

# Why Ask “Open” Questions? Objectives, with Sample Questions

## **1. To assess learning.**

- What is the most important idea in today’s session?
- Can you explain this concept in your own words?
- Can you draw a diagram to illustrate this idea?

## **2. To ask a student to clarify a vague comment.**

- Could you elaborate on that point?
- Can you explain what you mean?

## **3. To prompt students to explore attitudes, values, or feelings (when appropriate).**

- What are the values or beliefs that inform this argument?
- What is your initial reaction to this argument?

## **4. To prompt students to see a concept from another perspective.**

- How do you think that this issue is viewed by those with whom you disagree?
- How does that concept apply to this new problem?

## **5. To ask a student to refine a statement or idea.**

- When does that principle apply? Always? Only under certain conditions?
- Would you say, then, that you disagree with the author?

## **6. To prompt students to support their assertions and interpretations.**

- How do you know that?
- Which part of the text led you to that conclusion?

## **7. To direct students to respond to one another.**

- What do you think about the idea just presented by your classmate?
- Do you agree or do you see the issue differently? Explain.
- Can you think of another way to solve that problem?

## **8. To prompt students to investigate a thought process.**

- What are the assumptions that informed the design of this experiment?
- What are the assumptions that these two arguments share?

## **9. To ask students to predict possible outcomes.**

- What might happen if this practice were to be outlawed?
- What would be the result if a different set of assumptions were used to set up this experiment?
- Would you get a different result?

## **10. To prompt students to connect and organize information.**

- How does this article shed light on the concept we studied last week?
- Can you develop a graph or table that organizes this information in a helpful way?

## **11. To ask students to apply a principle or formula.**

- How does this principle apply to the following situation?

- Who can suggest how we might use this new formula to solve the problems we examined at the start of class today?
- Under what conditions is this equation not valid?

**12. To ask students to illustrate a concept with an example.**

- Can you think of an example of this phenomenon, drawn from your research?
- Can you point us to a specific part of the novel that led you to that conclusion?
- Can you identify a painting or design that exemplifies that idea?