

Lincoln and the Constitution: Suspending Habeas Corpus

The following information is taken entirely from this website:

http://www.studyguide.org/socratic_seminar.htm

Guidelines for Participants in a Socratic Seminar

1. Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. You are not "learning a subject"; your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text.
2. It's OK to "pass" when asked to contribute.
3. Do not participate if you are not prepared. A seminar should not be a bull session.
4. Do not stay confused; ask for clarification.
5. Stick to the point currently under discussion; make notes about ideas you want to come back to.
6. Don't raise hands; take turns speaking.
7. Listen carefully.
8. Speak up so that all can hear you.

9. Talk to each other, not just to the leader or teacher.

10. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.

11. You are responsible for the seminar, even if you don't know it or admit it.

Expectations of Participants in a Socratic Seminar

When I am evaluating your Socratic Seminar participation, I ask the following questions about participants. Did they....

Speak loudly and clearly?

Cite reasons and evidence for their statements?

Use the text to find support?

Listen to others respectfully?

Stick with the subject?

Talk to each other, not just to the leader?

Paraphrase accurately?

Ask for help to clear up confusion?

Support each other?

Avoid hostile exchanges?

Question others in a civil manner?

Seem prepared?

What is the difference between dialogue and debate?

- Dialogue is collaborative: multiple sides work toward shared understanding.
Debate is oppositional: two opposing sides try to prove each other wrong.

- In dialogue, one listens to understand, to make meaning, and to find common ground.

In debate, one listens to find flaws, to spot differences, and to counter arguments.

- Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

- Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

Debate creates a close-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

- In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, expecting that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than threaten it.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

- Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

- In dialogue, one searches for strengths in all positions.

In debate, one searches for weaknesses in the other position.

- Dialogue respects all the other participants and seeks not to alienate or offend.

Debate rebuts contrary positions and may belittle or deprecate other participants.

- Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of answers and that cooperation can lead to a greater understanding.

Debate assumes a single right answer that somebody already has.

- Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate demands a conclusion.

Dialogue is characterized by:

- suspending judgment
- examining our own work without defensiveness
- exposing our reasoning and looking for limits to it
- communicating our underlying assumptions
- exploring viewpoints more broadly and deeply
- being open to disconfirming data
- approaching someone who sees a problem differently not as an adversary, but as a colleague in common pursuit of better solution.