

Student's Name

Mrs. Horowitz

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### Shared Inquiry

I found the shared inquiry discussions to be beneficial in that the whole class was given an opportunity to share their ideas and to build on each other's opinions in order to reach new conclusions regarding *A Tale of Two Cities*. As a speaker, I found it relatively easy to communicate my thoughts to the circle, often supporting or discrediting the theses of others rather than randomly expressing my own ideas. This aided my overall understanding of the novel because it helped to incorporate what had already been said into my own opinions. Although writing down thoughts ahead of time was a helpful reference, I found it more beneficial to write down only a few bullet points, then add on to what I had based on my reactions to what was shared by others. This helped me to stay focused on the conversation at hand. This was especially true of question four, which was in reference to the sacrificial nature of Sydney Carton. Though some of my classmates felt that Carton's sacrifice was for his personal benefit, I strongly disagreed. I didn't feel the need to access the quote which came to mind when I read this question, choosing instead to paraphrase. I now wish I had not done this as what I mentioned to the circle greatly differentiates from the actual quote. The real sentence, said by Carton, can be found on page 448 and says, "It is best," he said, finally resolved, "that these people should know there is such a man as I here." I interpreted this to mean that the Carton recognized the necessity of his sacrifice for Lucie and was acknowledging that she and her family might have a

better life because of him. However, one may interpret the quote to be in reference to Carton's general presence in Saint Antoine, in which case my argument had no substance.

The listening portion of the shared inquiry was much more difficult than the speaking because I often found myself wanting to join into the conversation, which was prohibited. I handled this by writing down my thoughts among the notes I was taking of the rest of the conversation. This was especially applicable to question nine, which questioned whether the novel was about a revolution or a rape. While many of my classmates argued that the rape was in direct relation to the revolution, I disagreed. While the novel itself is, in my opinion, about a rape, the revolution is not. True, Madame Defarge's involvement in the revolution is because of her dark past and the rape of her sister, but one must remember that the French Revolution was not started by Madame Defarge. The revolution was caused by a number of factors, of which Madame Defarge is not a direct part. However, all aspects of the novel relate back to the fates of Madame Defarge's sister and brother and her relation to the family Evremonde, therefore making the book about a rape. I did observe a few awkward moments of silence in the other group's conversation as well as times when everyone seemed to be speaking at once. Despite this, I felt that the listening portion of the shared inquiry was beneficial because I was able to sit and take in what others had to share rather than focusing on my own ideas and waiting for my turn to speak. This enhanced my understanding of the novel in that I was able to observe my classmates rather than worry about myself, forcing me to listen to and contemplate their ideas.