

# Extension: Critical Thinking

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Critical thinking often involves asking and answering meaningful questions. As writer Randall VanderMey states, “Questions are like can openers to a critical thinker. He or she uses them to pry into topics.” The following scenario and questions reveal how one critical thinker might work toward understanding a new word.

**Understand** ■ In Jorge’s biology class, his teacher used the word *pandemic* during a discussion. To better understand the word, Jorge asked himself these questions:

- What is the word’s dictionary definition?
- What idea or word is *pandemic* similar to? Different from?
- Where did the word come from?
- Why is it important to know?
- When would I use this word?

**Your Turn** Decide on four or five questions that the student in each of the following scenarios could ask. (One sample question is provided for each scenario.)

**Analyze** ■ Amika’s art teacher displayed an unusual sculpture in class. To analyze it, Amika could ask herself these questions:

- What is the sculpture’s shape?

**Create** ■ Theo’s group must create a project that connects two courses of study. They have decided to create a humorous play about the history of math. To carefully consider the subject of math, they could ask themselves these questions:

- What distinguishes math from other courses?

**Follow-up:** Compare your questions with those of your classmates. How are they alike or different?

**Your Turn** Search a newspaper, newsmagazine, or news Web site to find a difficult problem to solve. Then answer these questions:

1. Examine the problem by answering the 5 W’s and H about it.
2. Analyze the problem by completing a cause-effect chart about it.
3. Create a cluster of possible solutions for the problem.