

Steps to Asking Good Questions

FOCUS

- What specifically do I want to know?
- What kinds of information am I missing?
- Is this more than a simple YES or NO question?
- Am I going for much deeper knowledge?
- What sources do I have to help me form my initial question?

PURPOSE

- Why am I asking this?
- Do I want to gather facts or opinions?
- Do I need simple clarification?
- Do I want to offer a different perspective?
- Am I looking for general or for more specific information?
- What am I going to do with this information?

INTENT

- How do I want people to respond?
- Do I want the answer to be of help to others?
- Am I starting an argument or opening up a discussion?
- Is the question superficial and not really useful or important?
- Am I asking out of frustration or curiosity?
- Do I really care about the answer?
- Can I show respect or deference to who I'm asking?

FRAME

- Am I using easily understandable terms and wording?
- Does my question contain bias or opinion?
- Is it too long or too short?
- Does it focus on what I want to know?
- Is it muddled with other inquiries that don't belong?
- Does the question focus on only one thing?

In order to get good answers, we must learn to ask good questions. How do we do it? It's easy with a 5-step process like this one.

There are 5 characteristics for you to consider when shaping your question, with a list of some exploratory points to go with them. Use a few, or all of them.

Once you've framed your new question(s), review them critically on your own or with a partner. You can always go back and revisit steps if you need to.

You can use these points to practice asking good questions for so many different situations, and for projects of every kind.

Form test and polls questions, interviews, use them in your own creative writing projects, for great problem solving, and more.

FOLLOW-UP

- Do I have any more specific questions to add?
- Will the person I'm asking be available for other questions if need be?
- If I still don't have the answer I need, what are my next steps?
- What can I do if I still don't understand?

