



INQUIRY FIELD GUIDE

*20+ PRACTICAL STRATEGIES AND
PROTOCOLS TO PROMPT QUESTIONS
AND FACILITATE INVESTIGATIONS*

The Question Formulation Technique

(Scaled for Emergent Readers)

The What

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) was developed by the Right Question Institute to help anyone produce, improve, and prioritize questions. Use this scaled version of the protocol with emergent readers or writers to generate investigation questions that will help them address meaningful, targeted content.

The How

1. Prior to the lesson, design a QFocus to jumpstart the production of questions.
 - A QFocus is a simple statement or image (NOT a question) that will lead students down a line of questioning that is relevant to the inquiry and the content you intend to address.
2. Review the rules of the QFT with students. (2 minutes)
 - Students will ask as many questions as they can—not make statements or tell stories.
 - Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions.
3. Present the QFocus, set a timer, and have students turn to a partner to ask as many questions as possible. (2-3 minutes)
4. Invite each pair to share 1 of their questions aloud with the class.
 - As questions are asked, record them on an “Investigation Questions” anchor chart exactly as stated, leaving space between each question to allow for revisions later.
 - Don’t worry if some students share statements; these will be revised in the next steps.
 - If time allows, invite each pair to share a second question.

5. Guide students through a process of checking to make sure all questions are really questions.
 - As a class, scan the list for statements, drawing an arrow next to all statements that need to be changed to questions.
6. Ask each pair to pick a statement that is marked with an arrow to change into a question.
 - As students share their suggested revisions, cross out each statement and write the new question to replace it.
 - If a pair shares a new statement instead of a question, ask if any other pairs worked to revise that statement.
 - Continue until all statements are turned into questions, or until students' stamina wanes.
7. Reread all of the questions and remind students of their current inquiry topic.
8. Ask students to prioritize the questions they created, challenging each pair to choose 1 or 2 questions they are most curious to answer, or that they think are most important.
9. Invite each pair to share their selected priority question(s), and place a star next to those questions on the anchor chart as they are identified.
 - If more than one pair selects the same question to prioritize, place a star for each pair.
 - Notice and discuss any patterns of how the class has prioritized the questions.

Visit inquired.org/fieldguide for the following resource(s):

1. *QFocus Planning* teacher worksheet: This tool supports the planning of a relevant and meaningful QFocus for QFT activities.
2. *Generating Investigation Questions* slide presentation: This slide presentation guides students through a scaled version of the steps of the QFT.