

## Overview

Question Formulation engages students in the practice of creating questions and engaging with content on a deeper level. This would be a way to go in depth on a concept attainment lesson on a major idea that is key in your course. Through a series of steps, students generate, categorize, then hone questions for further inquiry.. This strategy supports student collaboration, and leads to reflection on how to focus inquiry. It also serves as a formative assessment for the teacher and students to assess what they understand already versus what they want and need to know, related to the stimulus.

## Activity Instruction

1. Select a content-rich text or film to use as a stimulus to inquiry. We recommend using one of the many overview articles or videos available in our current event on The Electoral College. Pick the one you think fits your student readiness best.

### Videos:

- For the younger students: [Electoral college EXPLAINED by KIDS - How the Election is won in under 3-minutes! Kid Explorer, 2021](#)
- For high school: [Why the Electoral College Exists, National Geographic, 2021](#)

### Readings:

- [Election of the President and Vice President, Ben's Guide to the US Government](#)
  - [Electoral College, USA.gov](#)
2. Divide students into small groups where they will complete the “Question Formulation Worksheet”. You can make this worksheet available to students either on hard copy or digitally.
  3. Present or hand out the stimulus and instruct the students to do an initial read/view. Alternatively, read/view the stimulus as a whole group. Have a student or students summarize the main ideas to ensure students understand the basic concepts of the content.
  4. Question Generation: Instruct your students to work together in their small group to complete the first section, generating questions **about the Electoral College**. As students are working, circulate within the room and address any issues. This is rapid paced brainstorming and not a time for responding to the questions or revising.
  5. Essential Question (EQ): Instruct the groups to complete the second section, in which they choose an essential question from their list of questions. Rephrased: “*what is the main thing students want to know about The Electoral College*”
  6. Categorizing Questions: Teach the difference between a closed-ended and open-ended question by sharing examples. Indicate that students should identify each of their questions with a “C” or an “O.” Then have them discuss the usefulness of each type.
  7. Prompt students to identify which of their questions are the most important in exploring the concept of the Electoral College. Encourage them to improve their questions by adding clarity and by rephrasing the questions to make them more open-ended, if necessary.
  8. Use the final three questions to drive the next part of your course’s learning on the topic.



# Question Formulation - Student Worksheet

**Directions:** After you have reviewed the content, work in your group to complete these activities.

## 1. Generate Questions!

- Ask as many questions as you can about the text/video stimulus
- Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any questions
- Write down every question exactly as it is stated
- Change any statement into a question

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

Use more paper if you run out of room!

## 2. Choose the Essential Question (EQ)

Talk with your group and choose one question above to be an “essential question”. This should be the “big” question you have about the topic and one that is worthy of discussion. Mark it with ‘EQ’ or highlight it.

### 3. Categorizing Questions

Close-ended questions can be answered with “Yes” or “No” or one word while open-ended questions require an explanation and may have multiple or more complex answers.

Label each of your questions as either CLOSED or OPEN by writing a “C” or an “O” on the left of it.

### 4. Reflect on Question Types

Name advantages and disadvantages of asking closed-ended questions

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
CLOSE-ENDED		
OPEN-ENDED		

### 5. Prioritizing Questions

- Think back to the original reading/video. Which of your questions would be most important to research in order to understand this topic best?
- Choose the three most important questions from your list and mark them with an “X”
- Write all three below, improving them as you go. Make sure they are clear and open-ended.

<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
-------------------------------

ADAPTED FROM RIGHT QUESTION INSTITUTE