



COSTA'S QUESTIONING

DESCRIPTION

This activity helps students to generate and classify questions at three levels:

1. Gathering Information
2. Processing Information
3. Applying Information

This framework helps to expand and structure students' questioning processes so that they can use questioning more effectively to support their learning.

LEARNING STRATEGIES Metacognition, Questioning

LESSON PLAN STAGE Investigation, Launching into New Content, Reflection, Synthesis

SKILLS Factual, Inferential and Universal Questions, Theme

PREPARATION

- Create a graphic organizer that seems suitable to your students, or download one of many available online. The organizer should include three different sections for the three levels of questioning. Some take the form of a house, pyramid, or cake; others just use three rows or columns.
- Identify the text or topic about which you would like students to ask questions. You should pick either a document or a topic of study that is complex and potentially confusing, and that is sophisticated enough to allow for multiple layers of understanding and interpretation. The questioning process is designed to help your students better understand this topic or text.

ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

1

Teacher distributes text or discusses topic, as appropriate. Teacher explains that students will be working on generating and classifying questions in order to better learn about this text or topic.

- This activity is very versatile, and can be used either for a general topic, or in reference to a particular text. You could use it for a poem, a chapter of a short story, or a topic such as photosynthesis or the Franco-Prussian War.
- If you are using a text, students can either read the text ahead of time, or read the text for the first time in class while generating the questions.

2

Teacher leads a mini-lesson, exposing students to each type of question, and modeling each kind.

Students should initially get at least a day of instruction and practice in each question type. Once they get some familiarity a short review or extension is sufficient.



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ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

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| 3 | In groups or individually, students generate questions that they have about the text or topic. | You can circulate during this step, modeling asking questions, and bringing up interesting ideas so that students develop more questions on their own. |
| 4 | Students classify the questions on their graphic organizer according to the level of each question. Students note gaps in question types and fill in with additional questions. | More skilled students can ask and classify questions in one step. |
| 5 | Optional: students use resources or inferences to attempt answers to some of the questions. | This can also be a nice follow-up activity on an additional day, or for out-of-class time. |
| 6 | Either in groups or individually, students reflect on their learning by responding to the following questions in conversation or writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•How does each level of questioning contribute to your learning?•How does the act of classifying questions contribute to your learning? | Help students to reflect on their learning by probing their thinking and responding to their thoughts. |

ADAPTATION FOR THE MATH CLASSROOM

Costa's Questions is a seamless fit for an inquiry-based math activity, open-ended problem, or performance task as these types of assignments require a student to gather, process, and apply the math content in sense-making ways. As students enter these types of assignments, engaging in Costa's Questioning helps them organize their thinking and become specific about the assignment's layers of meaning.