

Question Categories for Designing Interest Surveys

The following six categories are useful for making interest surveys as together they give a broad picture of children's interests, and also provide valuable information for planning more engaging, personalized instruction. In each category below, there are some sample questions to demonstrate the kinds of questions that might be considered in a given category. One of the biggest factors in deciding which questions to include are the child's grade level. Some of these questions are more appropriate for older children. Others may need some modification for use with younger audiences.

Home, Family, and Community

- What do you enjoy doing at home with your family or friends?
- What do you enjoy doing at home by yourself?
- What do appreciate about your community and neighborhood?
- Do you have any pets or plants that you take care of at home? What are they? How do you care for them?
- Are there games, traditions, events, or pastimes you do with your family or friends that you would like to share with the class? What are they? Why are they important to you?
- Does your family speak more than one language? Could you share some words or sentences in that language with the class, so we could learn from you?

Books and Media

- What is your favorite book? Why do you like it?
- What is your favorite song, movie, or TV show?
- What is your favorite character in a book, movie or TV show? Why do you like that character?
- What kind of books do you usually read? Why?
- What kind of books would you like to start reading this year? Why?
- If you could choose a read aloud or a song for the class to hear, what would you choose? Why?
- Do you prefer fiction or nonfiction? Or do you like both? Why?
- Do you have a favorite genre/type of writing? Do you prefer novels, graphic novels and comics, short stories, poetry, or nonfiction?

School

- What do you most like studying at school? Why?
- What do you least like studying at school? Why?
- What do you want to learn this year at school? Why?
- What would you do to improve this school and other schools?
- What is interesting about reading and writing? What takes effort?
- What is interesting about math? What takes effort?
- What is interesting about science? What takes effort?
- What is interesting about social studies? What takes effort?

- What brings you joy at school?
- What frustrates you at school?
- What subjects or topics would you like to see added to the curriculum at school?
- What do you think will be fun about coming to school this year?
- What do you think will be hard about coming to school this year?

Pastimes and Hobbies

- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What new thing have you learned how to do in the past year?
- What new thing would you like to learn how to do in the upcoming year?
- Are you interested in art, music, games, sports, or another hobby? What aspects of art music, sports, games, or another hobby interest you?

Knowledge and Imagination

- What do you know a lot about?
- What do you want to gain more knowledge about?
- What things do you think it is important to have knowledge about? Why?
- Is there a historical figure you admire? Why do you admire that person?
- What are you curious about?
- What kind of thing might you invent if you could invent something?
- If you could imagine yourself living in any place or time, where or when would you live?
- If you could imagine yourself as any animal, what would you be?
- If you could imagine yourself doing any job in the future, what would you imagine yourself doing?

Current Events and the World

- What interested you about the time when ...?
- What scared you about the time when ...?
- What are some of the things you enjoyed doing during ...?
- What are some of the things that were hard to do during ...?
- What are some things you like about the world, as you know it, now?
- What are some things you would change about the world, as you know it, now?
- What are some of the issues or topics you would focus on if you were the president, the governor, or a member of Congress?
- What do you think it is important for citizens of our country to know and be able to do?