

Question Formulation Activity

Establish your Question Focus

Create your own on a topic of your choice

- Read an article, either from a Research Starter (encyclopedia) or periodical, on your topic
- Write a headline style summary of that article
- Revise that summary to meet these criteria:
 - Clear focus (specific subject matter plus point)
 - Statement, not a question
 - Provokes and stimulates new lines of thinking
 - Does not reveal bias

OR: Choose one of these, and read a Research Starter or periodical article about it

- Climate change cannot be reversed.
- Immigration creates costs and benefits for society

[Worksheet: enter selected Question Focus Statement and citation for article]

Questions about the Focus

Write down as many questions as you can think of. If some come out as statements, turn them into questions. If you can't think of more than a few, then choose one of those that interests you, turn it into a statement as a Focus (see above) and start over until you can easily generate a dozen or more questions.

Improve your questions

- Mark each of your questions as an Open-ended or Closed-ended question. An open-ended question has to be answered with an explanation or other extended statement. A closed-ended question can be answered yes/no or with just a few words.
- Convert some of your open questions to closed, and some of your closed to open.

Prioritize your questions

- Choose your three most important questions
- Consider your own interests, the interests of others, and the requirements of your prospective assignment.

[Worksheet: page for entering questions, space to mark as Open/Closed, space to state converted questions]

Research Question

Restate your top three questions as a single question to guide your research.

[Worksheet: Enter your Research Question]

Reflection

Either

Strengths-Improvements-Insights – What did I do well? What can I do better? What have I learned?

Or

Critical Incident – What was difficult? How did I get it done anyway? What did I learn from it?

Or

QFT – What are the advantages and disadvantages of closed-ended questions? Of open-ended questions? Why did you choose your three most important questions? How are you going to use your questions? -- What did you learn? Why is learning to ask your own questions important for learning? How do you feel now about asking questions? What did you like about the work you did? How are you going to use what you learned about asking questions?

[Worksheet: space for reflection statements]