

DO

Begin your questions with “how” and “why,” or change the questions into instructions that begin with words like “explain.”

Example: How does Rochester function as a Byronic Hero?

Build questions around themes and universal human experiences.

Example: How is the theme of ambition established already in the first chapter?

Make personal connections, particularly to our modern world.

Example: How does Frankenstein’s experiment mirror modern scientific endeavors?

Look for connections to other texts, such as allusions or patterns you’ve seen elsewhere.

Example: Explain the function of the characters and plot of Paradise Lost within the narrative of Frankenstein.

Look for symbols. Don’t be afraid to think outside the box.

How could Dracula be seen as a message to the Victorian people? If Bram Stoker didn’t make him a vampire, what else could he be?

CREATING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ABOUT LITERATURE

Ask questions that can be answered in one word.

Such as: Do you like the protagonist?

DO NOT

Begin questions with “who,” “what,” “when,” or “where,” if at all possible.

Such as: Where is this book set?

Ask blanket questions.

Such as: What’s the theme?

Ask questions too narrative or simplistic in nature, which pulls you away from the text.

Such as: When is a time that you experienced something similar?

Repeat or recycle questions taken from online texts. Please use your own mind.

Such as: How can fire and ice be seen as a motif in Jane Eyre (taken directly from Sparknotes)?



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