

Asking Challenging Questions

Asking good questions is an effective teaching method and can make your students' learning experience more meaningful. Ask questions of your learners that are engaging, arouse their curiosity about the topic, capture their imagination and challenge them to think critically.

Use the following table as a guide.¹ If a learner has trouble answering a question at the higher levels of the taxonomy, try asking it at a lower level and leading them to a higher level.

When you want your learners to:	Ask them:	Bloom's Taxonomy
Describe, name, list, define, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who, what, when, where, how...? 	1. Knowledge (identification and recall of information)
Report, review, translate, explain, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restate in your own words... Summarize... 	2. Comprehension (organization and selection of facts and ideas)
Apply, demonstrate, use, interpret, solve, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is...an example of...? How is...related to...? Why is...significant? 	3. Application (use of facts, rules and principles)
Analyze, criticize, debate, differentiate, calculate, test, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the parts or features of...? Classify ... according to... Outline / diagram... How does...compare / contrast with...? What evidence can you list for...? 	4. Analysis (separation of a whole into component parts)
Arrange, compose, formulate, manage, plan, prepare, integrate, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would you predict / infer from...? What ideas can you add to...? How would you create / design a new...? What might happen if you combined...? What solutions would you suggest for...? 	5. Synthesis (combination of ideas to form a new whole)
Assess, justify, conclude, value, defend, choose, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you agree...? What do you think about...? What is the most important...? Place the following in order of priority... How would you decide about...? What criteria would you use to assess...? 	6. Evaluation (development of opinions, judgments, or decisions)

¹ Adapted from: TRACE: Teaching Resources and Continuing Education
University of Waterloo <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infotrac/askquest.html>