

## The Five Guidelines for Shared Inquiry Discussion

These guidelines, observed by Great Books discussion participants of all ages, help create focused and lively conversations. Before beginning discussion, copy and distribute the student version of these guidelines (page 2) and ask students why they think each one is important to observe.

### **1. Listen to or read the selection twice before participating in the discussion.**

If participants have not read the selection, they cannot support their opinions with evidence from the text or respond knowledgeably to other participants' ideas about the selection.

### **2. Discuss only the selection everyone has read.**

This gives everyone an equal chance to contribute, as all participants will be familiar with the discussion topic. By keeping the focus on the selection, the discussion will not drift off on tangents about personal experiences or other references that are not familiar to everyone.

### **3. Support your ideas with evidence from the selection.**

Discussion improves reading comprehension and critical thinking skills when students analyze the selection carefully. The Shared Inquiry method helps students learn to go beyond simple agreement or disagreement as they explain their reasoning and link it to evidence from the text.

### **4. Listen to other participants and respond to them directly.**

Shared Inquiry discussion is about the give-and-take of ideas, a willingness to listen to others and talk to them respectfully. By directing comments and questions to other group members (and not just the leader), participants will find the discussion more spirited and dynamic.

### **5. Expect the leader to only ask questions.**

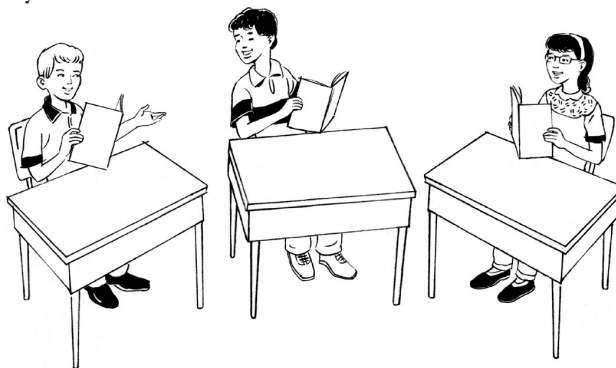
It may feel strange not to tell participants what the selection means; however, readers must learn to develop their own ideas about meaning. Asking questions helps show your students that you, too, are wondering about the selection's meaning, and that you don't have a specific answer that you are waiting to hear.

Following these guidelines in Shared Inquiry discussion will give everyone a chance to share ideas and learn from one another.

- 1 Listen to or read the story twice before the discussion.



- 2 Discuss only the story that everyone has read.



- 3 Support your ideas with evidence from the story.



- 4 Listen to other people's ideas. You may agree or disagree with someone's answer, or ask a question about it.



- 5 Expect the teacher to only ask questions.

