

Support units: Professional practice
Illustration 1: Questioning

Types of questions

The types of questions used will stimulate students to think and respond in different ways. Details about types of questions and examples are provided below. They are listed in order from the more 'closed' questions that involve recall, to the higher order questions that involve evaluation and problem solving.

Question type	Example
Rhetorical question: used to emphasise or dramatise a point rather than to elicit an answer	It takes 1,300 cubic metres of water on average to produce one tonne of wheat. Or does it?
Data recall question: requires factual recall; a closed or skinny question; sets up the classic guessing game in classroom interaction	What are Australia's major mineral exports?
Naming question: requires factual recall; a closed or skinny question; little development of thinking processes, the teacher as gatekeeper is restricting responses	What do we call the process when two pieces of a tectonic plate come together and push against each other to form a bulge in the earth's surface?
Observation question: requires description but there is no attempt at explanation; there is scope to view the question as convergent because it may require students to bring concepts together to obtain a rich answer; an inquiry question that may lead to further investigation	What happened to the western districts of NSW after the invasion of woody weeds?
Pseudo question: a question constructed to lead to a single response; a leading question that suggests the answer; a richer follow up question might ask students to explain the process in their own words or draw a diagram of the process	Is this an example of chain migration to Australia?
Speculative question: a hypothetical inquiry; an open-ended question with many acceptable answers; a divergent question	Why is water difficult to manage in Western Asia?

Question type	Example
allowing room for new questions, fresh lines of inquiry, multiple perspectives and deeper interpretation	
Reasoning question: involving thinking, synthesis and analysis; a fat question that allows for personal responses and stimulates further discussion and questioning	What is the effect of housing density on the liveability of European cities?
Evaluative question: an open question; clearly substantiated judgements made on the basis of evidence and the analysis of data; a question that might have some practical applications	How strong is the link between beach profiles and rip currents?
Problem solving question: a question aimed at constructing methods of finding out answers; higher order question using geography's substantial (facts and figures) and procedural knowledge (graphic and mapping skills)	How can we measure wellbeing between various places in India?