



Six Socratic Question Types*

I. “Flushing” Questions force interlocutors from familiar forests to take a position and clarify claims

1. **Questions soliciting Judgment or Account:**

- 💡 *What is the author’s argument? What causal factors do they cite?*
- 💡 *What did person p think/believe at the time? How might they have known/acted differently?*
- 💡 *What similarities/differences in the current environment make event e more or less likely?*

2. **Questions of Definition, Clarification, or Attribution:**

- 💡 *What do you mean by term t? What did the author mean? Has this meaning changed?*
- 💡 *Where/from whom does argument/opinion/theory y arise? In what context?*
- 💡 *Is claim v logically or empirically verifiable? Self-evident? Axiomatic?*

II. “Shotgun” Questions poke empirical or logical holes in interlocutors’/authors’ assertions/arguments

3. **Questions probing Assumptions & Premises:**

- 💡 *What are the premises of conclusion c? Are they valid/supported by the evidence?*
- 💡 *What does theory/model m assume? What must we assume for it to apply in case s?*
- 💡 *Do competing arguments/explanations share this assumption? Possible blind spots?*

4. **Questions probing Reasons & Evidence:**

- 💡 *Why did q occur and not r? What reasons/causal factors were decisive and why?*
- 💡 *What facts/data/arguments support m? Where do you see/not see m borne out and why?*
- 💡 *What is a finding/example/analogy that supports interpretation/explanation/prediction v?*

III. “Retrieval” Questions point interlocutors toward unconsidered perspectives, prospects, or analogies

5. **Questions pointing to Implications & Consequences:**

- 💡 *What did/will action/event/policy b mean for c? Was this foreseen/foreseeable?*
- 💡 *What are/were other possible or likely consequences of b?*
- 💡 *Is this finding generalizable? What’s similar/different about case/instance s?*

6. **Questions soliciting Perspective-taking & Counterargument:**

- 💡 *What’s another interpretation/way of seeing narrative n?*
- 💡 *How might person/group r react to/rebut that position?*
- 💡 *Whose interests/views of v should also be considered?*
- 💡 *Playing devil’s advocate, how might you critique your/the author’s argument/analysis?*

* In three functional groups, for use in facilitating dialogue, group inquiry, hypothesis testing, and peer critique.
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