

HOW TO BE A QUERIST

Querist: one who asks questions; an inquirer

When we are interested in a novel, movie, or TV show, we unconsciously ask questions as we read or watch. "Why did he do that?" "What's she going to do next?" "How are they going to get out of that mess?!" We do it all the time automatically when we're engaged in reading or watching, whether we know it or not. It's easy and fun to do with a novel or movie, but it also helps to do it with textbooks, videos and lectures. Asking questions while reading a book, or listening to a speaker or video engages and involves you with what you're reading or hearing. You probably already do it more than you know. We're going to practice doing it even more.

There are different kinds of questions to ask. They range from simple, fact questions, to very complex, difficult-to-answer questions. What follows are **Three Levels of Questions** that you can use to approach a text, video or lecture.

THREE LEVELS OF QUESTIONS

LEVEL ONE: Simple and basic

- These questions usually start with WHO, WHEN, WHERE, & sometimes WHAT; also how many or how much
- The answers to these questions can be found in your textbook, or another source such as an encyclopedia or dictionary.
- These questions will lead you to
 - Simple answers
 - Basic, factual information
 - Important details; definitions and identifications
- Examples:
 - Who was executed during the French Revolution?
 - Where was Napoleon defeated for the last time?
 - When did Japan attack Pearl Harbor?
 - What did President Roosevelt say when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor?
 - How many American soldiers are now fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan?

LEVEL TWO: More complex

- These questions usually start with WHY, HOW, & sometimes WHAT
- The answers to these questions may be found in your textbook, or may require further research in other books and sources.
- These questions will lead you to
 - More complex answers
 - Answers that require explanation, analysis or synthesis
 - Important concepts and ideas; cause and effect
- Examples:
 - Why was King Louis XVI executed during the French Revolution?
 - How was Napoleon defeated at Waterloo?
 - What caused Japan to attack Pearl Harbor?

LEVEL THREE: Very complex

- These questions usually start with WHY, HOW & sometimes WHAT
- These questions go beyond the textbook and may require extensive research.
- These questions may lead you to
 - Answers that require analysis, synthesis, evaluation or opinion
 - Give your opinion or make predictions
 - See an event in a larger time context (decades or centuries)
 - Address universal themes and ideas
- Examples:
 - Why did modern democracy develop first in England?
 - Why do people sometimes seek change through violent revolution?
 - What led to the attacks on September 11, 2001?
 - What would have happened if Al Gore had won the 2000 U.S. presidential election?
 - Which 20th century U.S. president was most important? (or best?)