

# MM

## QUICK— WHAT'S THE QUESTION

**A**lthough the structure of questions is important in grammatical communication, there are few activities that naturally elicit all possible question patterns. An engaging alternative is "reverse quiz games," in which players create various kinds of queries "in response" to given answers. Though somewhat "contrived," not only are such pursuits effective in teaching/learning instructional content, but they also motivate learners to produce correct, fitting, and meaningful grammar in appropriate contexts.

- ⇒ **SPECIFIC TOPIC OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS:** Informational Questions from the *INS Interview* (of potential citizens by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service)
- ⇒ **LANGUAGE LEARNING & PROFICIENCY LEVELS:** Intermediate to Advanced
- ⇒ **MATERIALS:** On transparencies and/or card stock, answers to questions in game-board format. To cover the items temporarily, use pieces of card stock or *Sticky Notes*

QUIZ BOARD 1. Quiz Subjects (Content) = American History, Government, Geography				
	WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	WHY?
Point Value <b>10</b>	George Washington	red, white, and blue	in the White House in Washington D.C.	for religious and political freedom
Point Value <b>20</b>	President Abraham Lincoln	It stands for District of Columbia.	on Liberty Island in New York Harbor	to win independence from England
Point Value <b>30</b>	the Vice President of the United States	the U.S. Constitution	in southern California	One reason was to free the slaves.
Point Value <b>40</b>	the governor	a government for and by the people	into the Gulf of Mexico	because he was assassinated

This Quiz-Game Answer Board is in the "Jeopardy" format, with items in *ascending* order of difficulty.

Question words have replaced the usual "content column heads."

(Self-) Teaching Tips:  
Creating Logical Answer + Question Sequences

The popular TV game show “Jeopardy” is known for the *Answer-plus-Question Format* of its quiz items. In what seems like a reversal of the traditional query-and-answer order, contestants must begin each response with a *question word*, usually *who* or *what*. In most cases, however, the correct responses could not really precede the given “answers” in meaningful sequence, so the language of the quiz show is not very helpful for grammar lessons in question formation.

Here are some ways to get around the grammatical peculiarities of that format:

- For each answer given on each quiz board, provide a question word or phrase with which participants are to begin their responses. The most common question words, all of which start with *wh-* are *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Some other possibilities are *which* or *what* followed by a noun, *how*, *how much*, *how many*, or *how* followed by another adjective.
- Although there are few answers that can elicit only a *single correct* question, you can choose responses that match only one or a few *obvious* inquiries. Make sure that each quiz item can follow the correct question in logical and meaningful order—that the sequence *makes sense*.
- Word the answers so they *suggest* the matching questions you have in mind. For example, you can include prepositions in answers to *where* and *when* questions and the conjunction *because* in responses to *why*-questions. If it helps, full-sentence answers (statements) could contain *word cues*.

## Instructions: How to Create & Use “Quiz-Answer-Boards” for Question Formation

1. **CREATING QUIZ ANSWER BOARDS.** Before making reusable *Quiz Boards*, collect a series of questions and answers related to course content or another topic that interests participants. Group the queries according to their *question words* or *phrases*. Keep them (in a list or chart) as an *Answer Key* for games. The sample questions below correspond to the *Quiz Game Board* shown on the previous page.

GAME 1: Quiz Question-and-Answers: American History, Government, Geography			
WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	WHY?
10. Who was the first President of the United States? <i>George Washington</i>	10. What are the colors of the United States flag? <i>Red, white, and blue</i>	10. Where does the President live while in office? <i>In the White House in Washington D.C.</i>	10. Why did the first colonists leave Europe for America? <i>For religious/political freedom</i>
20. Who (Which President) freed the slaves? <i>President Abraham Lincoln</i>	20. In the name of a capital city, what do the letters D.C. stand for? <i>The District of Columbia</i>	20. Where is the Statue of Liberty? <i>On Liberty Island in New York Harbor</i>	20. Why did the colonists fight to Revolutionary War? <i>To win independence from England</i>
30. If the President dies, who takes his place? <i>The Vice President</i>	30. What (document) is the highest law of the land? <i>The U.S. Constitution</i>	30. Where are the cities of Los Angeles and San Diego? <i>In southern California</i>	30. Why did the North fight in the Civil War? <i>One reason was to free the slaves.</i>
40. Who is the chief executive of each state? <i>The governor</i>	40. What is the definition of a democracy? <i>A government for and by the people</i>	40. Where does the Mississippi River flow? <i>Into the Gulf of Mexico</i>	40. Why didn't President John F. Kennedy serve a full term? <i>He was assassinated.</i>

Use one piece of card stock, at least 8 1/2 by 11 inches in size, and/or computer screen for each *Quiz Game Board*. To produce a board in the sample format shown in **IDEA MM: QUICK—WHAT’S THE QUESTION**, choose an appropriate number of columns, probably 3 to 6. Following are some ideas for useful *question words and phrases* to use as *Column Headings*. To ensure that all the important *question sentence patterns* are used, you can put a different combination on each *Board*.

WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	• In what year? • In which decade?	How?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who in the world?</li> <li>• Which figure from history?</li> <li>• What living person?</li> <li>• Which celebrity?</li> <li>• What leader?</li> <li>• What president?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What historical event?</li> <li>• What famous document?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what place?</li> <li>• In which country?</li> <li>• Where in the United States?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During what period of time?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much?</li> <li>• How many?</li> <li>• How important?</li> <li>• How necessary?</li> </ul>
	WHICH?	WHEN?	WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For how long?</li> <li>• How close?</li> <li>• How far?</li> <li>• For how many years?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which law?</li> <li>• Which principle?</li> <li>• Which statistic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From when to when?</li> <li>• How often?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toward what end?</li> <li>• For what purpose?</li> <li>• For what reason?</li> </ul>	

In an extra column, you might print *point values for items in ascending order of difficulty*. Values between 10 and 50 are useful because they can correspond to the number of seconds that “contestants” will be allowed to respond to each item. In the boxes of the appropriate column for each *question word or phrase*, put the *Quiz Answers*. To cover these until participants choose them, place cards or *Sticky Notes* (removable papers with a sticky edge) over the words in the boxes.

QUIZ BOARD 1. Quiz Subjects (Content) = American History, Government, Geography				
	WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	WHY?
Point Value 10				
Point Value 20				
Point Value 30				
Point Value 40				

2. **PLAYING A QUIZ GAME IN TEAMS.** If *Quiz Answers* are on a large board, transparency, or computer screen that everyone can see, the class can play games together. Cooperately and in competition with other groups, teams can choose items, agree on their “final” responses, and collect points for correct *Questions*.

The first team chooses a *Column Head* (a *question-word or phrase*). According to their level of confidence in the content (subject matter) of the game, they choose a *point value*. The *Card* covering the *answer* is removed, the item is read aloud, and the team has the number of seconds specified by the point value to come up with a grammatically correct and appropriate question for the answer.

(Self-)  
Teaching  
Tips:  
Question  
Sentence  
Patterns

Linguists/Grammarians divide question sentence patterns into two major groups. The first is yes/no questions (structures with rising intonation that elicit answers equivalent to yes or no). Most often, such questions begin with auxiliary verbs, such as forms of be, do, or have, or modal verbs (can, will, may, etc.)

In the second type, questions asking for informational answers begin with question words or phrases, usually who, what, what time, when, where, why, how, how many, and the like. When the question word who or what represents the subject of the sentence, it's followed by a singular verb in statement word order—as in the examples “Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?” “Who presides over the U.S. Senate?” “What happened in 1776?” “What is the Bill of Rights?” If the question word represents another sentence element, however, it's usually separated from the subject by an auxiliary verb or modal, as in “When did the Revolutionary War begin?” or “What can Congress do?”

If the team comes up with an acceptable response within the allotted number of seconds, they win an agreed-upon number of points. These can be listed and/or added to a running total on a board or a score sheet. The same players get another chance to choose a column, create a question for the answer, and collect points for a correct response. That team continues to play until they miss an item.

When the team whose turn it is responds *incorrectly*, it becomes the next group's turn to try to come up with an appropriate query—and collect the points—for the same item. If the second team responds correctly, they get another turn, and another, and another—until they miss an item, in which case the third team gets a chance to play.

If no team can come up with a correct and appropriate response to an item, the instructor or *Quizmaster* (the person with the *Answer Key* and/or necessary knowledge of the content) tells some possible questions. When all the cards or papers have been removed and all the items responded to, the group with the most points is the winner.

3. **PLAYING QUIZ GAMES IN SMALL GROUPS.** Table-top *Quiz Boards* work for small-group games, many of which can be played at the same time. After finishing a game, each group exchanges their *Game Board* for another one (with different targeted info and other question patterns).

*Group Answer & Question Quiz Board Games* can proceed as above—except that *Individuals* or *partners* can compete instead of in teams. Games will probably proceed most smoothly with a *Quizmaster* in each group—one person in charge of removing the cards or papers covering the items, reading the answers aloud, judging the correctness and appropriateness of contestants' responses (with the help of an *Answer Key* that gives multiple possibilities), and keeping score. Participants can take turns serving as *Quizmaster*.



4. **GRAMMAR & CONTENT FOLLOW-UP.** Of course, in a course or class, *Quiz-Board Games* are intended to be part of a wider content- or language-lesson. Like other language activities, they invite follow-up.

- **LISTS.** For the simplest kind of follow-up, game participants (individuals, pairs, groups) can compile lists of the answers and questions involved in each quiz game. They can hand these in for correction, comment, and/or grades.
- **“INFORMATION CHAINS.”** In a kind of *linked* format, each group works with a different *Quiz Board*. They divide a piece of paper vertically into three columns. In the left column, they list questions to correspond to the responses on their boards—perhaps *not* the most obvious questions this time. They pass their question lists on to the next group, who list logical (and hopefully correct) answers to the questions in the middle column of the paper. These can be checked and compared to the original *Quiz Board* items.

After *folding back* the first column of their paper, the *second* group passes it back to the *first* (or on to a *third*). Looking only at the information in the *middle* column, that group lists questions that correspond to the given answers. Then they unfold their paper to compare the questions in the outside columns.

Question 1	Answer 2	Question 2
<i>Who was the first President of the United States?</i>	<i>George Washington</i>	<i>Who led the American troops in the Revolutionary War?</i>
<i>If the President of the US dies in office, who replaces him?</i>	<i>The Vice President</i>	<i>Who was Joe Biden during the Barak Obama administration?</i>
<i>What document represents the highest law of the United States?</i>	<i>The U.S. Constitution</i>	<i>What historical document is Thomas Jefferson known for writing?</i>
<i>Where are the famous tourist places Disneyland and Hollywood located?</i>	<i>In southern California</i>	<i>Where did the movie (motion picture) industry begin in the U.S.?</i>

## Levels = Low Beginning to Advanced (How to Adapt)

- ↓ As is often the case, the activities and games suggested in **IDEA MM: QUICK—WHAT’S THE QUESTION?** can be adapted to less proficient learning groups by making the content of the lessons less challenging. For beginners, use only easy items with obvious responses—material that learners are likely to be familiar with—in the simplest of sentence patterns.
- ↓ Before playing quiz games with low-level students, provide preparation. Go over the information first. Allow participants to refer to vocabulary lists while competing in games.
- ↑ Challenge and competition can be added to *Answer-and-Question Games* by having participants create *Quiz Item Lists* (Questions & Answers—and vice versa)—based on their *own* subjects of knowledge or expertise. After editing the listings for accuracy and grammar, use them to make more *Quiz Item Boards*—or have students create these. The individuals or groups that researched or thought of the questions and answers for each topic can be the *Quizmasters* for those games.

## VARIATIONS & OTHER AREAS OF APPLICATION

Almost any content (subject matter) is appropriate for the *Question & Answer Quiz* format. And most topics can also be presented in *reverse order*—with answers followed by matching queries. In fact, the same material can be covered in *both* ways. Students can learn facts and practice information in the traditional order first and then review both the material and the question sentence patterns in reverse sequence.

Here are some practical topics that come to mind for *Question & Answer* and *Answer & Question* activities:

- *Getting Acquainted*
- *Health & Medicine*
- *Money & Consumerism*
- *Everyday Life*
- *Work & Business*
- *Current Events*
- *Culture & Customs*
- *Recreation, Including Sports*
- *Entertainment, Including the Media*

Here are ideas for “cultural literacy” or “academic” subjects:

- *Mythology & Folklore*
- *History & Government*
- *Economics*
- *Literature*
- *Geography*
- *The Physical Sciences*
- *Philosophy & Religion*
- *Anthropology, Sociology*
- *The Earth Sciences*
- *Fine Arts & Music*
- *Psychology*
- *The Life Sciences*

*Linguistic (language)* topics are appropriate for quiz games too. Some examples are *spelling, grammar patterns and rules, pronunciation, vocabulary, writing conventions*, and others. A possible light and funny linguistic content area is *riddles*—silly questions and their matching answers.

Almost any *Question & Answer Game* can be played in reverse order, with contestants giving plausible *questions for the answers* instead of answers to the questions. So what about variations in *Quiz Board designs*?

For example, IDEA X: **Game-Board**

**Knowledge of *DOING WITHOUT THE***

***PHOTOCOPIER*** (*Authors & Editors*, ISBN 0-9627878-4-1) offers instructions for “Quiz Board Games” in the “Tic-Tac-Toe” and other designs. Instead of question cards, of course, competitors can respond to the items presented on answer cards.

