

## Writing Effective Discussion Questions for Language Arts Classes

1. DO NOT WRITE "comprehension" questions, which simply ask for facts (like those on a quiz). Examples: What is the name of Emily Elizabeth's big, red dog? How many siblings does Rashad have?
2. A good way to test your question is to make sure it CANNOT be answered in just a couple words. It should be something that students could write several sentences about.
3. Choose a sentence (from a literary work) that made you confused, or just made you really say HMMM! Ask students to help you make sense of it by describing what made you wonder or be confused.
4. Write "why" questions—perhaps about the motives of the characters, especially the things about them the author doesn't tell you. Ask students to figure out the character's motivation behind their specific actions.
5. Write "why" questions about the author. Consider questions about the author's craft, such as how they create suspense, use dialogue, imagery, metaphors, or symbols.
6. Write questions about words, actions, or images you feel are symbolic or very important throughout the novel.
7. Write questions that ask about the lessons that can be learned in the book. What is the author trying to teach you in a particular part? These types will become more important as the author's message becomes clearer towards the END of the book.

### Note:

Before you share your questions with students (or peers), make sure they are mechanically and grammatically sound. You are the Language Arts teacher, after all, and your writing reflects your competence in the field.