

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.