

## Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking

Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior in learning. This taxonomy contained three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Within the cognitive domain, he identified six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These domains and levels are still useful today as students develop their critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking involves logical thinking and reasoning including skills such as comparison, classification, sequencing, cause/effect, patterning, webbing, analogies, deductive and inductive reasoning, forecasting, planning, hypothesizing, and critiquing.

Below you will find all six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. The first three levels (knowledge, comprehension, and application) fall into the lower-order thinking skills category. While the last three levels (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) fall into the higher-order thinking skills category. In each level you will find a brief description, key words, and question stems you can use to develop questions that will help increase your child's comprehension and critical thinking skills.

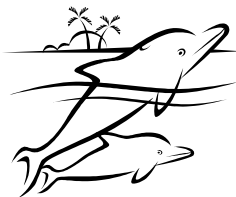
**Level 1: Knowledge** – exhibits previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers.

Key Words: who, what, why, when, where, which, choose, find, how, define, label, show, spell, list, match, name, relate, tell, recall, select

### Questions:

What is...?  
Where is...?  
How did \_\_\_\_\_ happen?  
Why did...?  
When did...?  
How would you show...?  
Who were the main...?  
Which one...?

How is...?  
When did \_\_\_\_\_ happen?  
How would you explain \_\_\_\_\_?  
How would you describe...?  
Can you recall...?  
Can you select...?  
Can you list three...?  
Who was...?



## Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking

**Level 2: Comprehension** – demonstrating understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.

Key Words: compare, contrast, demonstrate, interpret, explain, extend, illustrate, infer, outline, relate, rephrase, translate, summarize, show, classify

### Questions:

How would you classify the type of...?  
 What facts or ideas show...?  
 Which statements support...?  
 Can you explain what is happening...?  
 What can you say about...?  
 Will you state in your own words...?

How would you compare...? contrast...?  
 What is the main idea of...?  
 What is meant...?  
 Which is the best answer...?  
 How would you summarize...?  
 How would you rephrase the meaning...?

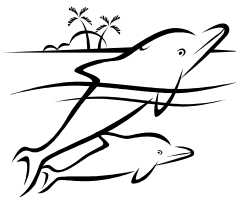
**Level 3: Application** – solving problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.

Key Words: apply, build, choose, construct, develop, interview, make use of, organize, experiment with, plan, select, solve, utilize, model, identify

### Questions:

How would you organize \_\_\_\_ to show...?  
 How would you show your understanding of...?  
 What facts would you select to show...?  
 What elements would you choose to change...?  
 What other way would you plan to...?  
 What questions would you ask in an interview with...?  
 How would you apply what you learned to develop...?  
 How would you solve \_\_\_\_ using what you have learned?

What would result if...?  
 What approach would you use to...?  
 How would you use...?  
 What examples can you find to...?  
 Can you make use of the facts to...?



## Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking

**Level 4: Analysis** – examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.

Key Words: analyze, categorize, classify, compare, contrast, discover, dissect, divide, examine, inspect, simplify, survey, take part in, test for, distinguish, list, distinction, theme, relationships, function, motive, inference, assumption, conclusion

### Questions:

What are the parts or features of...?  
 Why do you think...?  
 What motive is there...?  
 What inference can you make...?  
 How would you classify...?  
 Can you identify the different parts...?  
 What is the relationship between...?  
 Can you make a distinction between...?

How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to...?  
 What is the theme...?  
 Can you list the parts...?  
 What conclusions can you draw...?  
 How would you categorize...?  
 What evidence can you find...?  
 What is the function of...?  
 What ideas justify...?

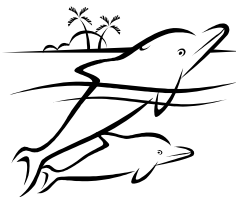
**Level 5: Synthesis** – compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.

Key Words: build, choose, combine, compile, compose, construct, create, design, develop, estimate, formulate, imagine, invent, make up, originate, plan, predict, propose, solve, solution, suppose, discuss, modify, change, improve, adapt, minimize, maximize, delete, elaborate, test, improve, happen, change

### Questions:

What changes would you make to solve...?  
 What would happen if...?  
 Can you propose an alternative...?  
 How could you change the plot...?  
 Can you predict the outcome if...?  
 Suppose you could \_\_\_\_; what would you do?  
 How would you adapt \_\_\_\_ to create a different...?

How would you improve...?  
 Can you elaborate on the reason...?  
 Can you invent...?  
 How would you design...?  
 How would you test...?  
 What facts can you gather...?  
 How would you estimate the results for...?



## Bloom's Taxonomy and Critical Thinking

**Level 6: Evaluation** – presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria.

Key Words: award, choose, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, determine, dispute, evaluate, judge, justify, measure, compare, mark, rate, recommend, rule on, select, agree, interpret, explain, appraise, prioritize, opinion, support, importance, criteria, prove, disprove, assess, influence, perceive, value, estimate, influence, deduct

### Questions:

Do you agree with the actions...?

What is your opinion of...?

What did the character choose...?

How would you prove...? disprove...?

What choice would you have made...?

How would you justify...?

What judgment would you make about...?

How would you compare the ideas...?

Based on what you know, how would you explain...?

What information would you use to support the view...?

Do you agree with the outcomes...?

Would it be better if...?

How would you evaluate...?

How would you prioritize...?

How could you determine...?

What would you select...?

Why was it better that...?

