
TECHNOLOGY ETHICS DISCUSSION CARDS

Grades 7-12 | 50 Scenario-Based Dilemmas

Privacy * AI * Social Media * Surveillance * Automation

SOCRATIC SEMINAR READY

Includes Facilitation Guide, Reflection Journals, & Rubric

Socratic Seminar Facilitation Guide

What is a Socratic Seminar?

A Socratic Seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others.

How to Use These Cards

1. **Preparation:** Distribute one card to each student (or small group). Give them 5-10 minutes to read the scenario and formulate their stance based on their assigned 'Stakeholder Perspective'.
2. **The Inner Circle:** Have half the class sit in an inner circle. This group will discuss the first dilemma. The outer circle observes.
3. **The Discussion:** Act as a neutral facilitator. Ask open-ended questions: 'How does the Creator's perspective conflict with the Regulator's?' or 'What universal right is being violated here?'
4. **Switch:** After 10-15 minutes, swap the inner and outer circles and present a new dilemma.

Ground Rules for Students

- Talk to each other, not just to the teacher. - Use evidence from the scenario to support your claims. - It is okay to disagree, but do so respectfully by attacking the idea, not the person. - Ask for clarification if you are confused. - Do not raise hands; wait for a pause and enter the conversation politely.

50 Discussion Cards

Cut these cards out for small group discussions, or display them on the board for whole-class seminars.

CARD 1

CATEGORY: PRIVACY

AI Art Generation

Scenario: An AI art generator creates stunning images in seconds. However, it was trained by scraping millions of copyrighted images from online artists without their permission, consent, or compensation.

Your Perspective: The User

The User: You want to use the AI to create a book cover. Is it ethical to use art generated from stolen work?

CARD 2

CATEGORY: PRIVACY

AI Art Generation

Scenario: An AI art generator creates stunning images in seconds. However, it was trained by scraping millions of copyrighted images from online artists without their permission, consent, or compensation.

Your Perspective: The Creator

The Creator: You are a digital artist whose style was copied. How do you protect your livelihood when your 'data' can be stolen?

CARD 3

CATEGORY: PRIVACY

AI Art Generation

Scenario: An AI art generator creates stunning images in seconds. However, it was trained by scraping millions of copyrighted images from online artists without their permission, consent, or compensation.

Your Perspective: The Regulator

The Regulator: Should the government require AI companies to license training data, potentially killing open-source innovation?

CARD 4

CATEGORY: PRIVACY

AI Art Generation

Scenario: An AI art generator creates stunning images in seconds. However, it was trained by scraping millions of copyrighted images from online artists without their permission, consent, or compensation.

Your Perspective: The Ethicist

The Ethicist: Does the transformation of data into a new model constitute 'fair use', or is it just high-tech plagiarism?

CARD 5

CATEGORY: PRIVACY

AI Art Generation

Scenario: An AI art generator creates stunning images in seconds. However, it was trained by scraping millions of copyrighted images from online artists without their permission, consent, or compensation.

Your Perspective: The Investor

The Investor: You fund the AI startup. If you force them to pay for data, you lose money. Do profits outweigh artists' rights?

CARD 6

CATEGORY: SURVEILLANCE

School Surveillance

Scenario: A school district installs monitoring software on all student-issued laptops. It tracks keystrokes, scans emails, and flags keywords related to self-harm or violence, but also captures private diary entries and chats.

Your Perspective: The User

The User: You are a student who feels your privacy is violated in your own home. Do you have a right to digital privacy on a school device?

CARD 7

CATEGORY: SURVEILLANCE

School Surveillance

Scenario: A school district installs monitoring software on all student-issued laptops. It tracks keystrokes, scans emails, and flags keywords related to self-harm or violence, but also captures private diary entries and chats.

Your Perspective: The Creator

The Creator: You built the software to prevent school shootings. How do you balance safety with privacy?

CARD 8

CATEGORY: SURVEILLANCE

School Surveillance

Scenario: A school district installs monitoring software on all student-issued laptops. It tracks keystrokes, scans emails, and flags keywords related to self-harm or violence, but also captures private diary entries and chats.

Your Perspective: The Regulator

The Regulator: What legal boundaries should exist for schools monitoring minors versus the police monitoring citizens?

CARD 49

CATEGORY: AI & AUTOMATION

Automated Grading & Bias

Scenario: A university adopts an AI system to grade all essays. The AI penalizes students who use non-standard English dialects or unconventional essay structures, systematically lowering the scores of marginalized students.

Your Perspective: The Ethicist

The Ethicist: Does efficiency (saving teachers time) justify systemic discrimination, even if unintentional?

CARD 50

CATEGORY: AI & AUTOMATION

Automated Grading & Bias

Scenario: A university adopts an AI system to grade all essays. The AI penalizes students who use non-standard English dialects or unconventional essay structures, systematically lowering the scores of marginalized students.

Your Perspective: The Investor

The Investor: The university contract is massive. Recalling the product for bias retraining will cost millions and damage the brand. What is the move?

Reflection Journal Prompt Set

Name: _____ Date: _____

After participating in the Socratic Seminar, choose ONE prompt to reflect on deeply.

Prompt 1: Which stakeholder perspective (User, Creator, Regulator, Ethicist, Investor) do you naturally align with the most? Why do you think that is? How did listening to the other perspectives challenge your own view?

Prompt 2: Choose a dilemma discussed today. If you were the ultimate decision-maker with the power to create one law or rule regarding this technology, what would it be? Explain the trade-offs of your law.

Prompt 3: Describe a time when you experienced an ethical conflict with technology in your own life (e.g., privacy, social media, AI). How did you resolve it? Would you resolve it differently now?

Socratic Seminar Assessment Rubric

Preparation	Deeply understands the scenario; brings extensive notes and evidence to support claims.	Understands the scenario; brings basic notes to the discussion.	Minimally prepared; relies on general opinions rather than scenario evidence.	Not prepared; has not read the scenario.
Participation	Actively engages; speaks multiple times; invites others into the conversation.	Engages; speaks a few times with relevant points.	Speaks once or twice, or speaks but goes off-topic.	Does not speak during the seminar.
Active Listening	Builds directly on others' comments ('I agree with X, and add...'); asks clarifying questions.	Listens and responds to others, but may simply state own point without connecting.	Appears distracted; occasionally acknowledges others' points.	Ignores others; talks over peers or tunes out.
Critical Thinking	Considers multiple stakeholder perspectives; identifies paradoxes and long-term consequences.	Considers at least one other perspective; identifies basic consequences.	Sticks to one perspective only; struggles to see gray areas.	Oversimplifies the issue to black/white or right/wrong.