

# INTRODUCING THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™ (QFT™)



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# ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION

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This power point presentation will walk you through all the steps needed and tips for teaching the Question Formulation Technique™ to your students.



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# WHAT IS THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™?

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The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) is a simple step-by-step process designed to help students produce, improve and strategize on how to use their questions.

The QFT allows students to practice three thinking abilities in one process: divergent, convergent and metacognitive thinking.

# USING STUDENT QUESTIONS

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Students can use their questions for the following:

- ▶ Homework Assignments
- ▶ Final Reports
- ▶ Independent Projects
- ▶ Research Papers
- ▶ Group Projects
- ▶ Assessments

# COMPONENTS OF THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™

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1. The Question Focus (QFocus)
2. Producing Questions following 4 Rules
3. Categorizing Questions
4. Prioritizing Questions
5. Next Steps
6. Reflection

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# THE QUESTION FOCUS (QFOCUS)

# THE QUESTION FOCUS (Q-FOCUS)

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A simple statement, a visual or aural aid; anything to help students generate questions.

Created from ***curriculum content***

- ▶ You will need to design a QFocus every time you use the QFT.

# THE QUESTION FOCUS (Q-FOCUS)

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The QFocus should be designed to accomplish one or more of the following:

- **Generate Interest**
- **Stimulate New Thinking**
- **Introduce a Topic**
- **Deepen Comprehension**
- **Assess Prior Knowledge**



# THE QUESTION FOCUS (Q-FOCUS)

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## The QFocus:

Should:

- ▶ **Be clear, brief and sharply focused.**
- ▶ **Provoke or stimulate new lines of thinking.**

Should NOT:

- ▶ **be a question.**
- ▶ **reveal teacher preferences or bias.**
- ▶ **Tip: Use this criteria for evaluating your QFocus.**

# THE QUESTION FOCUS (Q-FOCUS)

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To design your QFocus:

- 1. Define the QFocus purpose**
- 2. Think about what students will do with the questions they produce**
- 3. Generate several QFocus ideas**
- 4. Check against criteria**
- 5. Choose idea that best meets your purpose and the criteria**

# THE QUESTION FOCUS (Q-FOCUS)

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**Tip: Introduce the QFT process to your students by using a simple QFocus.**

**Once you have the QFocus you will be ready to guide your students to formulate their own questions.**

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# RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

# RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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- ▶ Let students know that you will be giving them a focus for asking questions but that before doing that, there are some rules to review and discuss.

# RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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Introduce the Rules for Producing Questions:

- Ask as many questions as you can
- Do not stop to answer, judge or to discuss the questions
- Write down every question *exactly* as it is stated
- Change any statement into a question

**TIP:** Distribute or post the **Rules for Producing Questions**

# RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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- Ask students to review the rules.
- Ask students to reflect about one of these questions:

What do you think would be difficult about following these rules?  
Which one of these rules might be difficult to follow? Why?

**TIP:** Do not skip over the discussion of the rules the first time you introduce students to the QFT™.

Review the Rules for Producing Questions every time you use the QFT.

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# PRODUCING QUESTIONS



# PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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Once students have discussed the Rules for Producing Questions:

- ▶ Divide students into small groups of 3 - 5.
- ▶ Ask groups to identify a note-taker.
- ▶ Distribute **newsprint or worksheets** to each small group.

# PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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**Introduce the QFocus and ask students to:**

- ▶ Produce as many questions as they can in allotted time
- ▶ Follow the Rules for Producing Questions
- ▶ Number the questions

**TIP:** The note-taker should also contribute questions.

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# CATEGORIZING QUESTIONS

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## Define closed and open-ended questions:

- ▶ **Closed-ended Questions** can be answered with a “yes’ or “no” or with a one-word answer.
- ▶ **Open-ended Questions** require more explanation.

# CATEGORIZING QUESTIONS

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## Step 1

**Ask students to look over the list and:**

- ▶ mark the questions that are **closed-ended** with a “**C**”
- ▶ mark the questions that are **open-ended** with an “**O**”

# CATEGORIZING QUESTIONS

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## Step 2

**Ask students to name:**

- ▶ advantages of **closed-ended questions**

**Then,**

- ▶ disadvantages of **closed-ended questions**

# CATEGORIZING QUESTIONS

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**Ask students to name:**

- ▶ Advantages of **open-ended questions**

**Then,**

- ▶ Disadvantages of **open-ended questions**

# CATEGORIZING QUESTIONS

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## Step 3

Ask students to **practice changing** questions from one type to another.

- ▶ “Choose one closed-ended question from your list and change it into an open-ended one.”
- ▶ “Choose one open-ended question from your list and change it into a closed-ended one.”

**TIP:** If students have questions from only one type, for example they only have open-ended questions – ask them to change two of their questions to closed-ended.



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## PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

# PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

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**Criteria** for prioritizing is usually set by the teacher. Criteria will depend on what you have planned as next steps with the questions. For example:

Choose three questions...

- *that most interest you.*
- *that are most important.*
- *that will best help you design your research project.*
- *you want/need to answer first.*

# PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

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- ▶ Ask students to review their list of questions and choose **three** questions (most important; to develop a project, etc.). Mark them with an “**X**”
- ▶ Remind students to keep the QFocus in mind while prioritizing.

# PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

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- ▶ Ask students to think about their rationale for choosing the priority questions.

For example:

“Why did you choose these three as the most important?”

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SHARE

# REPORTS

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Ask students to share aloud:

1. The questions they changed from closed to open-ended and then from open-ended to closed-ended
  - ▶ *Read the original question*
  - ▶ *Read the new question*
2. Their 3 priority questions
3. Their reasons for choosing the priority questions.

**TIP:** Students can assign a group member to report or collaborate in reporting.

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NEXT STEPS

# NEXT STEPS

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You can ask students to use their questions for:

Homework Assignments	Research Papers
Independent Projects	Group Projects
Final Reports	Assessments

- ▶ You could also ask students to decide how they will use their questions.



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# REFLECTION

# REFLECTION

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Ask students to think about the work they have done, what they have learned and its value. For example, you can use questions like:

- ▶ What did you learn?
- ▶ What is the value of learning to ask your own questions?
- ▶ How can you use what you learned?

**TIP:** Use one or more reflection questions.  
Ask one question at a time.

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- ▶ Additional materials to help you teach the QFT are available at [www.rightquestion.org](http://www.rightquestion.org).
  - ▶ For a comprehensive description of how to use the Question Formulation Technique™ in the classroom please see *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions*, 2011 Harvard Education Press. <http://www.hepg.org/hep/book/144/MakeJustOneChange>
  - ▶ We would appreciate any insights, suggestions or feedback about this presentation.

**Thank you!**