

# Powerful questions

## Introduction

A powerful question or statement can spark the imagination and stimulate a discussion. This activity creates questions that engage your students by linking topics they enjoy talking about directly with the content that you want to teach.

A good question should be:

### Personal

What are your students' interests and how can you link them to the topic? Can you link the topic to something happening in your local area?

### Current

Is the topic being reported by the media? Are your students familiar with it?

### Provocative

Could your students have strong feelings about the topic?

- In the right-hand column, write down all the science concepts/content related to the topic to be discussed.

Interests	Climate change
Mobile phones	Carbon footprint
Man United	Fossil fuels
The X Factor	Global warming

*This is where it gets a bit strange, but trust us...*

## How to run the activity...

Run the activity with your colleagues or your students.

- Working in pairs, use a copy of the template overleaf or draw two columns on a piece of paper.
- In the left-hand column, write a list of everything that your students are interested in. Write down as many things as possible (at least ten) in 3–4 minutes.
- The list could include celebrities, fashion, sports, music, local events, gadgets, etc. All references should be specific. For example, give the names of celebrities or TV programmes.
- Turn the list upside down, then one person picks up a pen and closes his/her eyes.
- He/she draws three or four lines to connect the two lists. The other person (with eyes open) helps keep the pen on the paper. This method generates more interesting results than choosing consciously.
- Turn the paper the right way up to see what connections you have made.
- Take 3–4 minutes to create questions or statements that link the connected items together. For example, Man United and carbon footprint could become: 'Should Man United only play local teams to reduce their carbon footprint?'

Write a list of everything that your students enjoy discussing – examples could include celebrities, TV programmes, sports, music, fashion labels or local events and news.

Write a list of everything that you want to discuss or that relates to the topic you are teaching.

Generated questions and statements

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