

# The Essential Question

Student-Developed Questions Using the Newspaper



August Rodin, The Thinker, From RodinInternational.com

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Published by: Newspaper in Education Institute

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## Introduction

**Lesson Activities with Graphic Organizers are in Alphabetic Order.**

**3, 2, 1 QUESTION FORMAT:** In this activity students will be asked to deal with the three highest levels of questioning, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. They will be asked to develop three analyzing questions for a reading, two evaluative or open-ended questions, and one question of creation.

**CORNELL QUESTIONS FOR NOTETAKING:** The name of this activity is Cornell Notetaking because of the format used in the development of the questions. The questions are on the left hand side of the paper while the answers are recorded on the right in bullets or talking points.

### **ESSENTIAL AND/OR KEY QUESTIONS:**

In the past students did research based on topics, but today they must base their research on a set of essential questions that lead to the development of concepts. In this way students replicate what happens in real life instead of what would happen only in school.

**FILL THE QUESTION JAR:** To help students understand the active reader process better, this activity has them write two or three thoughtful questions for a particular reading and then place their favorites in THE QUESTION JAR. Then just before the discussion of the reading, questions are drawn from the jar. These questions will then be presented to the class for answers and discussion.

**HEADLINE TO FOCUS QUESTION(S):** In SQ3R (skim, turn heading to question, read, review, and recite), students learn to turn headings into questions to read for specifics. Student will turn headlines into 5W and H key questions and then read to answer them.

**INFORMATION CHART FOR CATEGORICAL QUESTIONS:** Students reading news articles are often asked to use the KWL Process. Students can use this categorical technique to develop a chart to help them read and record information. By using this information chart systematically, students are enabled to go directly from categories using various resources to a written expository paragraph.

**JEOPARDY:** Jeopardy is a game of questions that has been popularized by the television game show. In this game the students are given the answers and they have to determine the question. It is often easier to answer questions than to formulate good questions in response to a given topic. Thus, Jeopardy is an excellent activity, not only for retrieving information, but to formulate comprehensive questions.

**LIMITED BLOOM'S TAXONOMY QUESTIONS:** Teachers have been exposed to the Bloom's Taxonomy of leveled questions and attempt to use these levels of questions in their classrooms for purposes of critical thinking. In this activity students learn to ask their own literal, inferential, and evaluative questions.

**LITERACY CIRCLE DISCUSSION LEADER QUESTIONS:** Literacy Circles are a way of students taking control of their reading and reader response. Once the teacher models the process, the students alternate key roles of asking their own questions, or being responsible for returning to the text to find support statements or correct answers.

**MOCK TRIAL, INTERVIEW AND/OR PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTIONS:** The questions used in trials, interviews and press conferences usually involve information about cause and effect, the solving of problems, feelings and emotions, clarification of events, background information, giving of examples, predictions for the future, and comparison situations. Each of these areas is directly related to a key reading skill that students need to master to be a proficient reader.

**NEWSPAPER SCAVENGER HUNT QUESTIONS:** In a Newspaper Scavenger Hunt, one group of students develops scanning questions based on the newspaper of the day. The other group of students quickly tries to find the answers. Then the roles are reversed.

**PARKING LOT QUESTIONS:** This activity uses a post-it, a journal entry, and/or parking lot space on the white/chalk board in order to get back to questions that have been left unanswered at the time. With this parking lot, the teacher can get back to important, key questions at the appropriate time without stopping the flow of the lesson.

**QUESTIONS FOR AUTHORS AND REPORTERS:** In this questioning exercise, the student is attempting to get into the head of the writer and pose questions that will lead to new insights into word choice, value of punctuation, organization of material, main ideas and details, use of quotations, statistics, graphics, examples, etc.

**ROUND ROBIN QUESTION / ANSWER ACTIVITY:** In the Round Robin Activity the student carefully reads and takes notes on an article. Then the first student asks a literal, inferential, or evaluative question based on the article. The second student then attempts to answer the first question to the best of his/her ability. If correct, the student gets to ask the next question.

**SOCRATIC SEMINAR QUESTIONS:** The Socratic Method has been adapted today to help students take a critical stance in both their reading and writing. After reading a news article or articles, students pose only one, open-ended, evaluative question that probes deeply into the subject matter. The students in the group attempt to answer each other's Socratic Question through logical thinking, referring back to the text, and connecting to other readings.

**STUDENT-DRIVEN WEB QUEST QUESTIONS:** In Student-Driven Web Quests, the student chooses a topic of interest, locates various websites that are appropriate and then begins to determine his/her own essential web quest question(s). Students who are designing their own questions and resources are working on an advanced critical thinking level.

**STUDENT GROUP, STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS:** Study Group Questioning is a valuable tool to help empower students to become independent learners. In this case the teacher is not in charge, but a group with assigned responsibilities takes over the leadership role. Each student assumes the responsibility of developing a study guide sheet in answer to specific questions posed. After all the study guides are complete, they are compiled and an oral discussion on each guide takes place.

**STUDENT-WRITTEN TEST QUESTIONS:** This activity has students write their own open-ended essay, short-answer, and multiple-choice test questions and submit them for use on an actual test of the newspaper content that is read. The teacher may add questions as needed.

**THREE-COLUMN NOTETAKING WITH ONGOING QUESTIONS:** When active readers take notes today they use three-column notetaking. In the first column, the factual information is listed. In the second column are insights about what is happening. Here the inferential level is being activated. In the third column, the student is listing what questions need to be answered through the reading.

**TWENTY QUESTIONS:** The teacher or the students create answers from the article(s). After being given a clue as to person, place or thing and a short scenario, students must ask questions that require only a "yes" or "no" answer. A maximum of 20 questions may be asked before the answer is given. This ability to both use clues and formulate a conceptual question requires critical thinking.

**VISUAL- AND AUDITORY-BASED QUESTIONS:** These questions usually focus on actual content, feelings and emotions displayed and why, inferred messages of all types, tone and purpose, connections, and comparisons. When students develop conceptual questions from both the verbal and the visual/auditory, they usually develop successful and insightful comprehension.

# INTRODUCTION

## THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION, A Key Element in Critical Thinking and Comprehension

Student developed questions are at the heart of today's education. Asking the correct question and then going after possible answers is what resourceful, independent learning is all about. If you ask the "right question(s)" you are on the path to finding out about what you really need to know to solve a problem.

In the past teachers asked the questions and students answered them. Often the students tried to predict what was in the teacher's head so their answers would be correct. But since today's teachers have become facilitators and students have become teachers in many cases, many of the roles have reversed. Now students:

- Pose their own questions based on prior knowledge, skimming and careful reading.
- Continue to refine their questions as they gain more knowledge.
- Discover the answers they need in the readings through location of proper information linked with logical thinking.

The process described above is not as clear-cut as "this is the question, this is the best answer," but it demonstrates to students that there is more than one way to answer a question and more than one way to solve a problem. This process shows students that the books and/or teachers are not always going to be there to identify the key question. In real life the questions that you need to answer must come from within.

According to Isabel L. Beck and Margaret G. McLean in the Nov., 2002 edition of *Educational Leadership*, "the instructional approach of continuous questioning enhances reading comprehension by teaching students to actively build understanding as they read and think. In fact, the ability to think — to be a lifelong seeker and integrator of new knowledge — is based on the ability to ask and consider important questions, questions that go beyond recall and stretch student thinking."

Asking the proper questions enables students to access and analyze information and to draw sound conclusions. In addition, good questions, developed by the student himself/herself, stimulate motivation, thinking, and creativity.

The complexity of our world is increasing rapidly with the rise of technology. We have access to much more information than any other generation. For this reason it is important not only to ask the right questions but also to ask them in a logical sequence. Without a sequential questioning strategy, students often flounder, go off track and overlook essential information.

This Essential Question Guide will provide numerous opportunities to build critical questioning skills through newspaper and Internet usage. Students can no longer just utilize how and why questions; they need to access questions that meet an assortment of critical new priorities.

# 3,2,1 QUESTION FORMAT

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Differentiating**

### **Overview of Activity:**

When students are learning to ask questions they need to realize that questions fall into different categories. For example, there are:

- questions that help you to remember,
- questions to help you understand,
- questions to help you apply,
- questions to help you analyze,
- questions to help you evaluate,
- questions to help you create.

In this activity students will be asked to deal with the three highest levels of questioning, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. They will be asked to develop three analyzing questions for a reading, two evaluative or open-ended questions, and one question of creation.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer on the 3, 2, 1 Question Format

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I carefully read and took notes on a self-selected or required article.

I developed three interpretation questions involving how, why, or if and answered my own questions.

I then developed two evaluative questions that made me take a critical stance and/or put me into an actual situation. I answered these questions.

I finally developed one creation question. This question helped me to develop a way of using the material that I had just acquired. I responded to the question.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# 3,2,1 QUESTION FORMAT

**Interpretative Questions**  
(Analyze How and/or Why)

**(3)**

**(2)**

**(1)**

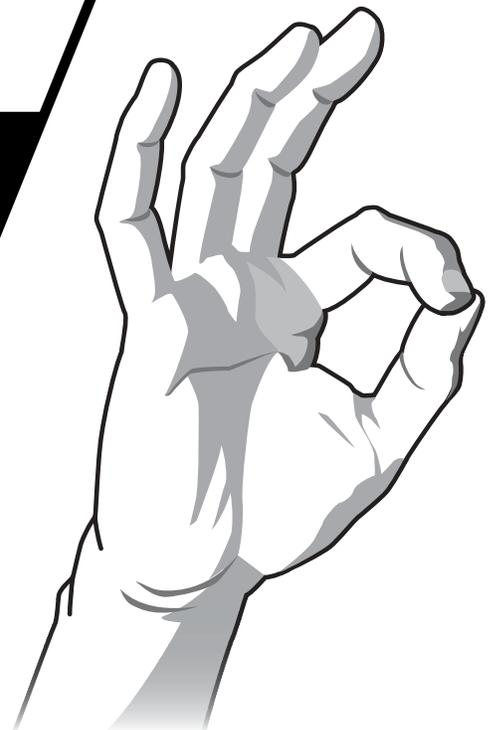
**Evaluative Questions**  
(Express opinion & back it up with facts)

**(2)**

**(1)**

**Creative Question**  
(Application, Results)

**(1)**



# CORNELL QUESTIONS FOR NOTETAKING

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Categorizing/Classifying**

### **Overview of Activity:**

To be a better reader and test taker students need to be able to take notes based on key questions that they establish for themselves prior to the actual reading, during the reading and then after the reading. These questions are known as focus questions.

The name of this activity is Cornell Notetaking because of the format used in the development of the questions. Most of the questions are grouped according to a particular category. The questions are on the left hand side of the paper while the answers are recorded on the remaining part of the paper in bullets or talking points.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer on Cornell Questions for Notetaking.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I thought about the article that I was about to read and possible questions that I could ask.

I folded my graphic organizer vertically into two parts. The one third on the left labeled preview questions. The two thirds on the right labeled answers, related information and details.

On the top portion of the paper I recorded my preview questions on the left hand side.

As I carefully read the article I began to look for answers to my preview questions and recorded the information in bullets on the right hand side of the page.

As I read I also began to see other key questions that needed to be answered so I recorded the questions on the left hand side and wrote answers to these key questions on the right hand side.

I continued with this question and answer process through the entire article.

At the end I folded back the answer phase of the notetaking and attempted to answer the key questions without looking at the bullet points.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?



# ESSENTIAL AND/OR KEY QUESTIONS

## Conceptual Skill Base: Constructing

### Overview of the Activity:

In the past students did research based on topics, but today they must base their research on a set of essential questions that lead to the development of concepts. Students are replicating what happens in real life instead of what would happen only in school. For example, to solve a problem in the real world, one must pose a series of questions in a logical order and find the answers in order to progress properly with a particular project.

Research is finding that by asking the proper question(s) one directs his/her own thinking and research in a critical manner that is conducive to the development of productive problem solving. The essential question forms the structural base on which learned materials are developed for conceptualization.

**Materials:** Newspaper article(s) and allied graphic organizer on Essential and/or Key Questions.

### Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:

I listened carefully as the teacher modeled the essential question activity.

I carefully read the article or articles for discussion, taking notes as I read.

At the end of each article, I listed a key or essential question on the graphic organizer.

After completing all the articles, or parts of a longer article, I posed one key question involving information from all of the articles and from all of the essential questions previously posed.

From the major essential question, I began to outline an essay response on the graphic organizer.

From my outlines and original notes, I developed and edited a persuasive essay to answer the essential question. (An alternative could be producing an editorial cartoon.)

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# ESSENTIAL AND/OR KEY QUESTIONS

## Essential and/or Key Questions:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Final key question to prepare the outline for five-paragraph essay.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### I. Introduction

Introductory statements

Thesis statement

Introduce supporting ideas (optional)

### II. Body

First supporting idea

- Transition, topic sentence
- Discussion, examples, and analysis
- Conclusion (optional)

Second supporting idea

- Transition, topic sentence
- Discussion, examples, and analysis
- Conclusion (optional)

Third supporting idea

- Transition, topic sentence
- Discussion, examples, and analysis
- Conclusion (optional)

### III. Conclusion

Transition, statement reflecting back on thesis

Restate key points

Ending statement that provokes thought (optional)

*Using your outline, write your essay on a separate sheet of paper.*

# FILL THE QUESTION JAR

**Cognitive Skill Base:** Distinguishing

## **Overview of Activity:**

A good reader of fiction or non-fiction continually asks him/herself reflective, conceptual and factual questions in order to better understand the material. These questions help the reader construct meaning by learning to reread, skim, or scan, read a passage out loud, take notes, or go to the dictionary.

To help students understand the active reader process better, have them write two or three thoughtful questions for a particular reading and then place their favorites in THE QUESTION JAR. Then just before the discussion of the reading, certain questions (with the asker's initials included) will be drawn from the jar. These questions will then be presented to the class for possible answers.

Once the students have had a group response to questions, the reading discussion should be much more successful. Students will feel empowered through hearing their questions read and answered. They will also learn to become more interactive readers.

**Materials:** A news article(s) with graphic organizer, Fill the Question Jar.

## **Instructions with Imbedded Rubric:**

I listened carefully as the teacher modeled the activity.

As I completed my reading, I begin to mentally ask myself questions that might help me better understand the reading.

I recorded at least three of these questions for the reading. These questions could be about facts that I needed to know, about relationships that were not clear to me, about a person's character or motivation, about a vocabulary word that I did not know, about what I thought was going to happen next, about the main idea or what the writer was trying to say to us, about connections or comparisons to other subject matter, etc.

I put my favorite questions in the Question Jar for the class discussion.

When I pulled someone's question out of the jar I answered it to the best of my ability, going back wherever possible to the text.

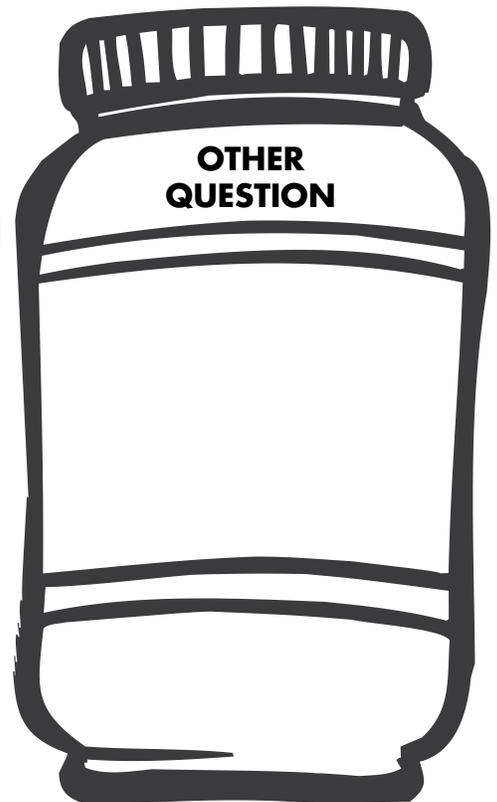
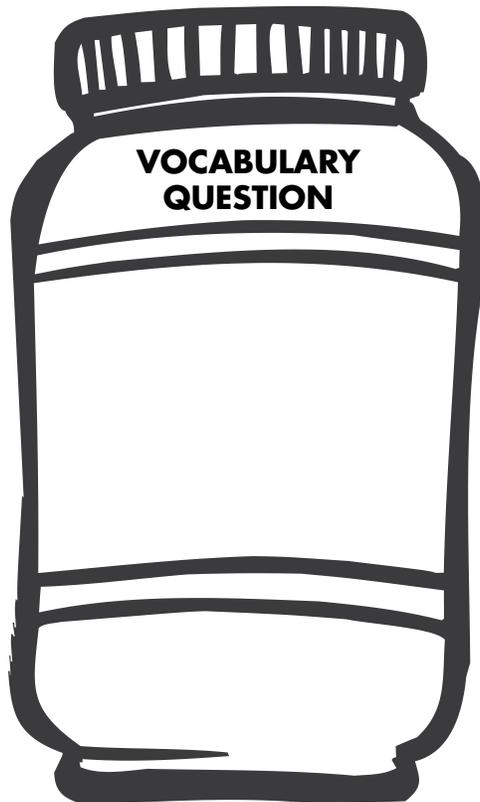
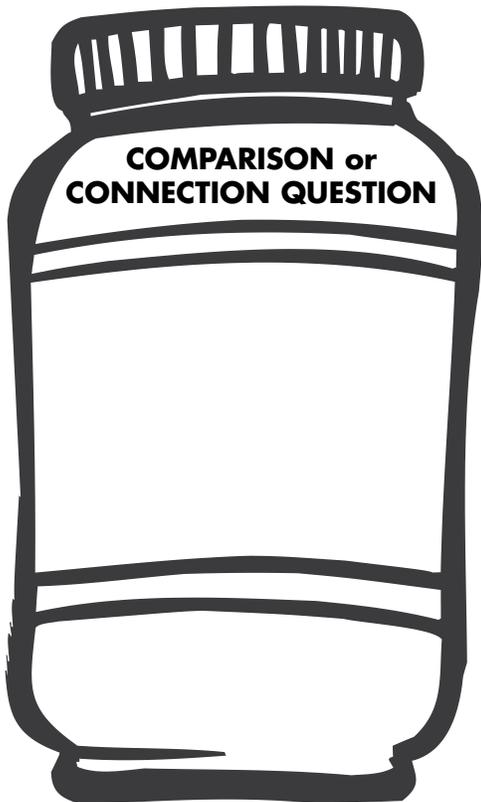
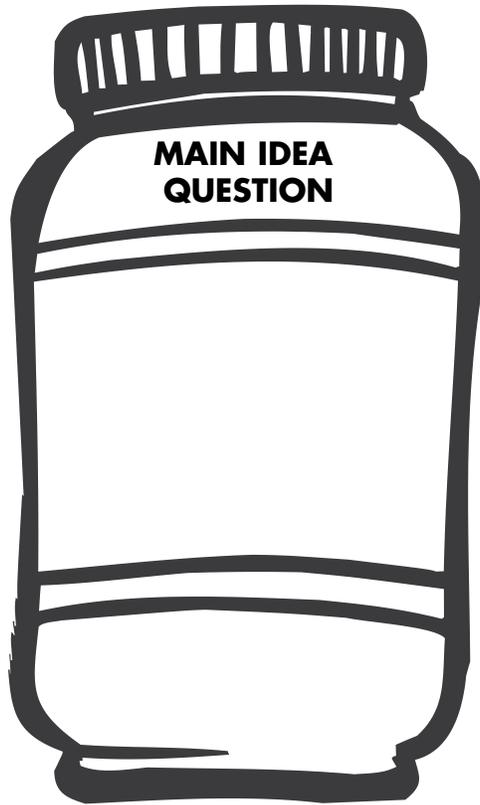
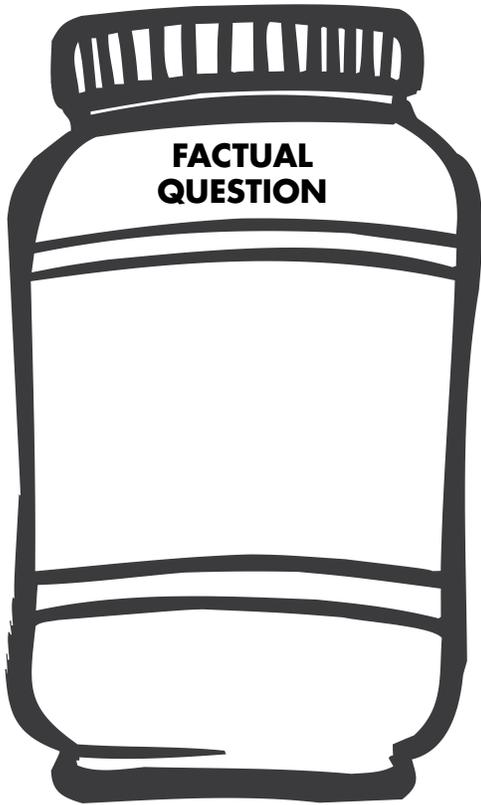
I used the questions from the jar and related answers to help me in the final class discussion.

## **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# FILL THE QUESTION JAR

Fill in Question, Then Cut Out and Place in Question Jar



# HEADLINE TO FOCUS QUESTION(S)

**Cognitive Skill Base: Implementing**

## **Overview of Activity:**

In the oldest reading strategy of all, the SQ3R (skim, turn heading to question, read, review, and recite), students learned to turn headings into questions to read for specifics. Students today need to perfect this same skill.

When a student is able to turn the headline into a 5W and H (why, who, what, when, where or how) question and read to answer that specific question, he/she is on the road to becoming a more proficient reader. Students cannot be expected to read and remember all that they read. They can, however, be expected to ask a key question from the heading and/or headline and read to find an answer to that question.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer for Headline to Focus Question.

## **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I chose a news article and turned the headline into a focus question using a 5W or H (why, who, what, when, where or how) to start the question.

With the focus question in mind, I carefully read to answer my own question and took specific notes.

When reading the article I focused on the question at hand and the related answers and did not record or spend time on the other material.

With the focus question and the related answers, I formulated a well-constructed paragraph with the question imbedded in the beginning statement and the recorded information as support elements.

I shared my paragraph(s) with another student for comment.

I will continue to use this strategy with other readings that I will need to tackle in the future.

## **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# HEADLINE TO FOCUS QUESTION(S)

**Paste or Write Headline:**

**Focus Question:**

**From focus question and related answers, write a well-constructed paragraph.**

**Paste or Write Headline:**

**Focus Question:**

**From focus question and related answers, write a well-constructed paragraph.**

# INFORMATION CHART FOR CATEGORICAL QUESTIONS

## Cognitive Skill Base: Organizing

### Overview of Activity:

When students previously read news articles, they were asked to use the KWL Process. This process asked them to organize information into what do I THINK I KNOW before reading the article, WHAT questions do I need to answer in the reading, and what did I LEARN from my prior reading and the final reading. Today students use this same process but categorize most of the questions and topics first before beginning the reading.

When students use this categorical technique to develop a chart to help them read and record information, they are developing an informational chart instead of just a KWL Chart. By using this information chart systematically, students should be able to go almost directly from categories using different resources to a written expository paragraph.

Doing research from periodicals, trade books, textbooks, the first person and the Internet requires an understanding of the information chart and related questions.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer Information Chart for Categorical Questions.

### Instruction with Imbedded Rubrics:

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

Before beginning a reading I listed key categorical questions to read for at the top of each column on the Information Chart.

I left one or two column tops empty so that I could add new informational titles as I read along.

As I read my article(s), I began to list related information in the proper column. When I could not find an appropriate column I started a new one.

When I finished reading, I orally read down and across the column of information, orally retelling the information to myself or another student, and put it into one or two paragraphs.

After using the above technique for a number of columns, I was able to put together a five-paragraph essay for revision and editing, an oral report or another project.

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# INFORMATION CHART FOR CATEGORICAL QUESTIONS

What do I already KNOW about the topic to be researched through the newspaper article(s) & other sources?

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Key Categorical Questions / WHAT questions do I need to answer as I read the article(s) & research other sources?

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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Answers to the questions & information on the topic obtained from these resources.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Newspaper Article(s)                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Textbook   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Internet   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Trade Book, Periodicals, Speaker, Field Trip, Other Source |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

What did I LEARN?

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Write your paragraphs with information from each column and then your 5 paragraph essay on separate sheets of paper.

# JEOPARDY

## Conceptual Skill Base: Retrieving

### Overview of Activity:

Jeopardy is a game of questions that has been popularized by the television game show. In this game the students are given the answers and they have to determine the question. It is often easier to answer questions than to formulate good questions in response to a given topic. For this reason Jeopardy is an excellent activity, not only for retrieving information, but also for formulating comprehensive questions.

The answers for the questions come from information and data in the news articles. The answers should range in difficulty so that all the students have an opportunity to respond.

**Materials:** Newspaper article or articles and the Jeopardy graphic organizer.

Note: The graphic organizer with teacher-prepared answers from the article(s) is given out only after students have read the article(s) and are ready to respond. Teachers could also have half the students read the article(s) and prepare answers and then have the other students read and provide the Jeopardy-type question.

### Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I carefully read the assigned article(s) and took notes on key elements and related, relevant details.

I turned to the graphic organizer and tried to develop a comprehensive question for each of the answers. I used my notes. Notes are helpful in developing conceptual questions.

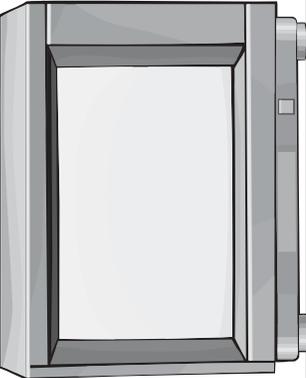
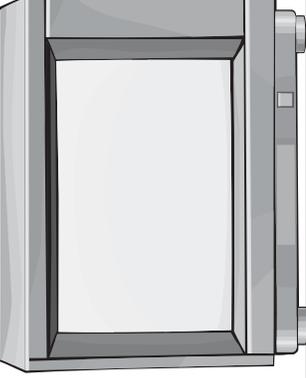
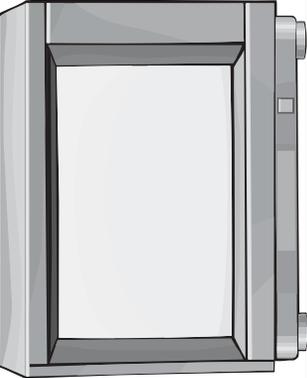
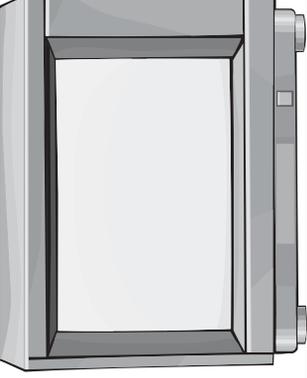
I shared some of my questions for related answers with the class when the teacher went over the exercise on the board.

When I was not able to develop a question for an answer, I went back in the text to locate where the information could be found. I looked for clues surrounding the answer in order to write my related question.

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own question(s)?

# JEOPARDY

| <b>Answer Provided</b>  | <b>Jeopardy-Type Question</b> | <b>Answer Provided</b>   | <b>Jeopardy-Type Question</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
|    |                               |    |                               |
|    |                               |    |                               |
|   |                               |   |                               |
|  |                               |  |                               |

# LIMITED BLOOM'S TAXONOMY QUESTIONS

## Cognitive Skill Base: Distinguishing

### Overview of Activity:

Teachers have been exposed to the Bloom's Taxonomy of leveled questions and attempt to use these levels of questions in their classrooms for purposes of critical thinking.

In most cases, it is always the teacher asking the leveled questions and not the student. With this activity, the student learns to pose questions on three different levels to improve comprehension as well as to improve test-taking skills. Remember, it is more difficult to ask your own questions and answer them than just answer routine questions.

When students are learning to ask leveled questions they need to understand about literal questions (where the answers are RIGHT THERE), inferential questions (where you have to SEARCH, FIND AND THINK), and evaluative questions (where you have to EXPRESS AN OPINION and back it up with information from the reading, other readings and/or life experiences).

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer on Limited Bloom's Taxonomy Questions.

### Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I carefully read the assigned article(s) and took notes.

From the article and notes I posed a literal question and answered it generally in column 2. In column 3, I added important details.

From the article and notes I posed an inferential question and answered it generally in column 2. In column 3, I added important details.

From the article and notes I posed an evaluative question and answered it generally in column 2. In column 3, I added important details.

I shared questions from the Limited Taxonomy Sheet with the class for discussion purposes.

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# LIMITED BLOOM'S TAXONOMY QUESTIONS

**Notes**

**Literal Questions  
(Answer in Text)**

**Important Details**

**Inferential Questions  
(Inferred in Text/Think & Analyze)**

**Evaluative Questions  
(Express Opinion & Back It Up)**

# LITERACY CIRCLE DISCUSSION LEADER QUESTIONS

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Constructing**

### **Overview of Activity:**

Literacy Circles are a way of students taking control of their reading and reader response. Once the teacher models the process, the students can alternate key roles, asking their own questions, or being responsible for returning to the text to find support statements or correct answers.

In Literacy Circles the roles are usually a Discussion Leader, a Reteller or Summarizer, a Quote Person, A Vocabulary Person, a Linker or Connector, and a Predictor. You can have the same roles and/or you may want to add or replace a role with a Timeliner, a Historian, a Geographer, etc.

With each of these roles, the person in charge must add to the discussion by posing a key question(s) and then challenging other students to answer the question. Others in the group may “piggyback” on the answer, disagree and prove, or further question.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the organizer for Literacy Circle Discussion Leader Questions.

### **Instruction with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

As I read the news article I took on the role as a discussion leader in order to develop at least one important open-ended question for the group to discuss.

Next I took on the role of reteller or summarizer of the article for the group.

I next took on the role of a linker/connector and tried to develop one text-to-text, text-to-self, and/or text-to-world connection to share with the group.

Then I took on the role of quote person and looked for a significant quote that I could discuss with the discussion group.

I eventually took on the role of vocabulary person and looked for two or more key words that everyone in the group needed to understand.

Finally, I acted as predictor for the group and discussed what I thought would happen in the future in regard to the topic at hand.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# LITERACY CIRCLE DISCUSSION LEADER QUESTIONS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Discussion Leader<br/>(At Least One<br/>Open-Ended<br/>Question)</b>                        |  |
| <b>Reteller or<br/>Summarizer<br/>(Summarize<br/>the Story)</b>                                |  |
| <b>Quote Person<br/>(Note Significant<br/>Quote(s))</b>  |  |
| <b>Vocabulary Person<br/>(Two or More<br/>Key Words)</b>                                       |  |
| <b>Linker or<br/>Connector<br/>(Text-to-Text, Text-<br/>to-Self, and/or<br/>Text-to-World)</b> |  |
| <b>Predictor<br/>(What Will<br/>Happen in Future)</b>  |  |
| <b>Timeliner,<br/>Historian, or<br/>Geographer<br/>(may be added or<br/>replace one above)</b> |  |

# MOCK TRIAL, INTERVIEW AND/OR PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTIONS

## Cognitive Skill Base: Designing

### Overview of Activity:

When students watch television they see people being asked questions in interviews, trial situations and at press conferences. In each of these situations people are sometimes asked “tough” questions that really make the person reveal important information. Using trials, interviews and press conferences as models for questioning, have your students select readings from the newspaper that focus on key individuals. Then have your students “grill” these people with insightful questions.

The questions used in trials, interviews and press conferences usually involve information about cause and effect, the solving of problems, feelings and emotions, clarification of events, background information, giving of examples, predictions for the future, and comparison situations. All of the areas just mentioned involve key reading skills that students need to master to become proficient readers.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the allied worksheet for Mock Trials, Interviews, and/or Press Conference Questions.

### Instructions with Imbedded Rubric:

I observed my teacher model each of the three formats given above and then developed a list of characteristics for each.

I chose one of the above formats on which to focus and found a news article(s) that I could use in connection with that format.

As I read the article I developed a question dealing with the background of the event and related details.

Secondly, I developed a question regarding present events, what was happening and how people were affected.

Thirdly, I asked questions concerning feelings and emotions regarding the event.

Fourthly, I asked what was being done in connection with the event.

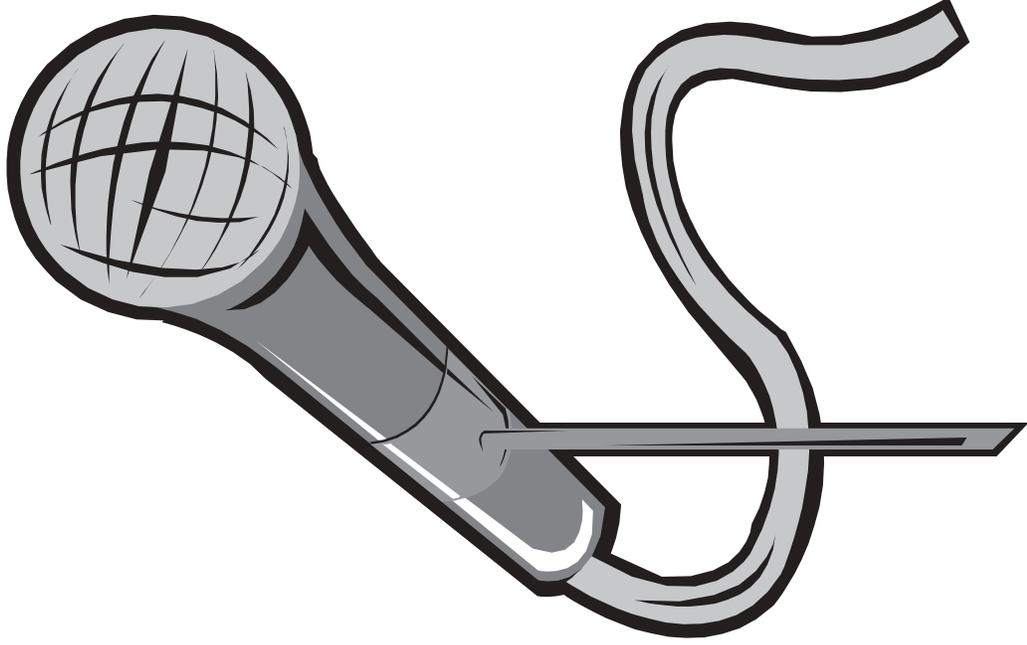
Lastly, I asked questions concerning future predictions and resolutions.

When the questions had been developed, I turned them into a classroom simulation involving other students.

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# MOCK TRIAL, INTERVIEW AND/OR PRESS CONFERENCE QUESTIONS



FACTUAL QUESTION:

RELATIONSHIP QUESTION:

AFFECTIVE QUESTION:

RESOLUTION QUESTION:

CASUAL QUESTION:

EMOTIONAL QUESTION:

CONNECTION QUESTION:

PREDICTIVE QUESTION:

SETTING QUESTION:

REFLECTIVE QUESTION:

# NEWSPAPER SCAVENGER HUNT QUESTIONS

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Mapping**

### **Overview of Activity:**

When students are using a newspaper to locate the answers to specific questions they are learning the basic reading skill of scanning. This particular skill is an important part of being a fluent reader, a reader who makes good use of reading time.

In a Newspaper Scavenger Hunt one group of students develop scanning questions based on the newspaper of the day, while the other group of students quickly tries to find the answers. Then the roles are reversed. By learning to write their own scanning questions, students become better at finding the answers.

When writing newspaper scavenger hunt questions the teacher should model the following type questions: vocabulary, graphics-based, math, headline, captions, geography, statistics, index-based, photo, classified, weather, sports, movies, unique/creative, etc.

**Materials:** A newspaper and the allied worksheet for a Newspaper Scavenger Hunt Questions.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubric:**

I observed the teacher model the exercise.

I, alone, or with my group, developed a series of scavenger hunt questions.

I included questions using photos and graphics.

I included questions where math was involved.

I included questions using weather, sports, and the movies.

I included geography questions.

I included questions using headlines and/or captions.

I included questions with a focus on vocabulary words.

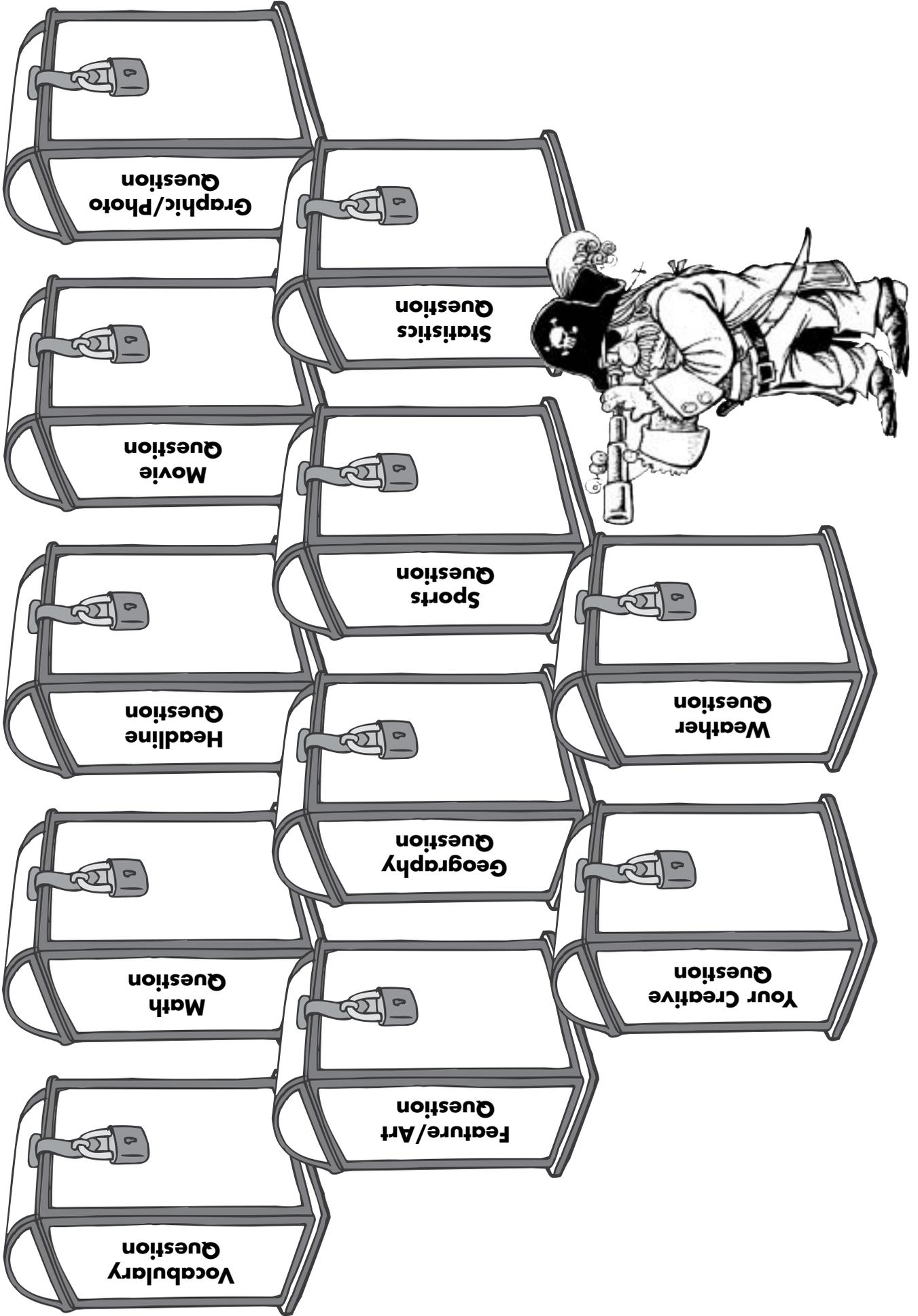
I included unique questions, using my own creativity.

I reversed roles and became the answer person for the questions of others.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# NEWSPAPER SCAVENGER HUNT QUESTIONS



# PARKING LOT QUESTIONS

## Cognitive Skill Base: Recognizing

### Overview of Activity:

This activity is slightly different than the other question activities in that it is not related to one article or any one portion of the day. Instead it uses a post-it, a journal entry, and/or parking lot space on the white/chalk board in order to get back to questions that have been left unanswered at the time.

This activity can also be used as a whole class activity for the teacher. When the class is deeply involved in a discussion and someone has a question that they don't want to forget, they need to record this question using one of the ways suggested above. They then need to share the answer to the question with the class at the appropriate time.

On the board the teacher may have a parking lot of questions on post-its or written on the board that need to be answered eventually. With this parking lot, the teacher can get back to the questions at the appropriate time without stopping the flow of the lesson. The type of questions found in a parking lot are often some of the most important key questions that need to be answered, but do not necessarily link to the topic at the time.

Research has found that students sometimes need additional wait time to process information, as key questions and insights often come well after a lesson is over.

**Materials:** A news article(s), post-its, journal, parking lot space on the white/chalk board, and/or graphic organizer for Parking Lot Questions.

### Instructions with Imbedded Rubric:

I thought of a related question that linked to the lesson, but did not have the opportunity to ask the question.

I recorded this question on my post-it, journal, other parking lot space and/or graphic organizer.

I remembered other key questions that I had concerning certain issues in class and also recorded them on the parking lot space.

When the teacher asked about parking lot questions, I responded and offered them to the class.

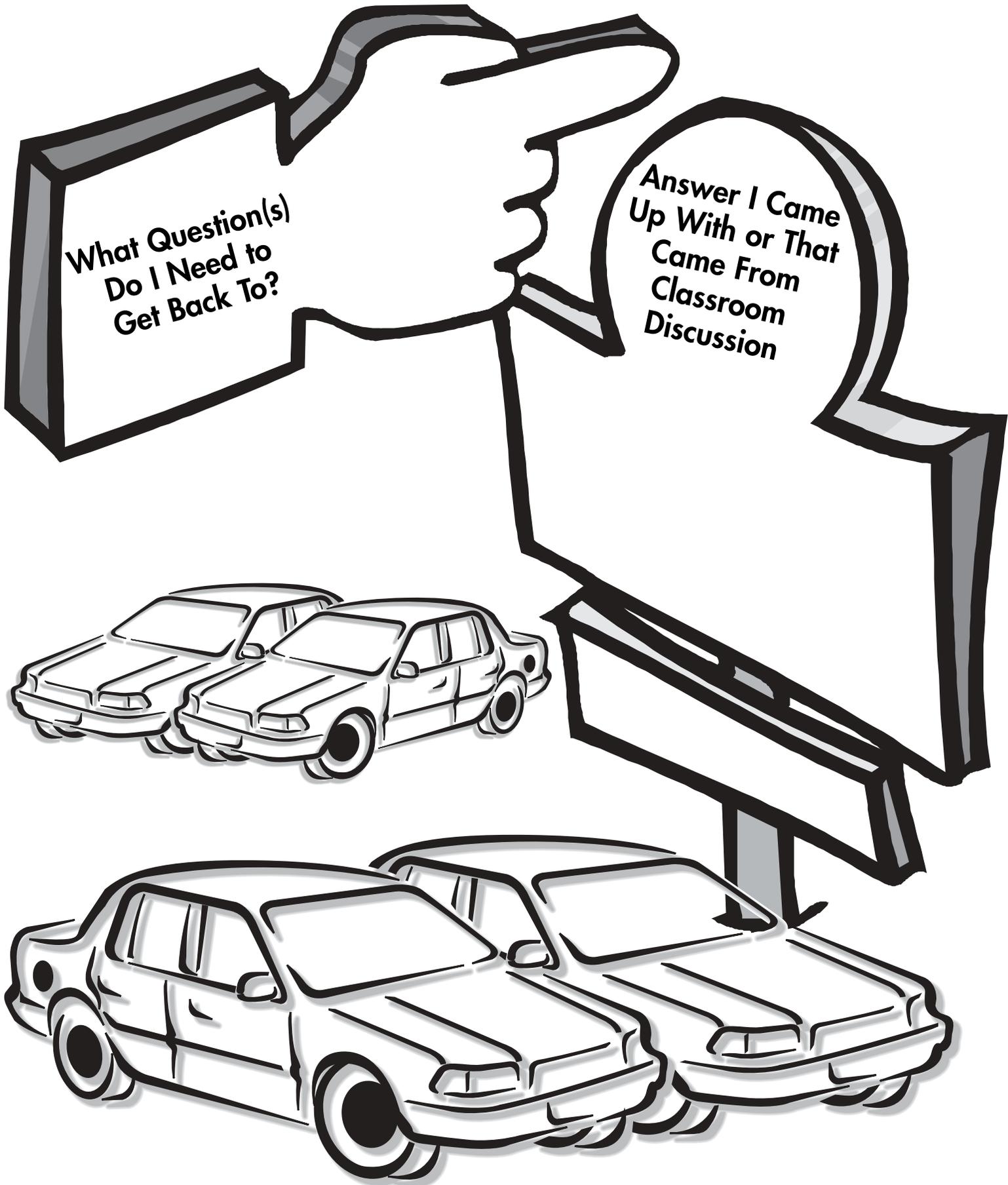
In some cases I had already been able to answer the parking lot question and shared this with the class. In others, I needed help from the class, the teacher or other resources to answer the questions.

I use the parking lot questions technique each day at home and at school.

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# PARKING LOT QUESTIONS



# QUESTIONS FOR AUTHORS AND REPORTERS

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Judging**

### **Overview of Activity:**

To comprehend on a higher level and become a better writer, students need to be able to ask hypothetical questions of authors and reporters. They need to analyze the writer's style of writing, the purpose, the tone, and use of various literary techniques. Through better understanding the writing styles of good writers, a student can begin to develop a true style of his/her own.

In this questioning exercise, the student is attempting to get into the head of the writer and pose questions that will lead to new insights in such areas as word choice, the value of punctuation, organization of material, main ideas and details, use of quotations, statistics, graphics, examples, etc. Authors and reporters act as mentors for our students, along side of a grammar book, a dictionary and a newspaper.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and graphic organizer for Questions for Authors and Reporters.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubric:**

I listened carefully as my teacher modeled the activity.

As I read the article(s) I tried to get into the "head" of the writer.

I asked and answered one question regarding the purpose, theme, or message from the writing.

I asked and answered a question regarding literary techniques used by the writer.

I asked and answered a questions regarding vocabulary used by the writer.

I asked and answered a question about the writer's use of punctuation, use of quotes, examples, statistics, etc.

I chose my favorite question and answer from above and shared it with the class.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# QUESTIONS FOR AUTHORS AND REPORTERS

## WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

**Q:** (Purpose, Theme, and/or Message)

**A:**

**Q:** (Literacy Techniques)

**A:**

**Q:** (Vocabulary)

**A:**

**Q:** (Grammar, Quotes, Examples, Statistics)

**A:**

**Q:** (Student or Teacher Choice)

**A:**

Q = Question A = Answer



# ROUND ROBIN QUESTION/ANSWER ACTIVITY

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Retrieving**

### **Overview of Activity:**

The more that students are in the driver's seat and asking the questions the better. Of course, students also need to be able to locate the answers to questions.

In the Round Robin Activity, the students carefully read and take notes on an article. Then the first student asks a literal, inferential, or evaluative question based on the article. (The type of questions may be set ahead of time by the teacher.)

The second student then attempts to answer the first question to the best of his/her ability and then gets to ask the second question. If a person is unable to answer a previous person's question, he/she will not be able to ask a question of his own. Students feel proud of their flexibility when they can both answer a previous question and pose one of their own.

This activity can be done in small or large groups. It can be used with more than one news article so that everyone gets a chance to participate.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer for Round Robin Question/Answer Activity.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I carefully read the assigned article(s) and took notes.

When it was my turn, I answered the question to the best of my ability.

I then asked my own question of the next person in the circle.

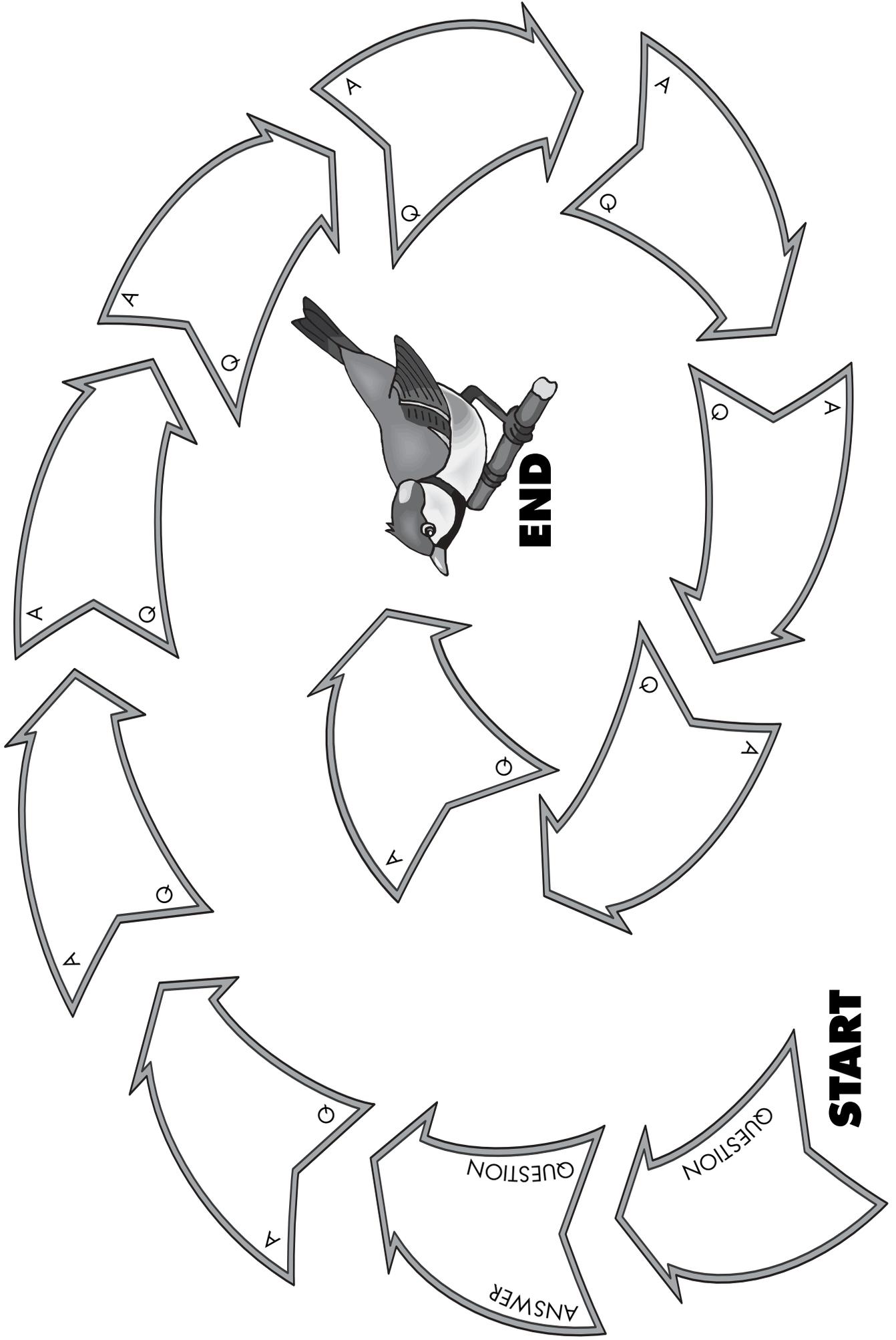
If I was unable to answer the question I was not able to ask my own question.

I listened carefully to other's questions and answers so as to learn and not repeat.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# ROUND ROBIN QUESTION/ANSWER ACTIVITY



# **SOCRATIC SEMINAR QUESTIONS**

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Designing**

### **Overview of Activity:**

Socrates was a great speaker with profound ideas. He was also a wonderful listener and knew how to pose provocative questions. Socrates believed that through asking the proper question(s) you could stimulate the mind to find the proper answer to almost any situation.

The Socratic Method has been adapted today to help students take a critical stance in both their reading and writing. After reading a news article or articles, students pose only one, open-ended, evaluative question that probes deeply into the subject matter.

The students in the group attempt to answer each other's Socratic Question through logical thinking, referring back to the text, and connecting to other readings.

**Materials:** A newspaper article and the graphic organizer for the Socratic Seminar Questions.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened carefully as the teacher modeled the Socratic Process.

I carefully read the readings and took notes on the material.

After completion of the reading I posed one essential, open-ended question that was evaluative in nature.

I listened to other students present answers to my Socratic Question along with related evidence for group approval and/or disapproval.

After listening to people respond to my question, I listened to other's questions, provided them with my answer, and backed up my opinion with as much evidence as possible.

In conclusion, I answered my own question with related evidence in a persuasive letter to the editor or editorial format.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# **SOCRATIC SEMINAR QUESTIONS**

**Key Open-Ended  
Question(s)**

**Answers to My  
Question(s) from  
Class Discussion**



**On a separate sheet of paper I answered my own question with related evidence in a persuasive letter to the editor or newspaper editorial format.**

# STUDENT-DRIVEN WEB QUEST QUESTIONS

**Cognitive Skill Base:** Executing

## **Overview of Activity:**

As more and more students begin to use the Internet to find their news articles, the greater the need to develop Web Quest Questions and find the related answers.

In the typical web quest, the teacher poses the question(s) and gives students various websites to utilize to find the necessary information. In Student-Driven Web Quests, the student chooses a topic of interest, locates various websites that are appropriate and then begins to determine his/her own essential web quest question(s).

Students who are designing their own questions and resources are working on a more advanced critical thinking level than the student who has been given a specific question and the resources to use.

With so much diversity in a classroom, both types of web quests might work well in the same classroom.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and the related graphic organizer for Student-Driven Web Quest Questions.

## **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I used a news article or editorial to help chose a topic of interest and began to search out appropriate newspaper and other websites to learn more about the topic.

To determine a workable web quest question, I examined the web sites for key information that was available.

From these web sites, I developed a web quest question(s) and began to record related information that could be used to fully answer my question.

From the related information that I recorded, I developed an essay, oral presentation or thematic project that demonstrated how well I was able to answer my web quest question(s).

Along with my presentation, I also gave credit to various websites and to other sources that I may have used in my search.

## **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?



# STUDENT GROUP, STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Coordinating**

### **Overview of Activity:**

It is never too early to teach students to conquer and divide using the study group method of study. Through this procedure students learn to focus on key questions for a particular portion of the reading matter. They become experts in one area of the reading and then allow the other students to help them better understand the other concepts. Study Group Questioning based on key conceptual questions is cooperative learning at its best.

Study Group Questioning is a valuable tool to help empower students to become independent learners. In this case the teacher is not in charge, but a group with assigned responsibilities takes over the leadership role. Each student assumes the responsibility of developing a study guide sheet(s) in answer to specific questions posed.

After all the study guides are complete, they are compiled and an oral discussion on each guide takes place. Each student must share the answers to their questions both orally and in writing. From the study guide questioning method, students usually come away learning much more than if they were studying independently. Students also like the idea of becoming an expert in a particular area of the study.

**Materials:** A news article(s) and graphic organizer for Student Group, Study Guide Questions.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubric:**

I listened carefully as my teacher modeled the activity and I developed key questions that needed to be answered for a product or test.

I volunteered to join a particular study group to assist in finding answers to the assigned questions.

I carefully read my materials with my specific questions in mind and wrote down the answers.

I transferred my answers to an outline format that could be added to the work of other students in my group.

Along with the others in my group, I distributed the study guide sheets to the rest of the class and reviewed the material orally as well.

I gathered the study guide sheets from the other groups and listened and highlighted their materials for the purpose of testing or production.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# STUDENT GROUP, STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

Topic:

Text/Page

Other Resources:

**Related Questions**

**Answers & Details**



# STUDENT-WRITTEN TEST QUESTIONS

**Cognitive Skill Base:** Extrapolating

## **Overview of Activity:**

Allow the students to write their own open-ended, short-answer, and multiple-choice test questions and submit them for use on an actual test of the newspaper content that was read. Study groups could also submit questions. If students are able to develop a set of comprehensive questions, they will usually be able to answer the questions fully.

The teacher should go through the submitted questions and use as many student-developed test questions as possible. The teacher may add questions as needed. When a test question has been accepted for usage on the test, the student should be given credit for the question by having his/her initials in parenthesis after the question.

**Materials:** Newspaper article(s) and the graphic organizer for Student-Written Test Questions.

## **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I carefully read the assigned article(s) and took notes on key elements as well as related, relevant details.

From the notes I developed at least one multiple-choice test question to place on the graphic organizer.

From the notes I developed at least one short-answer test question.

From the notes I developed at least one open-ended essay test question.

I made sure I knew the answer to my question. I placed both the question and the answer on the graphic organizer. If I had difficulty doing this, I returned to the text for supportive information to clarify the question and/or answer.

I understood that if any of my questions were actually used on the test I would receive credit for the question(s).

## **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# STUDENT-WRITTEN TEST QUESTIONS

## Test Questions

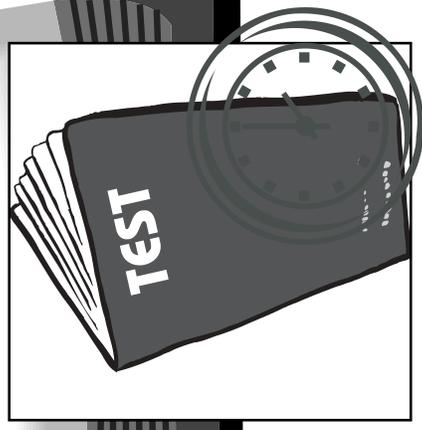
Multiple-Choice:

Short-Answer:

Open-Ended Essay:

Bonus Question:

## Test Answers



# THREE-COLUMN NOTETAKING WITH ONGOING QUESTIONS

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Monitoring**

### **Overview of the Activity:**

When active readers take notes today, they use three-column notetaking. In the first column, the factual information is listed. In the second column are insights about what is happening. Here the inferential level is being activated. In the third column, the student lists what questions need to be answered through the reading.

The third column of questions in Notetaking helps to keep the student on track. With this technique the student is always reading to answer particular questions needed to be able to better comprehend the reading. Since readers are not always going to have a teacher to assist them with readings, we need to teach readers as early as possible that they must establish their own questions to help them construct meaning from the text.

**Materials:** Newspaper articles(s) and the graphic organizer for Three-Column Notetaking With Ongoing Questions.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened as my teacher modeled the exercise.

I carefully read the assigned article(s) and took notes using the three-column method. In the first column I listed all pertinent information that I needed to remember.

In the second column I began to interpret the material and make guesses and inferences.

In the third column I began to ask key questions that needed to be answered in order for me to truly understand the information.

When I found out answers to the questions from the third column, I put these answers in the first column if they were factual and in the second column if they were inferential.

I continued to read to gather information for all three columns and shared this information during the class discussion.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?



# TWENTY QUESTIONS

## **Cognitive Skill Base: Hypothesizing**

### **Overview of Activity:**

Twenty Questions is a game that has been around for many years. Today the game has more relevance than ever.

The teacher or the students may create the answers from the article(s). After being given a clue as to person, place or thing and a short scenario, students must ask questions that require only a “yes” or “no” answer. This ability to both use clues and formulate a conceptual question requires critical thinking. This also requires that students listen carefully to each other’s questions so as not to repeat, but also to utilize the responses to develop their own questions.

The sooner the student(s) can formulate the right questions, the sooner he/she will get to the correct response. If students are not able to come up with the correct questions, they will have unsuccessfully asked twenty questions and will need to be given the correct answer. Students who know how to ask good questions should never have to go all the way to twenty.

**Materials:** A series of articles and the Twenty Questions Graphic Organizer.

### **Instructions with Imbedded Rubrics:**

I listened carefully as the teacher modeled the Twenty Question process.

I skimmed the assigned news articles to get an overview of the major people, places or things that were included in the articles.

I listened carefully to the initial clues given by the yes / no person.

I wrote down an original question and asked the answer person.

I listened to the other questions and began to think of possible answers as well as other questions.

I continued to ask comprehensive questions when applicable.

If I did not get the correct answer in twenty questions, and the answer had to be given, I thought about questions that I should have asked so I can be more successful in the future.

### **Reflection:**

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# TWENTY QUESTIONS

## Questions to Identify an Unknown Person, Place or Thing.

*Clue to be given: Then determine if it is a person, place, or thing before continuing questions.*

|    |    |
|----|----|
| 1  | 11 |
| 2  | 12 |
| 3  | 13 |
| 4  | 14 |
| 5  | 15 |
| 6  | 16 |
| 7  | 17 |
| 8  | 18 |
| 9  | 19 |
| 10 | 20 |



# VISUAL- AND AUDITORY-BASED QUESTIONS

## Conceptual Skill Base: Detecting

### Overview of the Activity:

Questions are not generated just from reading. Questions are also generated from what is seen in newspaper illustrations such as charts, photos, comics, editorial cartoon and/or seen and heard on CD's, television, videos, online, in the movies, etc. As we become a society that is more geared to the visual and auditory, we need to be able to question and reflect on visual and auditory media elements.

The visual- and auditory-based questions are conceptual questions that help the student construct meaning. These questions usually focus on content, feelings and emotions displayed and why, inferred messages of all types, tone and purpose, connections, and comparisons. When students can develop conceptual questions from both the verbal and the visual/auditory, they are better able to look at a situation from a number of different perspectives. The more clues and questions that we can bring to a situation, the better chance for successful and insightful comprehension.

**Materials:** Newspaper article(s) with online, audio, and/or video content that relates to the newspaper article (newspaper illustrations, website(s), teacher taped news program, visual images collected from other publications, videotape, etc.) and the Visual- and Auditory-Based Questions graphic organizer.

### Instructions Imbedded with Rubrics:

I listened carefully as the teacher modeled the activity.

I carefully examined newspaper illustrations, websites, and/or listened to audio/visual media related to the topic of the newspaper article to gain factual information, which I could turn into a question.

I looked and/or listened to the material for information that I could use to develop inferential questions.

I looked and/or listened to the tone and purpose of the article to develop questions.

I looked and/or listened for the emotions expressed to develop questions.

I looked and/or listened to make comparisons that would help me generate questions.

I looked and/or listened for connections to self, another piece of textual material, and/or the world, to help me develop questions related to those areas.

### Reflection:

What did I learn about asking questions from this exercise? What will I do in the future when I need to pose my own questions?

# VISUAL- AND AUDITORY-BASED QUESTIONS

| Media Type | Questions Based on Each Topic  |
|------------|--|
|            | <b>Fact / Information</b><br><br>                                      |
|            | <b>Emotions &amp; Feelings Expressed and Why</b><br><br>               |
|            | <b>Inferred Message(s) of Media</b><br><br>                            |
|            | <b>Tone &amp; Purpose of Message</b><br><br>                           |
|            | <b>Connections – Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World</b><br><br> |
|            | <b>Comparisons</b><br><br>   |
|            | <b>Teacher or Student Choice of Topic</b><br><br>                      |

## **Newspaper 5 W and an H Questions**

(for reading non-fiction, especially newspapers)

**Where** did the event happen?

**When** did it take place?

**What** happened?

**Who** was involved?

**Why** did it take place in the first place?

**How** are those involved affected or how did it play out?

## **Fictional Story Map Questions**

(for reading basic stories of fiction)

What is the setting of the story, time and place?

Who are the characters involved and what is their role?

What is the conflict, problem or goal taking place in the story?

What do the key characters in the story do to solve the problem or reach the goal?

What happens at the end of the story?

## **Metacognition Questions**

(for evaluating a project)

How did I organize or what did I do to develop my project?

Did my process work well or was it unsuccessful — evaluate your project?

If I had to start over, what changes might I make in my procedures?

## **Connecting Questions**

(for linking to various story elements, fiction or non-fiction)

**Text-to-Text:** Have you read something similar in another newspaper, book, periodical, on the Internet, etc.?

**Text-to-Self:** Have you or someone near you had a similar experience?

**Text-to-World:** Have you heard about something similar in current events, in history, in movies, on a television program, etc.?

## **Reader Response Questions & Statements**

(for fiction and non-fiction reading)

A question I have is.....?

I began to think of

I know the feeling of

I love the way.....

I realized.....

I think.....

If I were.....

I'm not sure.....

I predict.....

My favorite person is.....

I like the way the reporter.....

I felt .....when.....

I wish that.....

I was confused when.....

This made me think of.....

I wonder why.....

I noticed.....

I was surprised when.....

I changed my mind about.....because.....

I felt.....at the end of the article because.....

I wonder.....

What do you think?.....