



Tips for Teachers

Ten tweaks for your questions

Invite students to go beyond providing a casual answer and to think more deeply about the topics they are studying.

Task	Common question	Question tweaked for deeper thinking
Comparing	How are A and B similar and different?	<i>How similar or different are A and B: Very similar? Somewhat similar? Or not similar at all?</i>
Considering impact	How did A affect or contribute to B?	<i>Did A affect or contribute to B? If so, what was A's biggest impact on B?</i>
Brainstorming	How many different ways can you think of doing A?	<i>Which suggestion from the brainstormed list best serves our purpose? Rank order the top three suggestions from the brainstormed list.</i>
Learning about an event	Describe the event or character.	<i>What are the five most important things to know about this event/character?</i>
Explaining	Why do you think A happened?	<i>Provide a plausible explanation for A in light of all the evidence.</i>
Estimating or predicting	What do you think will happen?	<i>What do you think will most likely happen, considering available evidence, what can be inferred and what makes sense with what is generally known?</i>
Improving performance	What might you do to improve your performance?	<i>What would the criteria be for a good performance? How could you use the criteria to improve your performance?</i>
Assessing merit	Do you think A is good?	<i>What would distinguish a "good" A from a mediocre one? Which of these two (people, performances or products) best meets the criteria?</i>
Examining an image	What do you notice about the image?	<i>Using clues in the image (to infer meaning), what may have happened immediately before or after what is shown in the image?</i>
Checking answers	Is your answer correct?	<i>How do you know that your answer is reasonable? What evidence, inference or clues allow you to provide the answer with some certainty?</i>