinions in English.

What is a *Socratic seminar*?

It is a **formal discussion**, based on a text, in which the leader asks the rest of the group open-ended questions to the rest of the group.

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

01 CHOOSE A TEXT

- A short story or authentic document.
- Short documents contrasting ideas.
- An article about a scientific problem.

02 PREPARE THE STUDENTS

- Tell them that they are going to discuss a text.
- Encourage the students to take notes as they read.

03 PREPARE THE QUESTIONS

- You will act as discussion leader.
- Generate as many open-ended questions as possible.
- Try to connect the questions to their real context.

04 ESTABLISH YOUR ROLE

- The teacher's role is to ask provocative questions that drive the discussion.
- Don't correct or redirect the debate. Let the students feel free to express their thoughts.
- You may want to summarize ideas at the end of the debate and connect them to any related curricular contents you may need.

Try this!

Create a quick and hands-on debate using a fun prompt to ask your questions:

- ▶ Write your questions down **on a football** while your students are reading the text.
- ▶ Have the students **get up** out of their seats and stand **in a circle**.
- ▶ **Throw the ball** to a random student to start the debate. The student will read the question which is right in front of him/her on the ball out loud and answer it.
- ▶ Encourage the rest of students to **comment on the student's response**.
- ▶ When the discussion has run its course, ask the students to **throw the ball again** to a random classmate.

