
Four Levels of Questions for Deep Study

Level 1. Summarizing/Definitions/Fact Questions

These questions give you the vocabulary and scope of the subject matter.

- What is the definition of...?
- Who did...?
- When did...occur?
- How much/many...?
- What is an example of...?

Level 2. Analysis/Interpretation Questions

Here, you are looking for the context and impact, supported by evidence.

- How did...occur?
- Why does...occur?
- What are the reasons for...?
- What are types of...?
- How does...function?
- How does the process occur?
- What are my own examples of...?
- What causes ...to occur?
- What results when...occurs?

- What is the relationship between...and...?
- How is...similar to/different from...?
- How does... affect or apply to...?
- What does...mean?
- What conclusions can be drawn from...information?

- What is (are) the problem(s), conflict(s), issue(s)?
- What are possible solutions/resolutions to these problems, conflicts, issues?

- What is the main argument or thesis of an author?
- How is this argument developed?
- What evidence, proof, support is offered?
- What are other theories, arguments from other authors?

Level 3. Hypothesis/Prediction Questions

These questions help you to develop hypothesis and look at possible outcomes.

- If...occurs, then what would happen?
- If...changed, then what would change?
- What does theory x predict will happen?
- What hypothesis or theory explains this data or given information?

Four Levels of Questions for Deep Study

Level 4. Critical Analysis/Evaluation/Opinion Questions

Use these questions to analyze, differentiate, and make choices about the subject in context and with supporting evidence.

Is...

- good/bad? Why?
- Correct or incorrect? Why?
- Effective or ineffective? Why?
- Relevant or irrelevant? Why?
- Logical or illogical? Why?
- Applicable or not applicable? Why?
- Proven or not proven? Why?
- Ethical or unethical? Why?

- What are the advantages or disadvantages of...? Why?
- What is the best solution to the problem, conflict, issue?
- Why is it the best?
- What should or should not happen? Why?
- Do I agree or disagree? Why?
- What is my opinion? What is my support for my opinion?

How Can You Use These Questions?

Take any concept or statement, put one of these question “keys” in front of it, put a question mark at the end, and you have your question!

Now go look for an answer.

Remember that these questions at these levels may already be at the end of your chapters or in your study guide or learning objectives. So survey the chapter, find and use them if they are relevant to your learning.

Adapted from: Ryerson University and McMaster University Online (2006) materials. Used with permission.