

Costa's Levels of Questioning  
Key Words and Question Stems

Level 1

Key Words:

who	what	why	when	omit	label
where	which	choose	find	how	define
show	spell	list	match	name	relate
tell	recall	select	describe	identify	observe
		recite	scan		

Question Stems:

- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| * What is...?                | * How is ...?                 |
| * Where is...?               | * When did _____ happen?      |
| * How did _____ happen?      | * Can you recall ...?         |
| * Why did ...?               | * Can you select ...?         |
| * When did ...?              | * Can you list the three ...? |
| * How would you show ...?    | * Who was ...?                |
| * Who were the main ...?     | * Which one ...?              |
| * How would you explain ...? | * How would you describe...?  |

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Level 2

Key Words:

Analyze	compare	contrast	group	infer	sequence
synthesize	interpret	explain	extend	illustrate	outline
relate	rephrase	translate	show	classify	Demonstrate
summarize					

Question Stems:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| * How would you classify the type of ...? | * What facts or ideas show ...?    |
| * How would you compare ...?              | * What is the main idea of ...?    |
| * How would you contrast ...?             | * Which statements support ...?    |
| * How would you rephrase the meaning ...? | * What can you say about ...?      |
| * Which is the best answer ...?           | * How would you summarize..?       |
| * Can you explain what is happening ...?  | * Can you explain what is meant..? |



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Level 3

Key Words:

apply	evaluate	hypothesize	imagine	judge	predict
develop	solve	model	utilize	function	classify
examine	distinguish	theme	motive	conclusion	criteria
create	invent	improve	theorize	elaborate	compose
design	change	propose	adapt	combine	solution
criticize	decide	defend	prioritize	assess	defend
prove	support	opinion	recommend	interpret	relationships

Question Stems:

- \* How would you use...?
- \* Why do you think...?
- \* What is the theme...?
- \* What evidence can you find...?
- \* Can you make a distinction between...?
- \* How would you improve...?
- \* How would you test...?
- \* What facts can you compile...?
- \* Can you propose an alternative...?
- \* What would you recommend...?
- \* Why was it better that...?
- \* Based on what you know, how would you explain...?
- \* What questions would you ask in an interview with...?
- \* What examples can you find to support...?
- \* What would result if...?
- \* What inference can you make...?
- \* How would you justify...?
- \* What ideas justify...?
- \* How would you change the...?
- \* Can you predict the outcome if...?
- \* How would you prioritize...?
- \* What is your opinion...?
- \* What choice would you have made...?
- \* What changes would you make to solve...?