

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 |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 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. |
| 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. |
| 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.

