**Literature and Composition Socratic Seminar Discussion – Going against Society in the Context of Racism**

**Prepare written responses to the questions below. Use specific examples rather than general statements.**

**For example, this is not specific:**

* *Huck learns to overcome what society has taught him about race by learning lessons from other characters.*

. . . but this is plenty specific and demonstrates much deeper analysis:

* *Huck grew up in Missouri, a slave state. It was common for him and the people around him to view slaves as property rather than people. Even the widow, known for her strong Christian beliefs, sees no problem with treating blacks as property and separating them from family members, so of course Huck comes to accept society’s teachings and view blacks, including Jim, in the same light. However, as Huck is young and open to adventure, he is able to accept Jim as a travel companion. As the two travel together, Huck comes to see Jim as a person rather than a piece of property. For example, when Jim \_\_\_\_\_\_, Huck learns \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And when Jim \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Huck learns \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Coming to the conclusion that Jim is as human as anyone else, Huck \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ …. Etc.*

**Print your written responses and bring them with you to class on May 1. You will not be allowed to use a computer or any other electronic device during the Socratic Seminar. You will not be allowed to**

1. In your book, where do racist ideas and beliefs seem to come from? In today’s society, where do you think racist ideas and beliefs come from? What makes you believe this?
2. Which character(s) stand up against society by advocating for minority groups?
   1. What risks do they face in doing so?
   2. Why, despite these risks, do they continue make a stand by going against the grain of society?
   3. What factors seem to have shaped the characters’ views about race?
   4. What qualities do these characters possess that motivate them to advocate for those of a different race?
3. Which characters are outwardly racist? What factors seem to have shaped the characters’ views about race?
4. If one character from your book was to be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, which character would it be? Why do you believe this character would be fitting for a Nobel Peace Prize? How might others disagree (counterargument), and how would you respond to them in defense of your choice?
5. How is racism still an issue/problem in today’s world? Provide specific examples from current events.
6. What commonalities exist between the issues of racism experienced in your book and the issues of racism in today’s society?
7. What would the characters in your book say about today’s society? Why?
8. Is there something in American society that needs to change for the characters in novels (and people in real life) to achieve their true equality? If so, what?

**Assessment Rubric**

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| Analysis of Text  (written responses)  /50 | * Responses are probing, thought provoking and informed by the readings and class/group discussions * Responses demonstrate a deep analysis of the text rather than a simple summary * Integrated evidence from the readings or past experience in supporting points; cites textual evidence when supporting views * Responses display excellent understanding of the required readings and underlying themes & concepts * Responses display active listening during discussion * Responses show evidence of critical thinking – application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation |
| Analysis of Text  (verbal participation in discussion)  /50 | * Contributions are probing, thought provoking and informed by the reading and class/group discussions * Contributions demonstrate a deep analysis of the text rather than a simple summary * Provides comments and asks questions that actively stimulate and sustain further discussion by building on peers' responses * Exhibits strong listening skills evidenced by specific reference to what others say and feedback which builds on the verbal contributions of others * Consistently helps clarify or synthesize other class members' ideas * If disagreeing with other class members' ideas, the participant states his or her disagreement or objections clearly, yet politely; offers constructive response to peers * Moves discussion forward; doesn’t just state response and move on or tune out * New ideas presented must be connected to previous comments; no tangential conversations * Finds and makes connections between own points and other classmates’ ideas |

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