

LEVELS OF QUESTIONING (L123Qs): A Review

Remember, there are THREE Levels:

LEVEL ONE (L1Q): What did the text say? (Literal, Factual)

LEVEL TWO (L2Q): What does the text mean? (Interpretive, Literary Analysis)

LEVEL THREE (L3Q): Why does it matter? (Universal, "Big Picture")

Some more tips:

- If there is only ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER, it's a Level One Question.
- If the question mentions ANYTHING SPECIFIC IN THE TEXT -- a **character name, a place, thing, or word** -- it's a Level One OR Level Two Question.
- If there are TWO OR MORE POSSIBLE ANSWERS, it's a Level Two OR Level Three Question.
- if the question COULD BE ASKED OF OTHER TEXTS, or even be answered using personal experience, it's a Level Three Question. (Of course, a L3Q should also be applicable to the text at hand!)

Think of the following questions about the movie *The Wizard of Oz*:

- What is a **twister**? (L1Q)
- What relatives does **Dorothy** live with at the beginning of the movie? (L1Q)
- What is the literary significance about the movie changing from **black and white** to **color** when **Dorothy** lands in **Oz**? (L2Q)
- Why does the same actor who plays **Professor Marvel** also play the **Wizard**? (L2Q)
- How might the use of **water** (especially in its use against the **Wicked Witch**) be symbolic? (L2Q)
- Do we need to leave home in order to mature and grow? (L3Q)
- Why is it we take home for granted until we leave it? (L3Q)
- Is courage a character trait, or something you earn through actions and experience? (L3Q)
- How might the story follow the Hero's Journey? (L3Q)

Why do we bother assigning "levels" to our questions?

- To make ourselves aware of how deep we are thinking about text.
- To see if we are concentrating more on facts (L1Q) rather than interpretation and critical analysis (L2Q and L3Q).
- To think about text in a "big picture" way -- in particular, a text's **theme**. Notice that if I answer any of the last 4 questions above using *The Wizard of Oz*, I create a theme statement and the beginning of a thesis/argument. For example:

"***The Wizard of Oz* shows that it is necessary to leave home in order to mature and grow.** First, Dorothy runs away and gains wisdom from Professor Marvel. Second, when her house . . . "