

Costa's Three Levels of Thinking and Questioning

A second way to craft questions applies the Levels of Thinking and Questioning model of cognition in three levels.*

- Level 1 questions focus on gathering and recalling information.
- Level 2 questions focus on making sense of gathered information.
- Level 3 questions focus on applying and evaluating information.

LEVEL	DEFINITION	SAMPLE VERBS	SAMPLE BEHAVIORS
1 Gathering and recalling information	These questions can be answered with yes, no, or specific information found in written material, lectures, movies, etc. A person can point to the information, read it, or physically see it.	define, describe, identify, list, name, observe, recite, scan	Student lists all the planets in our solar system.
2 Making sense of gathered information	These questions require students to expand what they already know by using facts, details, or clues.	analyze, compare, contrast, group, infer, sequence, synthesize	Student arranges the planets in our solar system in order of size from largest to smallest.
3 Applying and evaluating information	These questions require students to reflect on their thinking and be able to respond with a personal opinion that is supported by facts. The student makes a value judgment or wonders about something. There is no right or wrong answer.	apply a principle, evaluate, hypothesize, imagine, judge, predict, speculate	Student speculates with the explanation that life could exist on other planets in other solar systems.

*Arthur L. Costa, *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking* (Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1985), 125-37.