

Ayn Rand's "We The Living" Socratic Seminar & Essay Assignment

Socratic Seminar Dates:

Essay Due Date:

The assignment:

In reading *We the Living* you may find that many of the fictional events in the story are eerily reminiscent of things that have happened or are happening right now. You are therefore charged with the task of **becoming an expert** and participating in a Socratic seminar to discuss one of two questions. When the Socratic is concluded, you will have to write an essay summarizing how the book is reflected in history, those areas of today's society which are reflected in the book, and the possibility of the future being the same or different from the issues explored in the book and discussed during the Socratic seminar. You will be graded on [relative] legitimacy of information, detail, analytical thought, and quality of the essay's structure in addition to your participation in the seminar. For comparisons you may pick any current events that are, in fact, **current**—as long as you can support your essay with evidence from the book. Overall point values for the Socratic and the essay are yet to be determined.

The Socratic seminar questions are as follows:

1. What were the advantages or disadvantages of the new social structure as described by Ayn Rand. Where did it succeed or fail and how did it affect the citizens of Russia?
2. Where do we see parallels to today's society? Will we or will we not adopt similar political and social structures? Why or why not?

The essay rubric for the assignment follows...

Ayn Rand's "We the Living" Essay Rubric

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	5 - Above Standards	4 - Meets Standards	3 - Approaching Standards	1/0 - Below Standards	Score
Focus or Thesis Statement	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.	

Accuracy	All supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately and it is clear that in-depth research has been done. Sources may be cited.	Almost all supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately and some research has been done.	Most supportive facts and statistics are reported accurately with minimal research having been done.	Most supportive facts and statistics were inaccurately reported and it is clear that little or no research has been done.	
Evidence and Examples	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show why each event is important to society.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show why at least two of the events are important to society.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how one of the events is important to society.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained and fail to show the importance of the events to society.	
Connection to Text	The connection between the current events and the text is clear and concise. The author offers in-depth analysis of the connection between the two and demonstrates a detailed understanding of the book.	Some connections between the current events and the text are shown. The author offers some analysis and it is clear that they have a decent understanding of the text.	Connections between the current events and the text are tenuous or not well explained. The author's comprehension of the book is rudimentary at best, however some effort was made.	No effort was made to connect the current events to the events in the text, and the author offers no understanding of the book.	
Closing paragraph	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the Thesis begins the closing paragraph. The author has left us with something to think about.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.	
Essay Structure and Conventions	The essay is well-written and laid out clearly. The author uses language to great effect and spelling and grammar errors are nonexistent.	The essay is clear and easy to understand, but with a few errors.	The essay lacks a clear focus, and spelling and grammar errors inhibit the reader's understanding.	The essay is poorly written and constructed. It is difficult to read because of many errors.	