

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Guidelines for Developing Juicy Discussion Questions**

Discussions in my previous classes have improved their ability to have deep, sustained discussions by first improving their questioning skills. Please use these steps as guidelines for constructing discussion questions worthy of an excellent discussion.

### **Step One: Use the text – open the book!**

Strong discussion questions are anchored to a specific event, scene and/or quote from a text. You should start your discussion questions by pointing your group members of a specific piece of evidence.

Possible sentence starters:

- “On page \_\_\_\_\_, I was interested in the scene where \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “On page \_\_\_\_\_, I noticed the quote \_\_\_\_\_”

### **Step Two: Go beyond comprehension—go deep!**

While it may make sense to include some questions that help clarify the plot or vocabulary, these questions are not good at helping your group maintain sustained discussion. Instead, keep notes on your clarification questions separately and use discussion questions as an opportunity to delve deeper into the text. You can do this by making sure your question is open ended.

Strong discussion questions are never “yes/no” questions. Instead, they encourage depth of thought from the members of your group. Here are some examples:

- What patterns are you noticing from this scene/quote?
- What can we notice about the character(s) internal struggle(s)?
- How is the character/s changing?
- How is a relationship changing?
- How is the conflict changing?
- What inferences can we make about this scene/quote?
- Who or what is influencing the character(s) in this scene/quote?

## **Step Three: Include the Habits of Mind!**

Strong discussion questions incorporate at least one habit of mind in a thoughtful manner. Please underline the H.O.M. in your question or write the HOM you used in parentheses after your question, so that it's easily apparent when grading. Here are some examples:

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### **Evidence:**

- Is there any other evidence (quotes/scenes) that can back up your opinion?
- This quote/scene proves what?
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### **Significance:**

- What is the long-term effect of this problem?
- How does this scene/quote affect the character(s)?
- Is there something more important that we should be considering? If we take a step back, what new theories can we make about the story/character/conflict?
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### **Alternatives:**

- What new strategies could the character(s) try?
- What would you do in that scene?
- What other options do the characters have?
- What are the consequences?
- Can anyone help the character(s) make a wiser decision?
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### **Connections:**

- Does this remind you of anything we have studied or seen before?
- Have you experienced a similar problem before?
- Has someone you know dealt with this problem before?
- Does this seem to be part of a pattern?
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### **Points of View:**

- Whose point of view are we hearing?
- Whose point of view is left out?
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## Try open-ended discussion questions!

1. "On page \_\_\_\_, in cell/s\_\_\_\_\_, I noticed the scene/quote/image where

\_\_\_\_\_.

(Ask a follow up question that asks your peers to examine this part of the text deeply, looking at character's motivations, hidden meaning, larger issues etc.)-

2.

3.

4.

## Try a Text-Self-Text question!

Start with something interesting in the text. Connect it to your personal experience. Then look back at that part of the text.

1. "On page \_\_\_\_, in cell/s\_\_\_\_\_, I noticed the scene/quote/image where \_\_\_\_\_.

How has your experience with \_\_\_\_\_ affected how you see this situation? (Then add a follow up question **about the text**)

2.