

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| To the Teacher | 5 |
| Common Core Standards Addressed | 6 |
| Conducting/Steps for the Seminar | 8 |
| Rubrics | 10 |
| Paideia Seminar Rules | 12 |
| Student Response Chart | 13 |
| Poetry: <i>The Runaway Slave</i> (from <i>Song of Myself</i>) by Walt Whitman Theme: Injustice, Bravery, Moral Dilemma | 14 |
| Aesop's Fable: <i>The Ass and His Purchaser</i> Theme: Influence on Us by Those with Whom We Associate | 18 |
| A Short Story by O. Henry: <i>A Retrieved Reformation</i> Theme: Reformation of Character; Irony | 23 |
| A Short Story by O. Henry: <i>The Ransom of Red Chief</i> Theme: Irony; Trickery; Humor | 28 |
| A Short Story by Charles Dickens: <i>A Child's Dream of a Star</i> Theme: Death/Loss; Love; Afterlife; Heaven; Angels | 34 |
| A Short Story by Kate Chopin: <i>The Story of an Hour</i> Theme: Death; Independence/Freedom; Emotions; Irony | 37 |
| Hey, Little Ant by Phillip and Hannah Hoose Theme: Sympathy/Charity; Bullying; One's Character | 42 |
| A Short Story by Ambrose Bierce: <i>An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge</i> Theme: Loyalty to a Cause; Death; Civil War; Delusions | 47 |
| A Short Story by W.W. Jacobs: <i>The Monkey's Paw</i> Theme: Greed; Learning from Mistakes; Loss; Regret; Horror | 52 |
| Aesop's Fable: <i>The Bear and the Two Travelers</i> Theme: Friendship; One's True Character | 57 |
| A Short Story by Willa Cather: <i>The Burglar's Christmas</i> Theme: Forgiveness; Family; Unconditional Love | 62 |

To the Teacher

Paideia Seminars or discussion seminars are wonderful strategies to get students thinking about a particular subject, article, idea, or book in a deep and meaningful way. This type of instruction prepares students for the 21st century by facilitating the development of communication skills, critical thinking skills, collaboration, and problem-solving. You can research Paideia Seminars on the web to learn more, but in this book, I have written about how I approach seminars in my own classroom with students. Paideia Seminars are not at all intimidating to facilitate, and once you have done one or two, you will be hooked. Students begin to open up and share deep thoughts and ideas spawned from a particular subject or reading selection and by listening to their peers' ideas. Students may agree or disagree with their peers, but they learn to do both respectfully and with much thought. Students are given an opportunity to answer pre-seminar questions to get them thinking about the material. Then in the actual seminar, students are asked some of the same questions that they have previously reflected upon, but other questions are also asked to see how well they have connected the different themes, lessons, morals, characterization, and big ideas from the material. Students are asked to support their answers with details from the material, to make connections to other texts or real-world experiences, and to fully explain their answers. I use rubrics to grade my students on how thoroughly they participated in the seminar. Not only will you be hooked after facilitating these seminars, but your students will enjoy them as well!

I am not assigning a particular grade level to any of the seminars because different groups of children in varying grade levels may be able to handle the content and questioning of each seminar. However, read the books or stories first to see if your students will be able to handle the material.

Common Core Standards Addressed in Grades 6-8

Grade 6:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Grade 7:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.3 Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Grade 8:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.3 Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

Conducting the Seminar

The way I conduct Paideia Seminars is I tell students that we are going to read a selection (book, article, story, etc.) and then we will participate in a Paideia Seminar. Of course, the first time I tell them this, they ask, “What is that?” I explain to them that it is a discussion seminar in which they will get to talk about the material we are reading with their classmates. I explain that they will need to know the material very well before we actually participate in the seminar because they must support their thoughts and opinions with valid details from the material. I tell them they may also use other text connections as well as real-world experience and research to support their answers. I explain that they will also have the opportunity to answer some pre-seminar questions to prepare their thoughts and opinions for the discussion seminar. I then explain to them that when we have the seminar that we will pull our chairs out from our desks/tables to form a huge oval so that all participants can see each other well. Students should use good eye contact and talk directly to other classmates using their names, so visibility of all students is a must. I explain to students that I am not the teacher during the seminar; I am only a facilitator who asks the questions that they will discuss with each other. Students are not answering my question to me; they use each question to spark a discussion with their classmates. They do not raise their hands, and I will not call on them to answer. It is their responsibility to answer the questions as they discuss with their peers. They must work out issues in discussions like whose turn it is to talk just as people do when they are in a group conversation. For example, if two students begin talking at once, one may nod for the other to go first. The whole group should take notice of that transaction, so that after the first person finishes talking the second person can talk before a “new” person begins giving their opinion. I explain all of this to students so they will understand when seminar day comes exactly how to participate. I also explain that I will be taking notes on how they respond. I tell them that any opinion is okay as long as it is well-supported and that I am looking for deep, novel, supported answers. I tell students they do not each have to respond to every question I ask, but that each student respond at least 3-4 times either in answering my question or responding to what another student has said.

Steps for the Seminar

1. Tell students the selection you will be focusing on and that you are going to have a seminar. (The selection may be in any subject: literature, math, science, social studies.)
2. Either read the selection together or students may read independently.
3. Give students pre-seminar questions to answer independently.
4. Grade the pre-seminar questions, but do not give back to students until after the seminar.
5. Plan what day students will participate in the seminar and announce it to them.
6. On the day of the seminar remind students of seminar behaviors, rules, etc. (I have included Seminar expectations.)
7. Seat students in an oval. Ask the first question.
8. Allow students time to answer the question and keep it going as long as new ideas are being offered and supported. Then ask the next question and continue in the same way.
9. Take notes while students are talking. I like to make a chart with all of my students' names. I make a column for the students' names, a column where I can tally how many times they speak, and one larger column where I can write specific things they said or whether it was a "disagree" opinion and/or if it had lots of details and support, etc. I have included a chart for your use. I tally responses in the categories and write notes or quotes to help me remember the responses, especially the unique answers. I only have 3 students on each page so I have plenty of room to record.
10. At the end, thank students for their participation.
11. The following day I talk to my students about the seminar: what went well, what didn't work, and what I would like to see the next time we participate in a seminar. I give back their pre-seminar questions and their rubric for the seminar. I allow students to ask me individually about their rubric score or the pre-seminar questions, so they may understand further what I am looking for.

The Runaway Slave (from Song of Myself)

by Walt Whitman

The runaway slave came to my house and stopt outside,
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the woodpile,
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him limpsy and weak,
And went where he sat on a log and led him in and assured him,
And brought water and fill'd a tub for his sweated body and bruis'd feet,
And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and gave him some coarse clean clothes,
And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his awkwardness,
And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck and ankles;
He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and pass'd north,
I had him sit next me at table, my fire-lock lean'd in the corner.

(Before the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, some people would defy the federal laws that required people to turn over runaway slaves to the proper authorities, and instead they would help the slaves get to freedom in the North.

The speaker of this poem has helped a runaway slave.)

Pre-Seminar Questions for *The Runaway Slave* (from *Song of Myself*)

By Walt Whitman



1. In this poem by Walt Whitman, why do you think the speaker has helped the runaway slave?

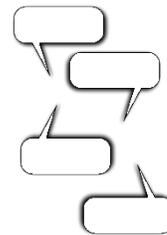
2. If it was the law to turn over runaway slaves, do you think it was right that the speaker and others of that time helped runaway slaves?

3. Why do you think Walt Whitman wrote this poem?

4. Do you think you would have turned in the runaway slave or turned him into the authorities? Explain.

Seminar Questions for *The Runaway Slave* (from *Song of Myself*)

By Walt Whitman



1. Why do you think the speaker in this poem helped the runaway slave? Would the speaker have not been in danger for helping the runaway slave since it was against the law to help a runaway slave?
2. What would you have done in this situation? Would you have pretended you didn't see him and let him escape or brought him in your home and helped him or turned him over to the authorities? Explain.
3. Let's make this into a modern day example and I want you to think about how you would respond. Listen carefully.

You live in an apartment over stores downtown. You are bored so you are just staring out the window. You see a man go in a store, pull out a weapon, and rob the place. You see him exit with the money. Then the police arrive, they see another man on the street that matches the description of the robber, and they begin to chase him. He runs from the police because he is deaf and scared and doesn't know what to do. He is not the thief, but he is scared. He runs into the door of the back of your apartment (the police do not see where he goes). You know he didn't commit the crime, and you realize he is deaf. If you don't yell out to the police immediately, you will be arrested for aiding a criminal (if the police find out you helped him because aiding a criminal is a crime), but if you call for the police, this guy will be taken to jail and tried for a crime he didn't commit. (The police in your town are known for wanting to close crime cases immediately, so you are sure you cannot just explain that you saw the real thief and this is not him. They will not believe you.) After the man hides in your closet, you hear a knock on your door. It is the police. What will you do?

4. Is it ever okay to lie or break the law? Explain with details.