

ASKING POWERFUL QUESTIONS REFERENCE

Print and use this reference during the discussion with your peers, or any time you need to understand a situation more fully.

QUESTION TYPES

Skilled questioning starts with the ability to ask a **variety of types of questions**. The different types of questions range from descriptive to explanatory and exploratory. See the table below for an overview of question types.

Question Type	Description	Examples
Descriptive	Descriptive questions ask for information and often begin with What, When, Where, and Who.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where is this scene located?• Who are the people in the picture?• What are they doing?
Explanatory	Explanatory questions ask for reasoning or interpretation and often begin with Why and How.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why are the people running?• Why are there no women in the scene?• How are they going to get off the bridge?
Exploratory	Exploratory questions ask for inference and considering implications and often begin with What if? What might? and How could?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What might their actions lead to?• How might their action affect relationships between those two tribes?
Testing/Challenging	Testing or challenging questions ask for justification of assumptions and often begin with Why would? or Why couldn't?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why would we think the people in the image are angry?• Why couldn't this event be located somewhere other than the Middle East?

QUESTION POWER

In addition, questions can have varying degrees of power, as demonstrated by the **Powerful Question Pyramid**. Certain questions are more likely than others to yield information and insights that can drive deeper understanding. For example, generally speaking, a *Why* question can help you gain deeper understanding than a *Where* question because of the potential richness of the answer.

