Silent Discussion

A silent discussion is similar to a message board or a group chat. In this assignment you will be divided into small groups and each of you will have a different prompt based on the novel Beautiful Music For Ugly Children. Each person will start their discussion with a statement based on his/her prompt. You will exchange your discussion with another member of your group and respond on his/her prompt/topic. Use the story as a reference to back up any points you make, **include quotes from the story to strengthen your agruments**, and feel free to ask a question as part of your response. After you have made a comment, trade papers with another member of your group, read the comments and write another response. It is ok to comment on a page more than once. Your goal is to keep these discussions going and build on them so try to phrase your responses to elicit a response. Avoid closed statements like just saying that you agree with the previous statement, or asking yes/no questions. Put your name or initial next to each “post” you write to make things easier to follow.

Silent Discussion Follow Up Questions.

1. Looking over your personal discussion prompt, how well do you feel that it went. Did the discussion go like you thought it would, or did the conversation go into areas you were not expecting? Do you feel that it was a thorough discussion of your topic?
2. You were discussing multiple topics at once. Is there a point that you made, on any discussion that you are proud of? Something that you feel enhanced a discussion particularly?
3. Is there a comment that you read that struck you as insightful and helped look at the story in a different way? Who wrote it, and on what page it was on?
4. Is there a comment you did not make that you wish you had time to if that topic had gotten back to you? What would you say, and where would you put it?

Silent Discussion: Teacher’s Resource Guide

The Silent Discussion is designed to get the students to engage in conversations about the novel and its themes. The reason that this activity works well is that it allows all students to participate in a discussion, the more vocal students who like to talk in class through the quiet ones who are not as comfortable vocalizing their opinions all have the same opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas about a text.

To facilitate this activity the teacher should divide the class into small groups. (five students per group seems to work best). Create a different discussion prompt for each student in the group, so each group has five different discussion topics. The questions can be the same for each group so you do not have to create a unique prompt for every student, and having identical prompts can help if you want to engage the class in a larger discussion when the activity is complete.

Once in the groups the students exchange papers and write their responses to the previous responses written by their classmates. To get the activity off to a quick start I passed out the prompts in the class before and had the students show up ready to exchange papers rather than take time to write an initial response. The students then continue exchanging papers with the goal of having each student make at least one comment on each prompt, in effect creating a discussion.

When there is 10-12 minutes lift in class, you tell the students to finish up the comment that they are working on and then pass out the reflection sheet and have them fill that out also. It depends on how much time you have in your class, if you want to divide this part into the next class, or assign the reflection as homework. In my 45 minute class the students had no problem completing both parts, but every class is different.

Below is a sample writing prompt template that you can use for your discussions. Feel free to use the discussion questions from the website, or make up your own to fit the focus you want. I am also including a sample grading rubric that you can use or modify to fit your needs.

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| **Beautiful Music: Silent Discussion**Teacher Name: Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  |

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| CATEGORY  | **4**  | **3**  | **2**  | **1/0**  |
| **involvement in discussions**  |  |  | Student contributed to all topics in his/her discussion group.  | Student contributed to 4 topics in his/her group. 1 point. Students contributed to 3 or less topics in his/her group. 0 points  |
| **contributions**  | Student’s discussion contributions were well thought out and added to the discussions.  |  | Student\'s contributions did not further the discussions. Responses were closed ended, or simply affirmations of other responses.  |  |
| **Reflection**  |  | Student completed reflection sheet fully with well thought out answers.  | Students did not complete the reflection sheet, or the answers were superficial and not reflective.  |  |
| **preparation**  |  |  | Student had initial response ready to start activity at beginning of class  | Student did not have initial response ready at the start of class. 1 point. Students did not bring initial response to class. 0 points.  |
| **links to text**  | Student included at least 2 quotes from the text to reinforce/further his/her discussions.  |  | Students include 1 quote/reference to the text to further his/her discussions.  | Student did not include any quotes from the text to further his/her discussions  |

Total points earned out of 15 \_ \_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name:

Silent Discussion Prompt 1

Music

**How do you think music keeps the novel moving?** Why do you think the author chose to incorporate so much music into this novel? Does the music keep you engaged or does it distract you?