

A Guide to
Creative
Questioning
for
Elementary-Grade
Literature

Grades 3-4

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The books in this volume are arranged alphabetically by author, with multiple titles by the same author arranged by date of publication so as to keep series titles in order.

Introduction

The purpose of the *Guide to Creative Questioning* series is to provide a framework to question children and teens about their reading in a way that encourages and promotes higher-order thinking. Children's literature provides a rich trove of ideas and themes that can be discussed and explored, and that process can lead young readers to develop broader knowledge, generate informed opinions, and wonder about new ideas.

When we ask students questions about what they have read, listen to their answers, and engage them in conversations based on those answers, we promote the exchange and exploration of ideas, whether those students are our own children or those assigned to us in a classroom. Good questions lead to positive thinking experiences and diverse, interesting answers. Through active questioning and discussion, students can play with ideas, discover relationships, and relate new information with old concepts. As such, it is useful to have a framework on which to fashion a pattern of questioning and discussion based on specific works of literature that a student has read.

Enter Bloom's Taxonomy. In 1956 Benjamin Bloom published his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* in which he presented a classification of educational objectives related to six major cognitive operations: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The original purpose of the taxonomy was to help improve the exchange of ideas among test makers and others in the fields of educational research and curriculum development, but it wasn't long before

educators were using it to guide their students in the cumulative process of learning.

The taxonomy is structured to progress from the simplest level of knowledge to the more complex thinking levels of synthesis and evaluation. Most educators agree that the upper four levels of the taxonomy—application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—represent the higher-order thinking processes, requiring students to engage in increasingly complex, sophisticated, and abstract thinking.

The Taxonomy Revised

As more and more members of the educational community referred to the taxonomy, it became apparent that its usefulness was somewhat constrained. Educators needed a way to tie it more concretely to what they were teaching in the classroom. So in 2001, after consulting with educational psychologists, curriculum experts, and others, Lorin W. Anderson (a former student of Bloom's) and David R. Krathwohl (Bloom's partner in his original taxonomy work) published *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. The revised taxonomy is based on Bloom's original educational objectives—progressing in complexity, as the original had—while identifying specific cognitive tasks that students must be able to perform at each level.

Level 1, Knowledge, became Remembering; Level 2, Comprehension, became Understanding; Level 3, Application, became Applying; Level 4, Analysis, became Analyzing. Levels 5 and 6, Synthesis and Evaluation, were looked at more critically in terms of the difficulty of skills and were switched so that Level 6,

Evaluation, became Level 5, Evaluating, and Level 5, Synthesis, became Level 6, Creating. The argument was that synthesis entails all of the thinking processes, including decision making, designing, redesigning, imagining, constructing, composing, and creating.

Remembering calls upon recall or memory of material as it was presented. Understanding calls upon memory of the material plus interpretation of its meaning. Applying means using the learned material in a new situation. Analyzing involves examining the learned material, breaking it into its distinguishable parts, and exploring their relationships. Evaluating requires being judgmental using criteria and standards. Creating entails planning and reorganizing known elements into something new or evolving a completely new idea.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY	REVISED TAXONOMY
Evaluation	Creating
Synthesis	Evaluating
Analysis	Analyzing
Application	Applying
Comprehension	Understanding
Knowledge	Remembering

Superfudge

by Judy Blume, 1980

Nothing is simple for twelve-year-old Peter Hatcher. And nothing drives him crazier than the off-the-wall antics of his little brother, Farley Drexel Hatcher—otherwise known as Fudge.

Level 1 (Remembering)

- What was Peter's new baby sister's name?
- Where did Peter's family move to?
- Who became Peter's best friend in Princeton?
- What did Peter and Alex do to make money?

Level 2 (Understanding)

- Why is Peter concerned about his mother having another baby?
- Why doesn't Peter want to move to Princeton?
- How does Fudge think covering Tootsie in stamps will improve things for him?
- Why is Fudge disciplined for running away from home?

Level 3 (Applying)

- How would you feel about moving to another state? Would you feel differently if you knew the move was only for a year? What if it was for five years?
- If you were moving just for a short time and could only take two things with you besides your clothes and other necessary items, what would you take?
- How would you feel if you were Peter and your family had given your siblings a nickname but not you?
- Would you like to have a myna bird? Why or why not?

Level 4 (Analyzing)

- Why was it hard for Peter to move to Princeton, even though he knew it was just temporary?
- Why does Mr. Hatcher have to move to Princeton to write his book?
- Compare Fudge and Daniel. How are the two boys alike? How are they different?
- How do you think Uncle Feather helped Fudge to begin acting older?

Level 5 (Evaluating)

- Do you think Peter is a good older brother to Fudge? Why or why not?
- How do you think Fudge will feel about baby Tootsie as she gets older?
- If Peter had not met Alex, how do you think he would have handled his stay while in Princeton? Explain.
- Do you think that the punishment given to Fudge and Daniel for running away was appropriate? What might you have done instead?

Level 6 (Creating)

- Think of some other things that Peter and Alex could sell in their neighborhood to make extra money.
- Create a new character for the boys to meet in Princeton. Who is the person? How do they meet?
- Suppose the move to Princeton was permanent. How would that change the story?
- For what other reasons might someone want to buy worms?