

Types of Questions and Requests that can Encourage Thinking and Flexible Thinking

Teachers and parents should try asking questions and making requests that encourage children to give explanations.

General examples:

1. Try and think of at least two ways to ...
2. How would or could you ...
3. Try and think of more than one possible reason for ...
4. Show me what you would do to ...

Examples related to specific topics:

1. Sorting:

- a) Which of the choices do you think is different? Why do you think so?
- b) Someone has selected 'this' (item, picture) as being different from the others.
Why do you think it was chosen?
- c) Working alone or with a partner, try to think of how each of the pictures or each member in a list
 - (i) might be in some way different from the others
 - (ii) might be in some way the same as the others

2. Patterns:

- a) What do you think could come next and why? Explain the reasons for your choice.
- b) Someone chose 'this' as the next item. Why do you think they chose it?
- c) What do you think is hidden? Why do you think so?
- d) Use your imagination and try to think of as many answers as you can for, "What could come next?"

3. Estimation – Describe how you would estimate:

- a) the number of ...
- b) the length/height of ...

4. Games – Use your imagination to make up your own rules for:

- a) a familiar game board
- b) some blocks (animals, etc.) and a piece of carpet

Based on the book "Making Mathematics Meaningful for Children Ages 4 to 7"
(by Werner W. Liedtke and Jennifer S. Thom)