A Socratic Seminar, named after the Greek philosopher Socrates, is a thought-provoking discussion on a topic. The topic in this type of discussion is often a controversial topic that would lead to people having opposing viewpoints. The format of this Socratic Seminar will be a guided discussion using certain focus questions.



The Topic: Climate Change

The current climate data has consistently shown that earth’s climate has warmed between 0.750 C to 1.00 C in the last 130 years. This part of the topic will not be debated. **What will be discussed is the role human activity plays in recent global warming**. The Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW) hypothesis blames humans for global warming.

* In a Socratic Seminar, participants are assigned one of the focus questions to research.
* Each participant is also assigned a specific viewpoint or side of the issue to further narrow your research: an activist or skeptic.
  + ACTIVISTS believe that humans are the major (or sole) cause of climate change, and we need to act now or we will suffer drastic negative consequences in the near future.
  + SKEPTICS either oppose the AGW hypothesis (*believing that global warming is mostly the result of natural cycles*), or question the activist’s approach in some way.
  + **Procon.org** … “climate change” <https://climatechange.procon.org/>

**Focus Topics/Questions**:

1. Find models that predict future climate changes. Are these predictions reliable? List indicators of climate change. How does the rate of climate change today compare with past ages?

2. List economic impacts arising from global climate change, emphasizing your viewpoint.

3. Compare the amount of extreme weather events (e.g. hurricanes, typhoons, etc.) that have occurred after 1900 to before 1900. What factors related to climate change may be causing extreme weather events or patterns? What can or should be done about it?

4. Should the government intervene and place regulations, restrictions, policies, etc. to address human causation of climate change? What are some interventions that are already established?

5. List major impacts to humans & the world in the next century based on climate change. What steps should be taken to address these impacts? (*Be sure to emphasize your viewpoint*.)

6. Global warming is a “hotbed” issue. Do people take a political view, a scientific view, both or neither when dealing with global warming? What stance should they take?

Climate Change Socratic Seminar Grading Rubric

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Task/Topic | Pts Possible | Pts Earned |
|  | | |
| PREPARATION PHASE | | |
| **Research Each Viewpoint**   * Give at least one “activist” (advocate) view and at least one “skeptic” (antagonist) view for each focus point/question. * Complete “Seminar” chart. * Be sure that each point is supported by reliable data, evidence or accepted theory. | 12 |  |
| **4 Research Points**  Prepare at least 4 points (do research) for ONE of the focus topics/questions.   * Must clear, distinct, & supported with data * Must be backed up with a direct source or reference listed next to it. | 4 |  |
| **2 Points** **of Emphasis**  Prepare at least 2 points of emphasis (for your presentation) for the ONE focus topic/question.  Must clear, distinct, & supported | 2 |  |
| **4 Reliable Sources / References**   * Listed in MLA Format. * Not all from the same type of resource (Wikipedia, notes, etc.) | 4 |  |
|  | | |
| SEMINAR PHASE | | |
| **Seminar Notes Page Completed** | 3 |  |
| **One Discussion Point**  Present your ONE focus point/question.   * Give source(s) when presenting the point. * Clearly state whether you are an activist or skeptic and explain adequately. | 5 |  |
| **Climate Change Summary**   * Following the Socratic Seminar write a short persuasive essay (2-3 paragraphs) giving your personal stance on climate change. * You must take a pro (for) or con (against) stance, and support it with data from the seminar. | 10 |  |
| TOTAL | 40 |  |

**Seminar Notes Page**

**Research Your Question & Viewpoint** *(4 minimum)*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

**Presentation Points of Emphasis** *(2 minimum)*

1.

2.

3.

4.

**Reliable Sources / References (MLA format)**

1.

2.

3.

4.

Seminar 🡪 Imagine a class discussion/debate. Write at least ONE piece of evidence to support the activist’s point of view, and ONE to support the skeptics point of view.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Activist’s Points | Skeptic’s Points |
| How are predictions on future climate changes made, and are these predictions reliable? What are some indicators of climate change? Is climate change different from the past ages? |  |  |
| Should such a small temperature change draw such attention and concern? What economic impacts issue from global climate change? Who does climate change impact? |  |  |
| Have extreme weather events, like hurricanes and storms, occurred more frequently in the past 130 years? What do extreme weather events or patterns tell us about climate change? What are the roles of nature and human activity in relation to climate change? |  |  |
| Should the government intervene and place regulations, restrictions, policies, etc. to address climate change? What are some interventions that are already established? |  |  |
| Will Climate change have long term impact? How will this issue impact your children and children’s children? What steps should we be taking to address this issue? |  |  |
| As a “hotbed” issue, is Global Warming politically driven, scientifically driven, both or neither? Should it be |  |  |

**Climate Change Summary**

* *Following the Socratic Seminar write a short persuasive essay (2-3 paragraphs) giving your personal stance on climate change.*
* *You must take a pro (for) or con (against) stance, and support it with data from the seminar.*