



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Asking Questions

- They should be simple and direct so as to elicit, with an economy of time, information and ideas required developing the aim.
- They should be directed to elicit broad answers, not a mere recital of factual information.
- They should be asked in an order that coincides with the development of the aim.
- They should produce discussion (open ended).
- They should stimulate critical thinking.
- They should challenge the pupils.
- They should be adapted to meet the needs of the pupils in the class.

EXAMPLES OF PIVOTAL QUESTIONS

- The temperature was identical on Monday and on Tuesday. How do you account to the fact that we felt warmer on Monday?
- Why should a person who has purchased a car on the installment plan read the contract?
- Explain what determines the effect of a geometric design arrangement?
- Describe the picture that came to your mind when we heard selections from the 'Grand Canyon Suite'?
- How can we determine whether the author was writing seriously or was poking fun at the characters?
- How does the bar graph of "expected population by age groups" help the government of our city?
- On the basis of your experience would you say that the author's description of the life of a sixteen year old is a realistic one? Why?
- How do you explain the character's change from a persecutor of the natives to an active helper of the natives later on in the novel?
- Why, in spite of the advantages of large food stores over small ones, are there so many small shops in your neighborhood?
- Why would Belgium in German hands be a pistol pointed at England?

- Why has the Northwest Ordinance been referred to as our basic colonial policy?
- Why has Japan been called the **England of the Pacific**?

QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE CLASS

To say, "Arnold, why is President Clinton right or wrong in.....?" enables the rest of the class not to feel responsible for the answer. The preferred pattern, therefore, is for the teacher to ask the question. Pause briefly, and then call on either a volunteer or non-volunteer.

LIMIT FACT QUESTIONS IN FAVOR OF THOUGHT QUESTIONS

The number of factual questions can be minimized by including the fact into the question, and to ask for an explanation based upon these facts. This technique eliminates the need for "teeth pulling." Thus, rather than asking, "What is credit?" "What is an installment cost?", the teacher can get to the main point by asking, "Why are credit cards (Master/Visa) said to be helpful?" "Why are credit cards said to be harmful?"

QUESTIONS SHOULD BE SPECIFIC

Including questions that require thought and extended answers (use the words; why, how. summarize.

AVOID ASKING, "ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?"

Students will seldom, if ever, respond to this question. It is better to ask every student to write or, question about the discussion, and then ask individuals to read their questions.