

Questions can be categorised into 4 levels called Blank's Levels of Questioning

They were developed by Blank, Rose and Berlin in 1978. The questions move from concrete to abstract. Understanding the complexity of questions can help in simplifying language or in appropriately developing children's ability to use language to reason. Children need to understand and respond to all these levels of questions to function easily within a year one classroom. Ages given in brackets are averages. Some 2-year-olds may cope with level 2-3 questions, while some 4-year-olds may need questions simplified to level 1-2.

1

(2-3 year olds)

Questions relate to the immediate environment and require concrete thinking. The answer is often in front of the child.

"What is that?" "What can you see?" "Find one like this" "What is ___ doing?" "Is it a ___?" (yes/no response)

2

(3-4 year olds)

As children develop world knowledge about concepts e.g. words about: size, colour, category and where things are etc. they start to be able to answer questions that require them to think about classifying/grouping objects, describing and understanding object functions etc.

"Find something that can ___ (cut)" "What is happening in this picture?" "Where is the ___?" (requires a location response e.g. "under the table" not just pointing) "Find something that is ___ (red) and ___ (spiky)" "How are these different?" "Which one is ___ (a fruit)?"

3

(4-5 year olds)

Requires children to use their own knowledge to make basic predictions, assume the role of another, or make generalisations. They begin to use higher-order thinking skills.

"What will happen next?" "How do you think he feels?" "How do I make ___ (a sandwich)?" "How are these the same?" "What is a ___?" (definitions)

4

Involves problem solving, predictions, solutions and explanations. Requires own knowledge and thinking about the future and past.

Predicting changes: "What will happen if...?" Solutions: "What should we do now?" Causes: "How did that happen?" Justifying: "Why can't we ___ eat ice-cream with a knife and fork?" Explanations: "How can we tell he is sad?"