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## SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET: ASKING, INTERPRETING AND EVALUATING QUESTIONS

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**Reporter's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(reports the group's work to the class)*

**Writer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(does the writing on this worksheet)*

**Organizer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(watches the time; keeps the group on task)*

**Proofreader's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(double-checks the writer's work for grammar, style, clarity, and readability.)*

**Evaluator's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(double-checks the group's work before reporting to make sure all parts of the question have been answered, appropriate support has been given for the group's answer, etc.)*

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### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Everyone in the group must have at least one job.
- Mix it up. Try to avoid having the same job all the time. The instructor reserves the right to reassign jobs if the same people do the same jobs in group work over and over again.
- Being an effective member of your group contributes to your individual participation evaluation for the day.

### IF YOUR GROUP HAS FEWER THAN FIVE MEMBERS

- The roles may be combined. For example, in a group of three, one person might do the work of the Proofreader and the Evaluator, and another the work of the Organizer and the Writer. There are no restrictions regarding which roles may be combined when a group has less than five members.
- Any person doing more than one job need not write their name twice. Simply write initials in the blank for the second job.

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**Purposes:** The main purpose of this exercise is to practice professional collaboration skills, organization, and critical thinking in a group setting. This assignment particularly focuses on the critical thinking skills of:

- **analyzing** your own work,
- **forming good information-seeking questions,**
- **evaluating questions,**
- **interpreting** the informational needs of others, and
- **strategizing** to meet those needs.

A second purpose of this exercise is to build on the work you did to prepare for class, correcting any errors or misconceptions you might have had, and clarifying key terms and concepts in our material. You are encouraged to take notes directly on your individual paper for this purpose!

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**Main Instructions:** This assignment has two parts. Do them in order according to the instructions given for each.

#### PART 1: FORMING A GOOD QUESTION

In your group, compare your reading questions from the day and select the one or two that gave you the most trouble. Do the following:

1. List any problematic terms. Specify whether the terms are vague (have an unclear range of application), equivocal (have more than one possible meaning given the context of the reading), or are confusing for another reason (be as specific as possible about what that reason is).
2. Identify, by page number and paragraph (e.g. “the second paragraph on page 99”) any specific passages of text where you find that you aren't following the author's reasoning.
3. Based on the terms you need clarified and the passages you find problematic, formulate a question that is clear, precise, well-written, and relevant to the specific text we are studying. Write this question in the space provided at the top of the next page.
4. When the time comes, tear the page off and trade questions with another group. Once you have their question, follow the instructions provided to complete the exercise.

WRITE YOUR GROUP'S QUESTION HERE:

*Do NOT complete the evaluation for your own question!*

**PART 2: EVALUATION**

1. Rate the question using the following criteria. A "5" is the best score possible. A zero, "0", is the lowest.

**Clarity**

(Is the question free from terms or phrases that are vague, ambiguous, or in need of clarification?)

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
Yes <-----> No

**Precision**

(Can you tell exactly what information this group needs?)

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
Yes <-----> No

**Writing**

(Is this question written in clear, correct English appropriate to an academic setting?)

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
Yes <-----> No

**Relevance**

(Is this question directly relevant to the specific text we are studying?)

5                      4                      3                      2                      1  
Yes <-----> No

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PART 2, continued

2. **Support** the ratings you gave this question with reasons and evidence..

3. Give specific, **constructive feedback** that would make this question better.

4. **Answer** the question if you can. If you cannot, then suggest a specific **strategy** that might be useful in finding the answer this question.

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*When you are done, return this page to the group who wrote the question.*