

Questions that extend children's thinking.



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Some questions to ask the children as they are working on their maths and in the plenary at the end of the lesson.

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Ask children who are getting started with a piece of work:

How are you going to tackle this?
What information do you have? What do you need to find out or do?
What operation/s are you going to use?
Will you do it mentally, with pencil and paper, using a number line, with a calculator...? Why?
What method are you going to use? Why?
What equipment will you need?
What questions will you need to ask?
How are you going to record what you are doing?
What do you think the answer or result will be?
Can you estimate or predict?

Make positive interventions to check progress while children are working, by asking:

Can you explain what you have done so far?
What else is there to do?
Why did you decide to use this method or do it this way?
Can you think of another method that might have worked?
Could there be a quicker way of doing this?
What do you mean by...?
What did you notice when...?
Why did you decide to organise your results like that?
Are you beginning to see a pattern or a rule?
Do you think that this would work with other numbers?
Have you thought of all the possibilities? How can you be sure?

Ask children who are stuck:

Can you describe the problem in your own words?
Can you talk me through what you have done so far?
What did you do last time? What is different this time?
Is there something that you already know that might help?
Could you try it with simpler numbers... fewer numbers... using a number line...?
What about putting things in order?
Would a table help, or a picture/diagram/graph?
Why not make a guess and check if it works?
Have you compared your work with anyone else's?

During the plenary session of a lesson ask:

How did you get your answer?
Can you describe your method/pattern/rule to us all? Can you explain why it works?
What could you try next?
Would it work with different numbers?
What if you had started with... rather than...?
What if you could only use...?
Is it a reasonable answer/result? What makes you say so?
How did you check it?
What have you learned or found out today?
If you were doing it again, what would you do differently?
Having done this, when could you use this method/information/idea again?
Did you use any new words today? What do they mean? How do you spell them?
What are the key points or ideas that you need to remember for the next lesson?