




Questions: / How to initiate your child asking good questions_010920152.pdf What makes a question good?

THE QUESTION IS THE ANSWER.


Smart questions are essential technology for those who venture on to the Information Highway. 

Without strong questioning skills, you are just a passenger on someone else's tour bus. You may be on the highway, but someone else is doing the driving.

Without strong questioning skills, you are unlikely to exercise profitable search strategies which allow you to cut past the **Info-Glut**  **Info-Garbage**  and **Info-Glitz** which all too often impede the search for **Insight**.

Sometimes this **New Information Landscape** seems more like Eliot's *Wasteland* than a library, more like a yard sale than a gold mine. The weaker the questioning and learning skills, the less value one is likely to discover or uncover.

Schools without a strong commitment to student questioning and research are wasting their money if they install expensive networks linking classrooms to rich electronic information resources.

*We are talking about the educational equivalent of Red Ink . . . 

the observable failure of schools to actually use their expensive network or computers to any meaningful extent because they are not seen as part of the school's primary mission. In all too many places that mission is defined primarily in terms of covering the curriculum (rapidly) and preparing students to score well on various state tests.


Which Questions Matter?



Most important thinking requires one of these three


Prime Questions

Why? How? Which?

 Why?	Why do things happen the way they do? This question requires analysis of cause-and-effect and the relationship between variables. It leads naturally to problem-solving (the How question) or to decision-making (the Which is best? question).
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Why? is the favorite question of four-year-olds. It is the basic tool for figuring stuff out (constructivist learning). At one point while researching student questions in one school district, I found **Why?** occurred most often in kindergarten classrooms and least often in the high school (which had the highest SAT scores in the state.)

Why does the sun fall each day? **Why** does the rain fall? **Why** do some people throw garbage out their car windows? **Why** do some people steal? **Why** do some people treat their children badly? **Why** can't I ask more questions in school?

 How?	How could things be made better? This question is the basis for problem-solving and synthesis. Using questions to pull and change things around until a new, better version emerges.
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How? is the inventor's favorite question. **How** is the tool which fixes the broken furnace and changes the way we get cash from a bank. **How** inspires the software



folks to keep sending us upgrades and hardware folks to create faster chips. **How** is the question which enables the suitor to capture his or her lover's heart. **How** is the reformer's passion and the hero's faith.



**Which is
best?**

Which do I select?

This question requires thoughtful decision-making - a reasoned choice based upon explicit (clearly stated) criteria and evidence.

Which? is the most important question of all because it determines who we become. **Which** school or trade will I pick for myself? **Which** path will I follow?

TWO roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood

Robert Frost

Faced with a moral dilemma, **Which** path will I follow? Confronted by a serious illness, **Which** treatment will I choose for myself?

