

# Guidelines for Developing Good Discussion Questions

Good discussion questions are not answered by "yes" or "no." Instead they lead to higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, comparison, evaluation) about the work and the issues it raises.



Good discussion questions call for more than simply recalling facts or guessing what the teacher already wants to know, but are open-ended, leading to a variety of responses. Good questions recognize that readers will have different perspectives and interpretations and such questions attempt to engage readers in dialogue with each other.



Good discussion questions depend on a careful reading of the text. They often cite particular scenes or passages and ask people to look at them closely and draw connections between these passages and the rest of the work.

Good discussion questions are simply and clearly stated. They do not need to be repeated or reworded to be understood.



Good discussion questions are useful to the audience. Good questions can help to clarify passages or issues students may find difficult. They help students understand cultural differences that influence their reading. They invite personal responses and connections.

Good discussion questions make (and challenge) connections between the text at issue and other works, and the themes and issues of the course.