

Segment: Open-ended Questions

Lesson Title: Lesson 1: Questioning Game

Grade Band: 6-12

Approximate Time to Complete: 25 minutes

Objectives: Students will be able to identify the differences among the variety of the types of questions (yes/no, narrow, closed-ended, open-ended).

Materials/Set up:

- Types of Questions Handout (one per student)
- Types of Questions: Educator's Resource (one per class)
- Chart paper or whiteboard for brainstorming
- List of people, places and things to be used during a game of 20 questions
Consider people, places and things that have been introduced to students through your curriculum

Resource:

- Online Video Clip: [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: The Diplomat](#) (Watch 1:46-3:08)

Overview

Questioning is a common method used to gain information. Different types of questions will elicit different responses. Learning the value of a powerful question and its ability to guide the response is essential for information gathering. This exercise involves the entire class engaging in a game followed by discussion.

Instructional Plan

1. Ask the students to brainstorm as many questions as possible using the following topic: spring break destination. To get the students started provide a few examples: Where can we go for spring break? Can we go to Disney World? Who can come?
2. Write the questions (or ask a student to volunteer to write) on chart paper or another place in the classroom visible to all of the students.

3. Distribute the Types of Questions handout to each student. Have students review the handout and label the questions by type. For example the labels, “C”, “N” or “B” can be added beside each question to represent, closed, narrow or broad. Alternatively three student groups could be formed with each group representing a question type (closed, narrow or broad). Groups could decide which of the questions belong to their group. Encourage students to decide on a class strategy to label the questions.
4. Play Online Video Clip - [James Baker: The Man Who Made Washington Work: The Diplomat](#) (Watch 1:46-3:08). Ask students to listen to the kinds of questions Baker was heard asking Shevardnadze. In this segment, Baker meets his Soviet Russian counterpart, Shevardnadze, and flies with him to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. On the flight Baker was overheard asking Shevardnadze open questions about his hopes and fears for the future. Baker was gathering information to help him decide whether Shevardnadze was someone he could work with. When the flight landed, he had decided that Shevardnadze was someone with whom he could work.
5. Explain that the class will now practice using a variety of questions in The Question Game.
During the question game, the teacher may further academic learning by selecting a person, place, thing, or event that the students read about in art, language arts, music, science, or other course.

Round #1: 20 Questions- Yes or No

- a) Play 20 questions with the class.
- b) Select a person, place, thing, or event (factual or fictional).
- c) Tell the students that they may ask you 20 questions that require a **yes or no** response.
- d) Keep a tally of the number of questions the students ask. An incorrect guess is counted as a question.
- e) The game is complete when 20 questions have been asked or someone in the class guesses the identity of the person, place, thing, or event.

Round #2: 10 Questions- Narrow, Open-ended

- a) Next play 10 questions with the class.

- b) Again, select a person, place, thing, or event.
- c) Tell the students that this time the students must ask narrow open-ended questions that require short answers.
- d) Examples of narrow open-ended questions include: “Where were you born? How old are you? In what century did you live?” Your responses should answer the question, but will involve one or only a few words.
- e) Keep track of the number of questions. An incorrect guess counts as a question.
- f) The game is complete when 10 questions have been asked or the class correctly identifies the person, place, thing, or event.

Round #3: 5 Questions- Broad or Open-ended

- a) The final question game is 5 questions.
- b) Again, select a person, place, thing, or event.
- c) This time the students should ask broad open-ended questions that elicit a lot of information.
- d) Examples of broad or open-ended questions include: “Tell me about yourself.” or “Tell me about a big event in your life.” Your responses should answer the question and may include a short sentence response.
- e) Keep track of the number of questions. An incorrect guess counts against the total number of questions.
- f) The game is complete when 5 questions have been asked or the class correctly identifies the person, place, thing, or event.

After The Game

6. Following the question games, lead a discussion of the different questions and the impact. Ask, “What was the difference between the different types of questions? What responses did the different questions produce? When would you want to use a narrow question or a broad question? Can you give an example of when it would be good to use each type of question? How do you feel when someone asks

you a yes/no question versus an open-ended question? Why did it take more of certain questions to guess?” See the Types of Questions Educator’s Resource.

7. Remind the class about Baker’s questions to Shevardnadze on the flight. If time allows, replay the video clip and point out how Baker used open-ended questions to find out about Shevardnadze.

Types of Questions

Questions represent a form of information gathering. They provide an invitation to express feelings, thoughts, and concerns; clarify missing or confusing information; and expand and verify information. Questions provide an avenue to open or close a conversation.

Closed-Ended Questions

Close-ended questions are questions that require a yes or no response.

Examples: Are you hungry? Were you born in Maryland? Did you do your homework?
A close-ended question will not invite more information or explanation. Instead, a close-ended question will confirm or deny an inquiry.

When is using a close-ended question helpful?
When is using a close-ended question not helpful?

Narrow Questions

Narrow questions are open-ended questions that ask about a particular topic. They will require more than a yes or no answer, but do not invite much elaboration.

Examples: What did you eat today? Where were you born? When did you do your homework?
A narrow question forces the responder to address the topic of the question and still allows the speaker to provide more information.

When is using a narrow question helpful?
When is using a narrow question not helpful?

Broad Questions

Broad questions are open-ended questions that generally ask for more information. Broad questions invite the speaker to expand upon information already provided.

Examples: What did you think about lunch? Tell me about the town where you were born? What are your thoughts on the homework?
Even broader questions could be: How did that impact you? Tell me more about that...; How did you meet?
A broad question asks the responder to talk more about emotions, thoughts, and impacts without restriction to a particular topic.

When is using a broad question helpful?
When is using a broad question not helpful?

Types of Questions: Educator's Resource

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When is using a close-ended question helpful?

- An explanation is not desired
- Seeking confirmation (yes) or denial (no)
- Quick answer- "Do you want to go out to dinner?"
- Providing clarity- "Did you just say you have English next?"

When is using a close-ended question not helpful?

- More clarification would provide reasoning and context
- The other person would like to talk more
- A yes or no does not truly answer the question, instead the response should be maybe or it depends

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A narrow question forces the responder to address the topic of the question and still allows the speaker to provide more information.

When is using a narrow question helpful?

- More information is necessary on a particular topic
- Focusing the responder
- Gaining clarification without the entire background

When is using a narrow question not helpful?

- Restricts the response
- More information is required
- Less information is required

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A broad question asks the responder to talk more about emotions, thoughts, and impacts without restriction to a particular topic.

When is using a broad question helpful?

- Seeking as much information as possible
- Allow the responder to identify what is important
- Doesn't restrict the response

When is using a broad question not helpful?

- Specific information is sought
- The responder talks too much
- Too broad, fails to get any helpful specific information