



Critical Thinking Questions

Critical Thinkers

At Norwalk Public Schools, we define a critical thinker as someone who can logically interpret, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information and ideas. This skill helps students make informed and thoughtful decisions.

Students engage in critical thinking by...

- Logically interpreting, analyzing, and synthesizing information.
- Evaluating information for accuracy, credibility, and relevance.
- Reflecting on and revising ideas using evidence.

Unlocking Critical Thinkers Through Questions

Being intentional about the types of questions we ask is crucial in fostering critical thinking. Open-ended, thought-provoking questions encourage students to analyze, evaluate, and reflect on their responses, allowing for deeper understanding and problem-solving.

Open-Ended Versus Closed-Ended Questions

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions typically prompt more than one answer or explanation and begin with “what,” “how,” or “why.” These questions encourage students to think critically and provide more thoughtful and detailed responses.

Examples:

- What do you think will happen when...?
- What do you think is the best option? Why?
- What should we try next?
- Tell me more about...

Closed-Ended Questions

Closed-ended questions usually require short, simple responses and often begin with words like “do,” “did,” “is,” or “are.” These questions are useful for quick clarification or straightforward answers.

Examples:

- Do you need help tying your shoelaces?
- Do you want pizza or chicken nuggets for lunch?
- Is your backpack in your locker?
- Did you eat breakfast?

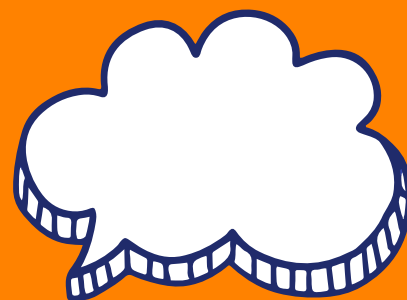
Open-Ended Question Examples to Support Critical Thinking

Question Stems to Support Students to Logically Interpret, Analyze, and Synthesize Information

- Why do you think...?
- How are these ___ similar and different?
- What evidence can you find...?
- How is ___ related to ...?
- What is the relationship between...?
- What patterns or trends do you notice, and what might they suggest?
- How does this new information challenge or reinforce what you originally thought? Why?
- What is the most important part of this idea or argument? Why?

Question Stems to Support Students to Evaluate Information for Accuracy, Credibility, and Relevance

- How do you know this information is from a credible source?
- What makes this source reliable or unreliable?
- Does this answer make sense? Why or why not?
- How could you prove...? Disprove?
- What is the author's position?
- What criteria would you use to assess...?
- What sources could you use to verify...?
- What data were used to evaluate ...?



Question Stems to Support Students to Reflect and Revise Ideas Using Evidence

- What additional information could help you improve your ideas or approach?
- How did you improve ... based on feedback or new information?
- What other information might you want to consider?
- How has your thinking changed since the beginning of the unit/lesson?
- What evidence did you use to support your decision to...?
- Why did you choose to revise...?
- What revisions would make your work stronger or clearer? Why?
- How did the feedback you received influence the changes you made to your work?



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