

Understanding Texts: 3 Levels of Inquiry

Learning Goals:

You will understand:

- that there are 3 levels of questions that can be asked of any text, regardless of genre
- how to ask these questions in the process of interpreting and analyzing a text
- that these questions can lead to greater understanding of the text
- that these questions can help consumers of texts understand the intent of the text's creator(s), that creators of texts have purpose, that the creator(s) of texts want to impact their audiences

Homework assignment: Read "A Worn Path" and compose 2 Level One, 3 Level Two, and 2 Level Three questions based on the story. Your *typed* questions are due next class.

Examples from *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Level One Questions: Explicit questions: These questions can be derived directly from the text, literal questions. These questions may define, describe, identify, name, recite, etc.

Examples:

Why does Atticus go to the jail?

Whom does Scout speak with at the jail?

Level Two Questions: Implicit questions: These questions can be inferred from the text, but require readers to analyze, compare, contrast, synthesize, etc.

Examples:

Jem refuses to leave the jail after Atticus impels him to go home. What does this defiance reveal about him?

What does a comparison of Dill's family life to that of Jem and Scout's reveal?

Level Three Questions: Questions transcending the text: These questions go beyond what is stated or implied in the text. They require readers to evaluate, speculate, apply, hypothesize, etc.

Examples:

The crowd disperses after Scout talks to Mr. Cunningham. What does this reveal about human nature and the "mob mentality"?

Examine the behavior of Jem and Scout in Chapter 15. What does their behavior reveal about gender roles in the 1930's?