

Socratic Seminar: *No Presents Without Representation!*

Topic: Christmas Taxes at the North Pole

What Is a Socratic Seminar? A Socratic Seminar is a guided discussion where students seek truth through questions, careful listening, and thoughtful reasoning. The goal is not to “win,” but to understand ideas deeply.

The Scenario:

Santa Claus and the North Pole Parliament have announced new taxes on Christmas presents to help pay for:

- Sleigh repairs, Elf wages, Reindeer care, North Pole security

Students who receive the presents:

- Were not consulted
- Have no representatives at the North Pole
- Are expected to accept the taxes anyway

Central Question: Are Santa’s Christmas taxes just and fair? Why or why not?

Before the seminar:

- Review your notes and materials on colonial taxation.
- Write out two ideas or arguments you may share.
- Be ready to connect the Christmas scenario to real history.

Seminar Rules

During the seminar:

- Speak respectfully and listen attentively.
- Do not interrupt.
- Refer to others by name when responding.
- Support your ideas with reasons, not just opinions.
- It is acceptable to change your mind.

You will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Preparation for the activity
- Use of clear reasoning
- Making historical connections
- Consistent participation
- Respectful Listening