

2.5 Questioning activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Topic type</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Preparation</i>	<i>Time in minutes</i>
39 What would happen if . . . ?	fact.	int.	class	yes	10–15
40 Question game	fact./pers.	int.	groups	Part 2	15–30
41 Go and find out	fact./pers.	int.	indiv./class	Part 2	15–30
42 Find someone who . . .	fact./pers.	int.	indiv./class	Part 2	10–20
43 Something else	pers.*	int.	indiv./groups	no	10–20
44 Ageless	pers.*	int.	groups/class	yes	10–20
45 Question and answer cards	fact.	int.	pairs	Part 2	10–15

pers. = personal; pers.* = more intimate; fact. = factual; int. = intermediate;

indiv. = individuals; groups = small groups; pairs = two people working together;

class = everybody working together; Part 2 = material for the exercises is to be found in Part 2.

This last section in the chapter is something of a mixed bag, in so far as it contains all those activities which, although they centre around questioning, do not fit into any of the previous sections. First of all there are humanistic exercises (No. 43 *Something else* and No. 44 *Ageless*) that focus on the learners themselves, their attitudes and values. Secondly there is a kind of exercise that could be employed to teach learners about the cultural background of the target country (No. 45 *Question and answer cards*). Thirdly there is a board game (No. 40 *Question game*). Last of all there are three activities suitable either as warming-up exercises or as strategies for tackling more factual topics. The worksheets belonging to these exercises (in Part 2) can be modified accordingly. Many of these activities are quite flexible, not only as regards their content but also in terms of procedure. By simply introducing a few new rules, e.g. a limit on the number of questions or a time-limit they are transformed into games.

As soon as students are able to produce yes/no and wh-questions most of these activities can be used. You may, however, have to adapt the worksheets as these are not always aimed at the earliest stage at which an exercise can be used. For reasons of motivation similar activities, like No. 41 *Go and find out* and No. 42 *Find someone who . . .*, should not be done directly one after the other.

For activities in which question forms are practised see sections 2.1 to 2.4. The book by Moskowitz (1978) contains a great number of humanistic exercises.

*Questions and answers***39** What would happen if . . . ?

- Aims* *Skills* – speaking
Language – if-clauses, making conjectures, asking for confirmation
Other – imagination
- Level* Intermediate
- Organisation* Class
- Preparation* About twice as many slips of paper with an event/situation written on them as there are students
- Time* 10–15 minutes
- Procedure* Every student receives one or two slips of paper with sentences like these on them: ‘What would happen if a shop gave away its goods free every Wednesday?’ ‘What would you do if you won a trip for two to a city of your choice?’ One student starts by reading out his question and then asks another student to answer it. The second student continues by answering or asking a third student to answer the first student’s question. If he has answered the question he may then read out his own question for somebody else to answer. The activity is finished when all the questions have been read out and answered.
- Variations* The students can prepare their own questions. Some more suggestions:
- What would happen
- if everybody who told a lie turned green?
 - if people could get a driving licence at 14?
 - if girls had to do military service?
 - if men were not allowed to become doctors or pilots?
 - if children over 10 were allowed to vote?
 - if gold was found in your area?
 - if a film was made in your school/place of work?
 - if headmasters had to be elected by teachers and pupils?
 - if smoking was forbidden in public places?
 - if the price of alcohol was raised by 300 per cent?
- What would you do
- if you were invited to the Queen’s garden party?
 - if a photograph of yours won first prize at an exhibition?
 - if your little sister aged 14 told you she was pregnant?
 - if you saw your teacher picking apples from her neighbour’s tree?
 - if a salesman called at your house and tried to sell you a sauna bath?

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if your horoscope warned you against travelling when you want to go on holiday?
 if it rained every day of your holiday?
 if you got a love letter from somebody you did not know?
 if you found a snake under your bed?
 if you got lost on a walk in the woods?
 if you were not able to remember numbers?
 if somebody hit a small child very hard in your presence?
 if you found a £20 note in a library book?
 if your friend said she did not like the present you had given her?
 if you suddenly found out that you could become invisible by eating spinach?
 if you broke an expensive vase while you were baby-sitting at a friend's house?
 if you invited somebody to dinner at your house but they forgot to come?
 if you forgot you had asked four people to lunch and didn't have any food in the house when they arrived?
 if a young man came up to you, gave you a red rose and said that you were the loveliest person he had seen for a long time?
 if you noticed that you hadn't got any money on you and you had promised to ring your mother from a call box at exactly this time?
 if you could not sleep at night?

40 Question game

Aims *Skills* – speaking, reading comprehension, listening comprehension

Language – questions and answers

Other – getting to know each other

Level Intermediate

Organisation Groups of six students

Preparation Two dice of different colours, a question board (see Part 2) and 10 (or 15) question cards (see Part 2) for each group

Time 15–30 minutes

Procedure *Step 1:* Each group receives the dice, question board and question cards. The question cards are put in piles face down next to the numbers 1 to 5 on the question board. Each student in the group is given a number from 1 to 6.

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Step 2: Taking turns, each student throws the dice. One die indicates the question to be asked (the one on top of the pile of question cards next to the number thrown) the other, the person who must answer the question. If the 'question-die' shows a 6, the person whose turn it is may ask a question of the student whose number was thrown with the 'student-die'. The exercise is finished when everybody has answered every question.

Variations 1: Students can prepare different questions.

2: Instead of personal questions others concerning subjects or topics taught in class can be chosen.

41 Go and find out

Aims *Skills* – speaking (writing)

Language – asking for and giving information

Other – getting to know each other, relaxation, losing inhibitions

Level Intermediate

Organisation Individuals, class

Preparation A different task for each student (see Part 2), a list each of the names of all the students (in big classes)

Time 15–30 minutes

Procedure *Step 1:* Each student receives a task and a list of the names of all the other students (in small groups where students know each other the list of names is not necessary).

Step 2: Each student now questions everybody else, according to his task. He writes the answers down, and crosses off the list the names of the people he has asked.

Step 3: When everybody has finished asking, each student reads out his question/task and reports his findings.

Variations 1: The types of task can be varied according to the background, age and interests of the group.

2: Two or three students can be given the same task.

Remarks There is a similar exercise in No. 15 *Opinion poll*.

42 Find someone who . . .

Aims *Skills* – speaking

Language – questions

Other – getting to know each other

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<i>Level</i>	Intermediate
<i>Organisation</i>	Individuals, class
<i>Preparation</i>	Handout (see Part 2; it should contain roughly as many sentences as there are students)
<i>Time</i>	10–20 minutes
<i>Procedure</i>	<p><i>Step 1:</i> Each student receives a handout. Everyone walks around the room and questions other people about things on the handout. As soon as somebody finds another student who answers ‘yes’ to one of the questions, he writes his name in the space and goes on to question someone else, because each name may only be used once. If a student overhears somebody answering ‘yes’ to another person’s question he is not allowed to use that name himself. After a given time (15 minutes) or when someone has filled in all the blanks, the questioning stops.</p> <p><i>Step 2:</i> Students read out what they have found out. They can preface their report with: ‘I was surprised that X liked . . .’, ‘I never thought that Y liked . . .’.</p>

43 Something else

<i>Aims</i>	<p><i>Skills</i> – speaking</p> <p><i>Language</i> – conditional</p> <p><i>Other</i> – thinking about oneself, getting to know each other, imagination</p>
<i>Level</i>	Intermediate
<i>Organisation</i>	Individuals or groups (in large classes)
<i>Preparation</i>	None
<i>Time</i>	10–20 minutes
<i>Procedure</i>	The teacher explains the basic idea of the activity: ‘Suppose you weren’t you but something else entirely, e.g. an animal or a musical instrument. Just think what you would like to be and why, when I tell you the categories.’ Possible categories are: colours, days of the week, kinds of weather, musical instruments, months, countries, cities, articles of clothing, songs, kinds of fruit, flowers, kinds of literature, pieces of furniture, food, toys, etc.
<i>Variations</i>	<i>Something else</i> can also be played as a guessing game. Two students are asked to leave the room while the rest of the class agree on a person to be guessed. When the two students are called back in they ask questions such as: ‘What would the person be if he or she was an animal? a colour? a building? a

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landscape? a piece of music? a musical instrument? a flower?, etc. From the answers, characteristics of the person can be deduced and his or her identity guessed. If the person to be guessed is present he can comment on the comparisons made, e.g. 'I was surprised that . . ., I don't see myself as . . ., Being compared to . . . was quite startling/disappointing/flattering/embarrassing . . .'

Remarks Since the insights gained in this activity can be quite unsettling for the people concerned, it should only be organised in groups which have a friendly, supportive atmosphere.
(Idea adapted from Moskowitz 1978.)

44 Ageless

Aims *Skills* – speaking
Language – questions about one's age and feelings about age
Other – talking and thinking about oneself

Level Intermediate

Organisation Groups or class (if not more than 15 students)

Preparation Questions about age, one list of questions for each group (see below)

Time 10–20 minutes

Procedure Each group/the class talks about age, guided by the following questions:

'What do you like about your present age? What did you like about being younger? What will you like about being 5/10/30 years older? What will you like about being elderly? What is the ideal age? Why? What could you say to someone who is not happy about his age? Do you often think about age/growing old/staying young? Does advertising influence your feelings?'

Variations The questions can be distributed to different students, who ask the other members of the class/their groups when it is their turn.

Remarks This exercise works well if the students have known each other for a while and a friendly, supportive atmosphere has been established.
(Idea adapted from Moskowitz 1978.)

45 Question and answer cards

<i>Aims</i>	<i>Skills</i> – speaking <i>Language</i> – formulating questions <i>Other</i> – learning something about English-speaking countries
<i>Level</i>	Intermediate
<i>Organisation</i>	Pairs
<i>Preparation</i>	One card per student (see Part 2)
<i>Time</i>	10–15 minutes
<i>Procedure</i>	The students work in pairs. They question each other in turn about the things specified on their cards. (If several cards have been distributed each pair of students exchanges cards with another after having answered all the questions.)
<i>Variations</i>	1: Each student receives a different card and has to find his partner before he can start with the questions. 2: The students make up their own cards about subjects dealt with in class. For this they should use the second type of card (see Part 2), where answers are not given.
<i>Remarks</i>	Other examples for guided questioning are to be found in No. 16 <i>Guided interviews</i> .