

## Lesson Guide

<b>Time</b>	20–50 minutes (one class period)
<b>Classroom Setup</b>	Circle
<b>Materials</b>	ThinkCERCA text, student handout, paper and pencil
<b>Management Tips</b>	<p>Your discussion question should be thought-provoking and should support multiple legitimate answers while remaining connected to the text(s) students just read.</p> <p>Discussion duration depends on the age of the students and on their—and your—level of experience with such discussions.</p> <p>Stick to facilitating; avoid evaluating or interpreting students' ideas.</p> <p>Make sure students have read the text prior to the discussion.</p>
<b>Open Ended Questions</b>	<p>Ask non-leading questions that invite students to fully understand and articulate their ideas.</p> <p>Can you say more about what you mean? Can you tell us more about your idea?</p> <p>Where does the text support your claim? How does that part connect to your claim?</p> <p>What do you mean when you say that part of the text is “weird”? Weird how?</p> <p>Who would like to build on what Corinne said? Who saw this part differently from how Dean saw it?</p>
<b>Steps for Strategy</b>	<p><b>Before starting</b> Prepare a big question and some guiding questions based on the text(s) your students are reading. Write these in a notebook along with a few follow-up questions; use this as a “cheat sheet” to help you facilitate smoothly. Leave space to take notes during the discussion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Be seated in a circle along with your students. Ensure everyone, including you, has the text and note-taking supplies.</li><li>2 Review the Socratic Discussion guidelines (on the student handout).</li><li>3 Reread the text together (if it is longer, students should simply take a minute or two to review their annotations).</li><li>4 Begin discussion by asking your big question.</li><li>5 Ask all students to support their claim with evidence. Follow up on many different kinds of ideas. Even the most answer-ready students must get practice locating and articulating support and connections—and sometimes the unexpected answers are the best!</li><li>6 Listen carefully and patiently. If you don't understand what the student is saying or how it is relevant to the question, ask questions soliciting more detail or explanation.</li><li>7 Remind students to take notes; pace the discussion so that they can do so. Keep track of who speaks and what is said in your notebook. When you listen and take notes, you are modeling for your students to do the same.</li></ol>

---

Lesson Guide

---

**Steps for Strategy**

- 8 If you feel discussion faltering or students getting off track, use your guiding questions, and/or invite students to respond to and build on one another's ideas.
- 9 When it is time to wrap up, give students a few minutes to write down their thoughts about the big question and the discussion.

---

**Variations**

For groups larger than twelve, create an inner and an outer circle. Outer-circle students take notes on the discussion. Ask them after discussion to evaluate or provide insight on specific elements of the discussion. For the next discussion, the groups switch places.

Help reluctant speakers participate: tell them you are going to call on them after the next person and offer low-risk participation options such as naming someone they heard speak that they agree with.

Help confident speakers listen: challenge them to only comment on something another student has said. Help them slow down: use follow-up questions to get them to explain their conclusions.

Have students use their notes as the basis for a written assignment.