

Becoming an Expert

To become an expert in any activity or area of study, you must be able to analyze and understand events, situations or physical and mental creations and focus on details that non-experts do not notice. Expert training often involves developing guiding questions that direct attention to key elements of the field they are studying.

Example

A crime scene investigator might ask, “What evidence suggests how the perpetrator came and went from the scene?” These more general questions lead the experts to then ask specific questions directly related to the object of investigation. For example, the general question concerning the perpetrator’s coming and going might lead the investigator to notice a set of muddy footprints. She then might ask, “What are the size and type of the shoes that left these muddy footprints?” Experts ask these kinds of questions so that they clearly understand what they are studying and can clearly communicate their understanding to others.

Like expert crime scene investigators, effective readers also use guiding questions to help them look for evidence in texts.