

A Guide to  
Creative  
Questioning  
for  
Primary-Grade  
Literature

*Grades K-2*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Fairy Tales, Folktales, and Fables</b>	
<i>Arrow to the Sun</i> .....	10
<i>The Blind Men and the Elephant</i> .....	12
<i>Cinderella</i> .....	14
<i>Dooly and the Snortsnoot</i> .....	16
<i>Eli</i> .....	18
<i>The Emperor's New Clothes</i> .....	20
<i>The Fisherman and His Wife</i> .....	22
<i>The Five Chinese Brothers</i> .....	24
<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> .....	26
<i>Hansel and Gretel</i> .....	28
<i>Helga's Dowry: A Troll Love Story</i> .....	30
<i>Henny Penny</i> .....	32
<i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> .....	34
<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> .....	36
<i>The Loudest Noise in the World</i> .....	38
<i>The Pied Piper of Hamelin</i> .....	40
<i>Puss in Boots</i> .....	42
<i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> .....	44
<i>Six Foolish Fishermen</i> .....	46
<i>The Sleeping Beauty</i> .....	48
<i>Star Boy</i> .....	50
<i>Stone Soup</i> .....	52
<i>The Three Billy Goats Gruff</i> .....	54
<i>The Three Little Pigs</i> .....	56
<i>The Three Wishes</i> .....	58
<i>Town Mouse, Country Mouse</i> .....	60
<i>Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears</i> .....	62

### ***Timeless Animal Stories***

<i>A Birthday for Frances</i> .....	64
<i>Bunnicula Strikes Again!</i> .....	66
<i>Curious George</i> .....	68
<i>Frog and Toad Together</i> .....	70
<i>The Island of the Skog</i> .....	72
<i>It's So Nice to Have a Wolf Around the House</i> .....	74
<i>The Story of Babar the Little Elephant</i> .....	76
<i>The Story of Ferdinand</i> .....	78
<i>Sylvester and the Magic Pebble</i> .....	80

### ***Stories Featuring Child Protagonists***

#### *The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids #24:*

<i>Dragons Don't Cook Pizza</i> .....	82
<i>Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible,</i> <i>No Good, Very Bad Day</i> .....	84
<i>Amelia Bedelia</i> .....	86
<i>"B" Is for Betsy</i> .....	88
<i>Busybody Nora</i> .....	90
<i>The Cobble Street Cousins #4: Some Good News</i> .....	92
<i>Junie B. Jones Is a Beauty Shop Guy</i> .....	94
<i>Magic Tree House #20: Dingoes at Dinnertime</i> .....	96
<i>Martha Ann and the Mother Store</i> .....	98
<i>Marvin Redpost #4: Alone in His Teacher's House</i> .....	100
<i>Mary Marony and the Chocolate Surprise</i> .....	102
<i>Pee Wee Scouts #34: Planet Pee Wee</i> .....	104
<i>Ramona the Brave</i> .....	106
<i>What Mary Jo Shared</i> .....	108

<b><i>References</i></b> .....	110
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The books in this volume are arranged alphabetically by title within the three categories.

# 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.

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

## Little Red Riding Hood

*by Charles Perrault, retold and illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman, 1983*

Originally a story by the Brothers Grimm, this is the tale of a little girl who meets a wolf on the way to her grandmother's house. The wolf thinks he has found an easy dinner, but a woodsman saves both Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother.

### ***Level 1 (Remembering)***

- Why did Little Red Riding Hood go to visit her grandmother?
- What did the wolf do to trick Little Red Riding Hood?
- Who saved Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother?

### ***Level 2 (Understanding)***

- Explain the wolf's plans as he headed toward grandmother's house.
- Why did Little Red Riding Hood's mother worry about a trip through the woods?
- How did Little Red Riding Hood know that the wolf was not really her grandmother?

### ***Level 3 (Applying)***

- What would you do if you met a wolf on the way to your grandmother's house?
- What would you bring to your grandmother if she were sick?
- Interview the wolf, and ask him three questions that will help you get to know him better.

#### ***Level 4 (Analyzing)***

- Compare the wolf in this story to the wolf in *The Three Little Pigs*. How are they alike? How are they different?
- Do you think Little Red Riding Hood realized that the creature in bed was not her grandmother before the wolf sprang up to eat her? Explain your answer.
- Why didn't the wolf just eat Little Red Riding Hood when he saw her in the forest?

#### ***Level 5 (Evaluating)***

- Do you think Little Red Riding Hood learned anything from her experience? If so, what do you think it was?
- Think about the wolf's plans for making a meal out of grandmother and Little Red Riding Hood. What mistakes did he make?
- Select the character that you think is most clever. Give reasons.

#### ***Level 6 (Creating)***

- Suppose that Little Red Riding Hood met a bear instead of a wolf. Make up a new story telling what might happen.
- Think of other ways that Little Red Riding Hood could have been saved.
- Predict what might happen the next time Little Red Riding Hood goes to her grandmother's house.
- Suppose the wolf were an octopus. How would the story change?