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*Sincerely,  
Karen Haag*

**I hope I can help you in some small way.**  
**Please feel free to email with questions 😊**

**Socratic Seminar Lesson Plan**  
**Central Idea:**

*Hope this template makes your planning a little easier.*

**Grade Level of Article** (usually pick something challenging, above grade level) \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Article to read ahead of time** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make sure ALL students are in a circle** and can see one another.

Ask students to **set goals** for the seminar. Examples:

1. I will ask someone else to contribute.
2. I will compliment someone.
3. I will answer at least one question.
4. I will let others speak before I do.
5. I will listen with an open mind to others' ideas.
6. I will be willing to change my mind.
7. I will monitor my language to be sure I demonstrate I'm willing to considering all ideas.

**Opening Question** for everyone to answer: Take a few minutes to mark an *important word* in the article. There are many important words so I would like you to mark several. Everyone will have a turn. You will need to listen and you cannot repeat someone else's important idea. (Or you might say, "You can repeat an important word if you think it is important, also.") (Share selected words.)

**Write 2-5 Literal follow-up Questions:** Quote vocabulary or sentences from the article in the question you craft. Ask students to explain what the quote means or ask students to agree or disagree. (Try to get *key words* identified and defined.)

**Write 1-2 Application Questions:** Build up to relating the content to the children's lives --- if this were to happen to you, how would you ----? Or, what do you predict would happen if ---? Or, persuade us that ---- or ---- is a good idea. (These questions can be turned into independent writing assignments for individual accountability.)

**Closing Question:** (Choose one or write one.)

- (1) Tell us if you changed your mind from the beginning to the end of the discussion and what made you change your mind.
- (2) Pick a word that you think is important now.
- (3) Pick a word that describes how you're feeling now.
- (4) Other

**Reflect on your goal by writing in your notebook. Set a new goal.**

## EXAMPLE OF A Socratic Seminar Lesson Plan (Haag)

**Central Idea:** Through changes in the Earth's surface, evidence of life before human existence is exposed.

**Grade Level of Article** (usually pick something challenging, above grade level) : 4.6 Flesh-Kinkaid

**Name of Article to read ahead of time** \_\_\_\_\_ *Tracking Dinosaurs, Weekly Reader* \_\_\_\_\_

**Make sure ALL students are in a circle** and can see one another.

Ask students to **set goals** for the seminar. Examples:

1. I will ask someone else to contribute.
2. I will compliment someone.
3. I will answer at least one question that demonstrates my thinking.
4. I will reference the text to give evidence for my ideas.
5. I will let others speak before I do.
6. I will follow up others' questions and comments by building on their ideas.
7. I will listen with an open mind to others' ideas.
8. I will monitor my language to be sure I demonstrate I'm willing to considering all ideas.
9. I will be willing to change my mind.

**Opening Question** for everyone to answer: Take a few minutes to mark an *important word* in the article. There are many important words so I would like you to mark several. Everyone will have a turn. You will need to listen and you cannot repeat someone else's important idea. (Or you might say, "You can repeat an important word if you think it is important, also.") (Share selected words.)

**Write 2-5 Literal follow-up Questions:** Quote vocabulary or sentences from the article in the question you craft. Ask students to explain what the quote means or ask students to agree or disagree. (Try to get *key words* identified and defined.)

1. Use the article to explain what a paleontologist is.
2. Read subhead with me: "New technology helps scientists unlock mysteries about these ancient creatures." (subhead) What's mysterious in this article?
3. How does new technology work to help the scientists?
4. What part of our knowledge about dinosaurs has changed as a result of new technology?
5. What did scientists rely on in the past to get their information?

**Write 1-2 Application Questions:** Build up to relating the content to the children's lives --- if this were to happen to you, how would you ----? Or, what do you predict would happen if ----? Or, persuade us that ---- or ---- is a good idea. (These questions can be turned into independent writing assignments for individual accountability.)

1. What color are dinosaurs?
2. What does the last sentence mean? (Every time a new technique comes up, the old fossils are pulled out again and looked at anew with brand-new eyes.)
3. If you were able to talk to Barnum Brown what would you tell him?
4. What question do you think scientists still hope like to answer?
5. Are you sure that there is evidence of life before humans? Use evidence from the article to support your belief.

**Closing Question:** (Choose one or write one.)

- (1) Tell us if you changed your mind from the beginning to the end of the discussion and what made you change your mind.
- (2) Pick a word that you think is important now.
- (3) Pick a word that describes how you're feeling now.
- (4) Other:

**Reflect on your goal by writing in your notebook. Set a new goal.**