



Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan



Text:

from ***The Republic***, by Plato

Grade/Subject

MS / ELA



Ideas, Values:

Freedom, Good and Evil, Responsibility, Perspective



Pre-Seminar Content



Launch Activity:

Use a speaking and listening mini-task focused on this guiding question:

How does being invisible affect the way people act?

Speaker sentence frame: When someone is (or thinks they are) invisible, I think they act _____ because _____.

Listener response frame: What I hear you saying is _____.
Is there anything else?

Take turns (3-4 min.) practicing sharing aloud with the sentence starters.

Inspectional Read:

Distribute the text and have students take a look at the structure. Ask how many paragraphs there are, and then have them letter the paragraphs A-D. Ask students to anticipate what they imagine it will be like to read this text. Read the text together aloud and encourage students to follow along, looking at the words as they hear them.

Background Information:

Briefly share that Socrates was Plato's teacher. Socrates was dedicated to helping students discover the truth. He taught by asking questions.

Vocabulary:

Ask students to look back at the text and see if there are any words that would be helpful to have a synonym for. Provide word meanings as needed. Note that *Lydia* was a country in ancient times located in the part of the world now known as Turkey.

Analytical Read:

Have students read the text a second time silently to themselves. During the second reading, have students think about the costs and benefits of being invisible.



Pre-Seminar Process

-  *Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.*
-  *Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.*
-  *Have participants set a Personal Goal.*
-  *Agree on a Group Goal.*

Seminar Questions

Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):

- ❖ Reread the first two sentences of this text. If you had to respond “yes” to one of the two questions, which would it be? (round-robin response)

Share (round robin) in this way:

I believe people are good because they want to be.

OR:

I believe people are good because they are afraid to be bad.

- ❖ What in the text is related to how you think about human nature?

Core (Analyze textual details.):

- ❖ What happens to the shepherd?
- ❖ What does the shepherd illustrate about being invisible?
- ❖ What does this story imply about power and responsibility?

Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):

- ❖ How does this story relate to your life? (and particularly in connection with your actions on the internet?)

Post-Seminar Process

- ★ Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal participation goal.
- ★ Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of seminar.
- ★ Note reminders for next seminar.



Post-Seminar Content

Transition to Writing:

Take 2-3 minutes and make a short list of notes about ideas that you heard, read, or thought in relation to our *Launch* question.

Writing Task:

How does being invisible affect the way people act?
After reading and discussing an excerpt from “The Republic,” write a letter to a future child comparing the costs and benefits of being invisible. Cite the text as an example.

(LDC Task#: 23)



Brainstorm:

It may be helpful to students to create a chart or list identifying costs and benefits of being invisible.

Structure the Writing:

Allow a few minutes for all to revisit their notes, the text, and to refine their thinking. Encourage students to outline their writing by planning a beginning, middle and ending of the letter.

First Draft:

Challenge students to get ideas down on paper based on the previous steps. No erasing should be allowed. Lines to show additions/subtractions can be made—and celebrated as part of the revision process! Once they are done (and a possible minimum length has been met), a first draft can be considered complete.

Collaborative Revision:

Once the draft is complete, have participants work in pairs. As they read each other's work aloud, they are looking for three things, and the listener should restate them to the writer:

1. The cost and benefit of being invisible
2. Acknowledging the audience
3. The structure of a letter.

Affirmations are helpful! Writers should then begin a second draft.

Edit:

Once the second draft is complete, have participants work in groups of three or four and take turns reading each other's second drafts slowly and silently, marking for spelling and grammar errors, with a 5-10 mark limit. (Have dictionaries and grammar handbooks available for reference.) Take this opportunity to clarify/reteach any specific strategies you have identified your students may need. Give time for full revisions and editing, resulting in a third and final draft.

Publish:

Publish (either virtually or on paper) the final copies of the resulting letters in a collection to be shared for students new to the class.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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From *The Republic*
By Plato

Are people good because they want to be? Or are they good because they are afraid to be bad? To answer these questions let us pretend we can give both the good and the bad person the freedom and power to do whatever they please. Then in our imaginations we can see what they will do. I think the good person will be no different from the bad person, for he is really as selfish as the bad man. Only fear of the law makes him good. Let me tell you a story about a man who had such freedom.

People say that this man was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia. After a great rainstorm and an earthquake, the ground opened up where he was caring for sheep, and he went into the opening in the earth. The story goes on to say that he saw many wonderful things there, among which was a large bronze model of a horse with little doors on the side. When he looked in, he saw the body of a giant with a gold ring on its finger. He took the ring and left.

When the shepherds held their monthly meeting to report to the king about his flocks, he also attended, wearing the ring. While he was sitting there twisting the ring on his finger, he happened to turn it so that the stone faced his palm. When he did this, the story goes on, he became invisible. Those who sat around him could no longer see him. They spoke about him as if he were not there. He was amazed and twisted his ring once more. When he turned the stone out, he became visible again. He tested this many times, and found that the ring really possessed this power of making him invisible when he wanted. So with the help of this ring, he committed many crimes and took over the kingdom.

Now suppose we have two such rings. Let's give one to a good person and the other to an evil person. It is hard to believe that even a good man would stop himself from stealing and doing all kinds of other bad things, if he knew he would never get caught.

From *Touchstones*, Vol XXX