Questions for Different Kinds of Thinking

Different kinds of questions generate different kinds of thinking. These definitions and examples describe three kinds: elaborating, hypothetical, and clarification questions.

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| Elaborating Questions       | These questions help to extend and broaden the importance of the meaning. Students can elaborate on the question making it more personal to them. | ▪ What are the implied or suggested meanings?  
 ▪ What does this mean to you?  
 ▪ How could you take the meaning farther?  
 ▪ What could the next step be? |
| Hypothetical Questions      | These questions help to explore possibilities and test theories. These are the “what would happen if…” questions, allowing students to use their imaginations based on the facts they have learned. | ▪ What if the earth had no sun?  
 ▪ What if the polar ice caps melted?  
 ▪ What if Charlotte in Charlotte’s Web had lived?  
 ▪ What are the possible pros and cons? |
| Clarification Questions     | These questions help to define words and concepts and clarify meaning.     | ▪ How did the character get to this point?  
 ▪ How did they gather the data? Was it a reliable process?  
 ▪ What is the sequence of ideas and how do they relate to one another? |