

Thinking  
strategies  
to enhance skills  
of analysis,  
creativity,  
and problem  
solving.

## *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening*

**Lesson Description:** Students participate in an abbreviated version of Socratic Seminar to elicit critical and creative thinking skills in poetry.

**Pre-assessment/Prior Knowledge:**

- Students have indicated a basic understanding of the Decisions & Outcomes strategy through the introductory lesson (p. 44).

**SOL/POS Objective:**

**Eng. 3.1**

The student will use effective communication skills in group activities.

- d) Listen attentively by making eye contact, facing the speaker, asking questions, and summarizing what is said.
- e) Ask and respond to questions from teachers and other group members.
- f) Explain what has been learned.

**Eng. 3.3**

Building Vocabulary

**Eng. 3.5**

Appreciating Literature

**Instructional Strategy:**

*Generating and Testing Hypothesis*- Students use their Habits of Mind in a brief Socratic Seminar to explore poetry.

**Materials:**

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* (p. 137)

**Enduring Understanding:**

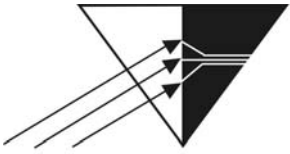
- Events are affected by choices.
- Choices have short and long term effects.
- Life is a series of decisions and outcomes.
- Making decisions requires choosing from alternatives.

**Introduction/Essential Questions:**

- How have the decisions you've made shaped your life?
- How have the decisions people in history made shape outcomes?
- How do the Habits of Mind affect the decisions you make?

**Teach and Explore Strategy:**

- Distribute and read *Stopping By the Woods on a Snowy Evening* (p. 137).
- Students write what they think of the poem and relate connections to other poems or stories they have read and/or experiences that they have had.



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- Students prepare for abbreviated Socratic Seminar by writing three open-ended questions about the poem. Support students in learning to write good open-ended questions. Students also identify vocabulary words that were new to them or were used in interesting ways.
- Encourage 5-6 students volunteer to share their responses.
- Students share vocabulary words: they share their definitions and why they chose the word.
- Students move to sit in a circle. During the seminar, students address each other by their surnames, prefacing a response with “Ms.” or “Mr.” as they share and debate different viewpoints, support their opinions with clear reasoning and evidence, consider alternative views, and identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- If this is one of the first Socratic Seminars for the class, the teacher leads the discussion. If the class is experienced in seminars, the teacher selects a student leader. The leader selects student-generated questions and asks them to the class.
- As the leader calls on participants, he or she checks off names of those who respond, making an effort to give everyone an equal chance to be heard. Participants are given checks if they share an insight and a star if they cite evidence from the text to support thinking.
- The leader guides the discussion, though participants are encouraged to respond to each other. As the discussion of each question tapers off, the leader may pose a new question. Quality of conversation and not quantity of questions posed is the goal – the leader may or may not get through all of the questions.
- Students compose original poems in response to the brief Socratic Seminar.

**Assessment Evidence:**

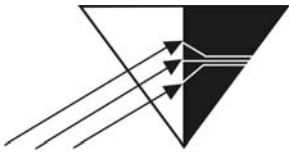
- Individual statements.
- Group statement(s).
- Teacher observations.
- Completed products and sharing.
- Student discussions.

**Metacognition:**

- Which Habits of Mind are most important to you, at this time? Why?
- In reading other’s statements, what have you learned about yourself?

**Extensions:**

- Create a class PowerPoint presentation of the cooperative/collaborative groups’ poems and their corresponding questions.



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***Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening***

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.  
And miles to go before I sleep.