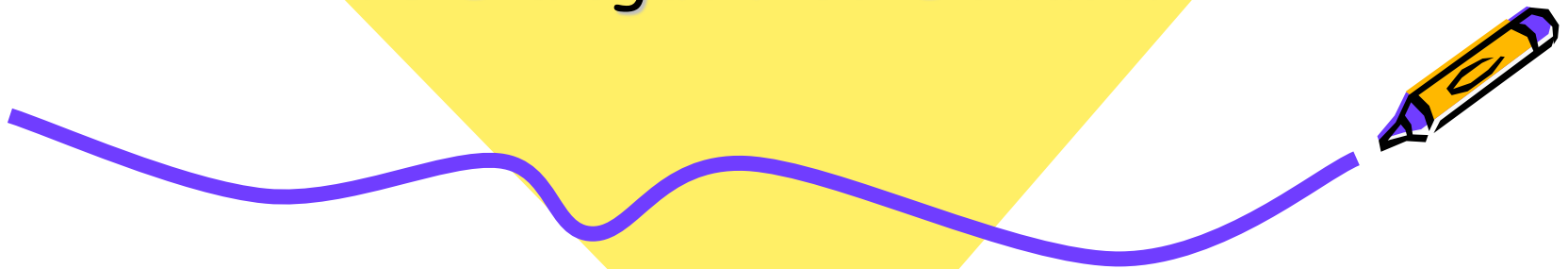


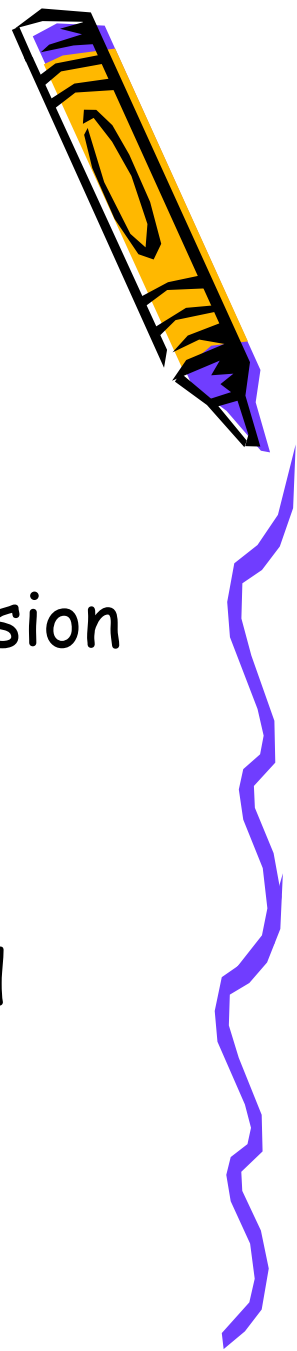


# Socratic Seminar

It's Dialogue *Not* Debate!



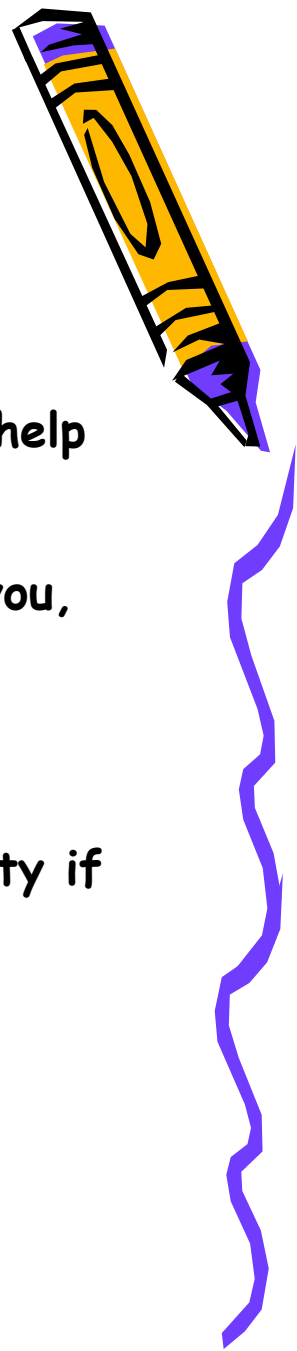
# The Elements of Socratic Seminars



- The Text
  - Choose a text that will enable your students to have a thoughtful discussion
  - Texts can be from readings in literature, history, science, math, philosophy, art or even music
  - Current events from newspapers and magazines can be appropriate



# The Leader

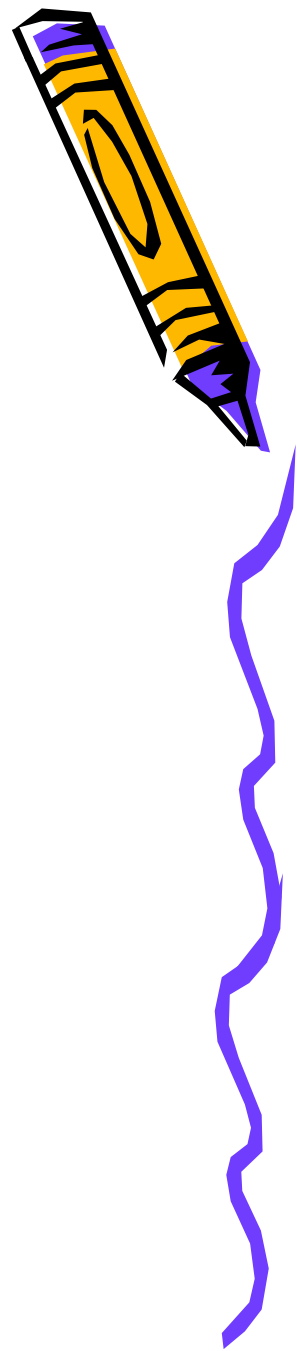


- Know the text well before you begin
- Be prepared with a series of questions about the text to help define discussion and give it direction
- Facilitate discussion among participants rather than with you, the leader
- Be an active listener
- Help participants rephrase questions and answers for clarity if necessary
- Encourage participants to *use the text* to support their responses



# The Participant

- Read the text carefully and for understanding
- Highlight the text and make notes in the margins
- Take turns speaking instead of raising hands
- Listen carefully and actively to your fellow participants
- Discuss ideas of the text, not each other's opinions
- Keep your mind open to new ideas and possibilities



# Dialogue vs. Debate

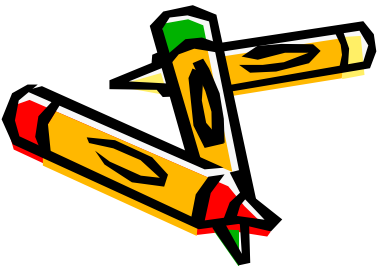


## Dialogue is...

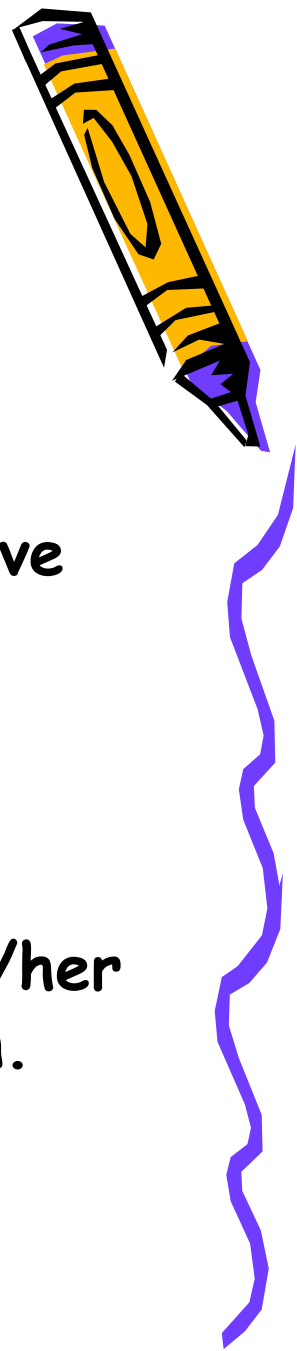
- collaborative
- about understanding
- re-evaluating assumptions
- keeping an open mind
- searching for strength and validity in all ideas
- about temporarily suspending beliefs
- open-ended

## Debate is...

- oppositional
- about proving others wrong
- defending assumptions
- close-minded
- about defending beliefs
- having one right answer
- searching for weakness in ideas
- demands a conclusion



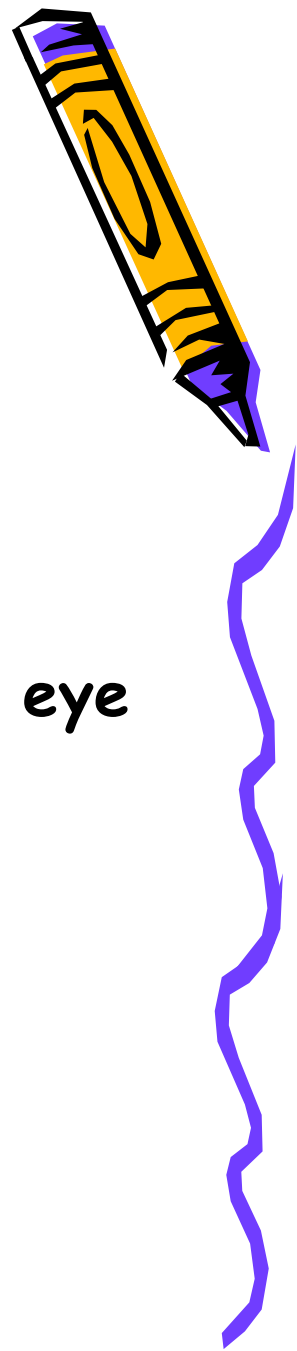
# Socratic Seminar Rules



- Be courteous. No put downs or sarcasm.
- Absolutely no side conversations! If you have something to say, address the entire group. You may have valuable input.
- No need to raise your hand. Allow each speaker enough time to begin and finish his/her thoughts. Do not "talk over" another person.



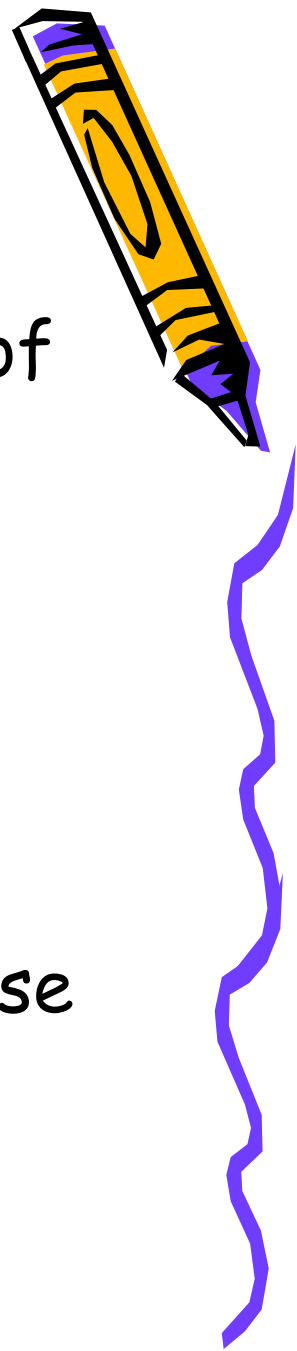
# Socratic Seminar Rules Continued...



- Involve others in the discussion and ask questions to elaborate on their responses.
- Use your best active listening skills through eye contact and providing feedback.
- Remember there are no wrong answers. All ideas are valuable!



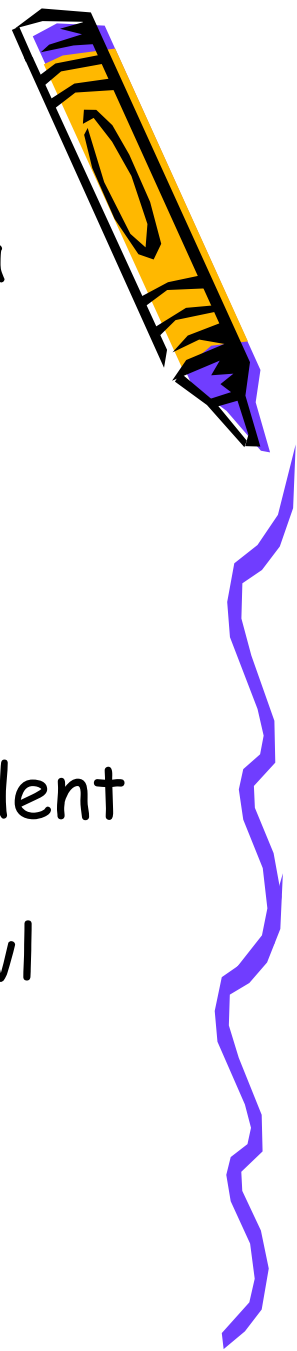
# How to get started?



- Make sure each participant has a copy of the text. They will highlight and take notes in the margins.
- Read the text aloud one time.
- Have students read the text one more time, silently taking careful notes for use in the seminar.







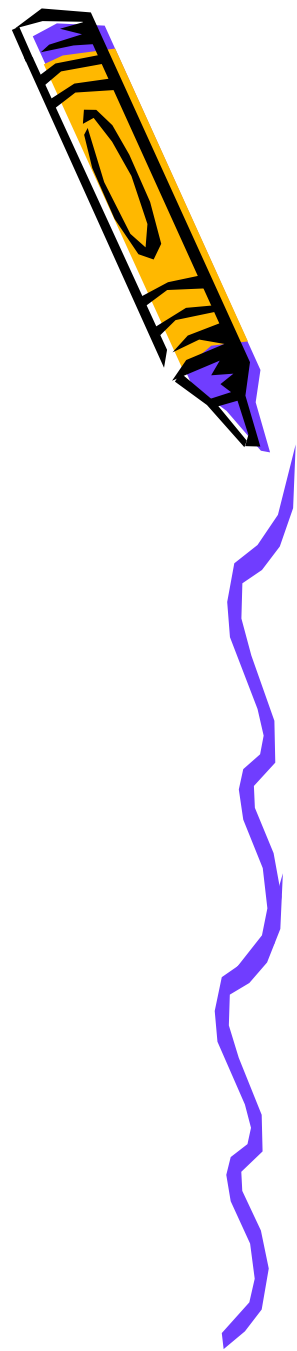
- Students write at least three probing questions to be used for discussion as a homework assignment.

(Bloom's Taxonomy—Knowledge, Understanding, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation)

- On the day of the seminar arrange student desks in a circle. If you have a class of more than 20 students, use the fishbowl method.



- An opening question is posed by the seminar leader.
- Responses should be supported by evidence/quotations from the text.
- Student's ask each other for clarification in order to deepen understanding.
- Switch inner/outer circles after 15 minutes.



# Debrief

- Be sure to conclude each seminar with a debrief.
- If you use the fishbowl method, you can have the observers share what they saw and offer suggestions for improvement.
- Depth and Complexity
  - What patterns were observed?
  - What unanswered questions remain?
  - Was there an ethical component?

