

Seminar: Guidelines & Reflection

AP Language and Composition

Purposes:

- To generate ideas for later exploration
- To practice reflective and critical thinking
- To refine conversation skills / conferencing
- To improve listening skills
- To focus on textual evidence

Preparation:

- You should obviously read the assigned essay or text before class
- See page three (Levels of Questioning); in that fashion, you should develop **at least** three questions about the reading(s) that you'd like answered.
- You should also come prepared with segments of the text you'd like to address / discuss
- Throughout the seminar, you should explicitly or implicitly seek answers to these questions
- In your first part of your seminar evaluation, you should write on your blog your answers to the questions that were addressed.

Guidelines:

- Everyone should speak at least once
- No person or persons should dominate. If you have spoken three times, wait at least five minutes before talking
- Please address your peers by... (class choice) surnames or first names...
- Class will form a circle for discussion.
- Grades are determined by students and teacher
- Your grade is based on a healthy balance among
 - listening to others
 - speaking
 - questioning and clarifying points made by others
 - familiarity with the text
 - ability to draw parallels and make connections, both in discussion and in your seminar reflection
- Be aware of people who are trying to jump in, but are having a difficult time
- Ask thoughtful questions that clarify and expand ideas
- Be willing to qualify or abandon your initial opinions if you are persuaded by others that you need to do so
- When drawing parallels and making connections refer to the text
- Be comfortable with silence
- Make eye contact with your peers, not the teacher
- The teacher will act as the facilitator, not the teacher
- Remember—this is a discovery and critical thinking activity. Most comments are welcome. Evaluation of those comments are encouraged
- Linear thinkers need to be comfortable with ambiguity. Answers and direction come later.
- It's fine to return to a previous topic in the conversation. Just acknowledge that you would like to shift the discussion or to return to a point that someone made earlier.
- Seminars raise more questions than they answer. Refinement of thought comes through other activities.

Use the next page as a self-grading/evaluation guideline.

Name: _____

Work(s) Discussed: _____

Level 0

_____ Doesn't pay attention to seminar discussion	_____ Doesn't contribute to the discussion	_____ Disrupts, scoffs at other students' comments
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Level 1

_____ Contributes to the discussion	_____ Listens actively	_____ Is Considerate
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Level 2

_____ Does not digress unproductively	_____ Is neither impulsive nor overly hesitant
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Level 3: Extends and Expands discussion by...

_____ Questioning	_____ Involving others in a meaningful way	_____ Offering analogies
_____ Alluding to previously shared readings	_____ Clarifying the contribution of others	_____ Comprehending and Contributing to the Universal level
_____ Examining critically and logically the ideas of others	_____ Connecting ideas to contemporary, current events	_____ Other:

After our class seminar, you should answer the following questions on your blog. Start a new tab for your reflection. Your grade for the seminar will be a reflection of your own ideas / comments about the seminar and my assessment of your contribution.

Summary

A. What were the main points made during the discussion? Which, if any, were confusing or unclear? What new point(s) did I hear about the text/topic being discussed? Note who made these comments. What were my original questions? What new ones came to light during the seminar? Which ones were / weren't answered?

Analysis

B. How might this seminar connect to other readings/topics in this or other classes? How did this seminar reorient your view on the text/topic being discussed? What ideas for study and writing can I take from this seminar?

Self-Evaluation

C. What grade would you give yourself in the seminar? Why?

Levels of Questioning

Mr. Eble, English

Level One: The Explicit Question (Comprehension)

(Explicit: fully and clearly expressed or demonstrated; leaving nothing merely implied. Latin: *explicare* = to unfold). These questions can be answered directly by facts contained in the text. One teacher calls the answers to these kinds of questions “finger facts” because we can put our finger directly on the answer. Examples:

What color dominates the image?

What kinds of sentences are most common in the speech?

What was the Edna wearing during her dinner party?

Why did Nick Carraway decide to move to New York?

Level Two: The Implicit Question (Analysis, Interpretation, Synthesis)

(Implicit: implied, rather than expressly stated; indirect. Latin: *implicare* = to interweave). These questions are textually implicit, requiring analysis and interpretation of specific parts of the texts. These are related to details of the text but cannot be answered by simply pointing your finger. Examples:

How does the presence of the bird above the central figure contribute to his heroic stature?

Why does Shakespeare describe flowers in connection with Ophelia?

What is the significance of the green light in *The Great Gatsby*?

How does Obama’s use of metaphor support his purpose?

Level Three: The Philosophical/Universal Question (Reflection, Evaluation)

(Philosophy: The critical analysis of fundamental assumptions or beliefs. Greek: *philo* = loving; *sophia* = wisdom/truth. Universal: of, pertaining to, or characteristic of all or the whole. Latin: *uni*= one, *verse* = to turn). These questions are much more open-ended and go beyond the text. They are intended to provoke discussion, reflection, and evaluation of an abstract idea or issue. Examples:

Why might ignorance be preferable to knowledge?

Does awareness of death help us live more purposefully?

How might one’s heritage act as both a burden and a gift?

Which form of government is the most just for all of its members?