



University Center for Teaching and Learning

Designing Discussion Questions using Bloom's Taxonomy: Examples*

To challenge your class to address a topic at a higher level of abstraction, use questions that are developmental in nature with multiple levels of thinking. These types of questions promote critical thinking and help students to work collaboratively. Bloom's Taxonomy, described below, presents five levels of questioning from lowest to highest levels of abstraction; however, sequential use of these levels is not a requisite. For example, to elicit students' ideas, the discussion may begin with questions of evaluation and progress to alternative levels of questions depending on the issues and ideas that emerge. As you prepare to lead discussions, you may want to have a repertoire of questions that use the five levels of thinking that follow:

1. **Knowledge**, identification, and recall. Does the student **know** the information?

Sample questions:

What did the policy propose?

Who supported the policy?

When was the bill passed?

What events influenced the passage of the bill?

Identify ... Define ... List ...Name...Label...State...Identify...Match...Recognize...Recall...

2. Understanding and comprehension. Does the student understand?

Sample questions:

In your own words define aging-in-place.

Summarize why older adults prefer to live in their own homes.

What does it mean ...?

Contrast ... How do you know ...? Interpret...Paraphrase... Explain...Restate...Infer

3. **Application**. Can the student use previously learned information in a new situation?

Sample questions:

Describe how a prospective payment plan would work in this case.

How might nursing homes been viewed in the 1800s?

Where else might this apply?

Explain how one might use ...

Use...

Compute...demonstrate...apply...construct...Hypothesize...Demonstrate...Sequence...Organize...Predict

4. Analysis and Synthesis. Can the student dissect and reassemble the idea or issue? Can the student view the issue from a different perspective? Can the student examine the available facts and offer alternative interpretations and solutions?

Sample questions:

What caused the aging political lobby to respond this way?

Why might Medicaid encourage the use of skilled nursing?

How could the incentives be realigned to support in-home care?

What are the important elements to each party's interest?

How are these programs interrelated?

Compare...Contrast...Diagram...Map...Adapt...Compile...Design...Categorize...Reconstruct...Integrate...

5. Evaluation. Can the student assess, form opinions, establish appropriate standards and criteria, evaluate ethical dilemmas, and critically examine an issue or idea?

Sample questions:

Which method, procedure, or solution is better?

Can you evaluate this idea in terms of ...?

Which approach would you choose? Why?

Judge... select... rate

...critique...justify...recommend...persuade...support...assess...prioritize...verify

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More Examples of Questions for Facilitating Class Discussions

The following questions represent diverse levels of thinking. Consider how you can adapt some to align with your learning objectives. (These are not organized by level of learning.)

- What hypothesis would you make?
- How would you solve the problem?
- What inference would you make?
- What would happen if ____?
- What is the most significant part of ____?
- How would you go about finding ____?
- What are the two main factors influencing ____?
- What were the events that led to ____?
- What are two signs of ____?
- What are the criteria for ____?
- What is the process for ____?
- Which of the following are true?
- How effective was the method of research in ____?
- How would you collect better data?
- What possibilities are there for further investigation?
- How did this case or problem contribute to your understanding of ____?

Categories of questions:

- **Factual** (What is the definition of ____? What is the name of ____? Who... what... when... where...?)
- **Exploratory** (“What research evidence supports the theory of...”)
- **Linking/Extension** (“How does ____ relate to ____?” Is there a connection between what you’ve just said and what Jane said a minute ago? How does your observation [relate to...challenge or support...add to...?”])
- **Hypothetical** (What might have happened if ____”
- **Cause/Effect** “What effect might ____ have on ____?”
- **Challenge** (“How else might we account for...?”)
- **Relational** (Compare ____ with ____)

- **Diagnostic** (“Why...”)
- **Action** (“What should we do?”)
- **Combination Questions** (How would you relate your points to those mentioned by Student A or to something else you said? How would you understand X in light of Y?)
- **Priority Questions:** Which issues do you consider most important? Where do you start? How would you rank these?
- **Action Questions:** What would **you** do in Person X's shoes? How?
- **Prediction Questions:** What do you think would happen if we followed Student Z's action plan? Give us a forecast of your expectations. How will he/she react to your thinking?
- **Generalizing and Summarizing Questions:** What inferences can we make from this discussion and case? What generalizations would you make? How would you summarize the three most critical issues that we have discussed? Can you summarize the high points of the discussion thus far?

Probing Questions:

- Probe for more evidence or info—“How do you know that? What data is that claim based on? What does the author say that supports your argument? What evidence would you give to someone who doubts?”
- Probe for clarification (“Are you saying that...?” “Could you give me an example?” “Can you put that another way? What’s a good example of what you are talking about? What do you mean by that? Can you explain the term you just used?”
- Probe assumptions: “What are you assuming here?” “What could we assume instead?” “Is this always the case?” “Why do you think the assumption holds here?”
- Probe reasons, evidence and causes: “What are your reasons for saying that?” “What other information do we need to know?” “Is there good evidence for believing that?” “What do you think the cause is?”
- Probe implications and consequences. “When you say___, are you implying that___?” “If you do that, what will happen?” “How is that connected to the question?” “How does that bear on ___?” “How does that follow?”
- Probe thought processes: “Could you explain further where you’re having difficulties?” “Could you express that point in another way?” “Could you be more specific?” “Have you thought of...?” “What factors make this a difficult problem?” “What would this look like from the point of view of ___?”
- Ask a question with multiple possible answers. Write all options on the board without commenting on the list being produced. Then have the class discuss the options, explaining why some answers are better than others.