

Five Levels of Content Facilitation Questions — Secondary

When you are a masterful facilitator, you spend a majority of your time working with students one-on-one, in pairs, or in small groups as students are working on differentiated activities. As students are working on their activities, you'll want to have thought through a set of leveled questions to ensure that each of your learners is progressing toward and beyond content mastery. Below are the five levels of content facilitation questions with a couple of examples to highlight the progression.

Question Type	Description	ELA Example	Health Example
Comprehension	Questions that ensure students understand the content's concepts and skills	What themes, character motivations, and key events shape the text?	What nutrients does the body need, and what role does each play in overall health?
Application	Questions that ensure students' ability to apply learning to new situations	How does the author develop theme through character actions or plot events?	How would you apply your understanding of nutrition to plan meals for an athlete or teen?
Connection	Questions that ensure students' ability to apply learning to their lives	How does this text connect to real-world issues, personal beliefs, or current events?	How do your nutrition choices influence your energy, focus, and long-term health?
Synthesis	Questions that encourage students to create new information from existing data	How could the ideas in this text be reinterpreted in a modern or different context?	Design a daily meal plan that supports both physical health and lifestyle demands.
Metacognition	Questions that prompt students to think about their thinking processes	How did your interpretation of the text change as you read more deeply?	What strategies helped you analyze nutrition information and make informed choices?

But first, access! Prior to pushing students toward and beyond content mastery, it is essential to make sure that each of your students has access to the instructional activities. Is there a language barrier to account for? Are there accessibility accommodations that students need? Do students have a processing deficit? Access questions can be asked after your first observations and throughout the leveled questions explained above. Consider the examples below:

- What background knowledge might you need here?
- What vocabulary is essential to understanding this task?
- What tools or supports could help you access this content?
- What is the question really asking you to do?
- In what language do you prefer to respond to the question or prompt?

Below is a variety of examples for each type of content facilitation question. After reviewing the samples, use the brainstorm organizer provided to brainstorm your own set of questions for an upcoming instructional unit.

Question Type	Example Questions
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main character's motivations and actions at the beginning of the novel? • How do the principles of progressive overload and specificity play a role in achieving fitness goals? • What patterns or relationships do you notice in the data?
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a basic programming concept you've learned, can you write a short program or algorithm to solve a simple problem, such as calculating the sum of numbers from 1 to 10? • Can you use this method to solve a different type of problem? • How would this learning transfer to a real-world scenario? • Can you apply this concept across disciplines?
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do historical events we've discussed in this unit relate to current events or issues in the world today? • Where do you see this concept influencing real decisions? • How does this align or conflict with your own perspectives? • What data in your life could be represented by a linear function?
Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you make up a dance that mixes two different dance styles? Why did you choose those styles and how do they blend together? • What might the civil rights movement of the future be? • What might the future implications of this trend be?
Metacognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When approaching certain assignments, how do you decide what steps to take to research, organize information, and complete your work effectively? • As you collaborate with your peers, how do you assess your own contributions and the effectiveness of the group's work? • What assumptions did you bring into your work?

Brainstorm Organizer — Five Levels of Content Facilitation Questions

Question Type	Brainstormed Questions
Comprehension	
Application	
Connection	
Synthesis	
Metacognition	