 Year 11 English extension – Socratic seminar

Date:

Length: 15 minutes

Questions:

* What is the relationship between a text, the context within which it is written and the values it reflects?
* How do texts reflect or challenge cultural concerns relevant to their context?
* How and why do composers borrow from, adapt and appropriate aspects of texts from the past?
* Do paradigm shifts result in changes in the way values of 'good' and 'evil' are represented in texts?
* How do responders determine whether the values reflected in texts are responses to cultural concerns or reflections of them?

Task description:

Part 1: Seminar participation – inner circle

* Students are required to participate in an in-class Socratic seminar. They will be allocated a question above and be required to prepare discussion notes to assist them in their participation in the seminar. The purpose of the notes is to act as an ‘essay plan’ for their allocated question. They should focus on the following points:
  1. Literally – what is the questions asking (a thesis statement)?
  2. Analytically – provide evidence from the texts you have studied and demonstrate how your chosen evidence supports your thesis (remembering to include some techniques discussion so you can demonstrate your understanding of the way language is used to shape meaning)
  3. Evaluation – why is the question relevant and important within the context of Year 11 Extension English (why is this unit important, what does it teach us about how we as responders engage with texts).

Part 2: Active listening – outer circle

* Those students who are not participating in the actual seminar are required to listen actively to the discussion and summarise the main points of the seminar.
* Your summary should be organised into three sections:
  1. The main points of the ‘literal’ discussion.
  2. The main points of the ‘analytical’ discussion.
  3. The main points of the ‘evaluative’ discussion.
* The notes need to be typed up and handed in to your teacher at the end of the seminar. The expectation is that you should have roughly one A4 page of notes for each seminar.

Socratic seminar – Rules of engagement

Rules:

* Students are arranged in two concentric circles.
* -The INNER circle contains students who will be involved in the discussion; each student must contribute to the discussion.
  + Students will be randomly allocated to the INNER circle based on the article they have been given to read.
* The OUTER circle contains the listeners. Students in the outer circle are not to speak, their role is to listen to the discussion and summarise the main points.
* There should be two empty seats in the INNER circle.
* Students in the OUTER circle may join the INNER circle when the following occurs:
  + Discussion appears to be off topic
  + Discussion becomes non-productive
  + INNER circle members have not discussed an area deemed to be important.

Responsibilities of the inner circle:

* Students determine who the first speaker is. A new student enters the discussion only when the previous speaker indicates they have finished.
* All students in the INNER circle are required to contribute, though they do not necessarily need to participate.
  + Follow-up questions may be asked by INNER circle members.
  + When a student from the OUTER circle opts to take a seat in the INNER circle, they become the next speaker.
  + INNER circle members MUST come to a consensus for each question OR after allowing each student the opportunity to speak, agree to disagree.

Responsibilities of the outer circle:

* To ensure the practice of good listening, students in the OUTER circle must summarise the INNER circle discussion. They are required to summarise the INNER circle seminar in note form, addressing the main aspects of the discussion. Dot points are fine.
* If an OUTER circle member joins the INNER circle, they are still required to submit their written summary of the parts of the seminar they weren’t engaged in.