



ORCA: A METHOD TO CRAFT
**OPEN, RELEVANT, CRITICAL,
& ACTIONABLE QUESTIONS**



College of Education
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ORCA: A METHOD TO CRAFT OPEN, RELEVANT, CRITICAL, AND ACTIONABLE QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

All inquiry-based classrooms, whether facilitated by teachers or led by students, are rooted in questions. Use this short guide to support the development of open, relevant, critical, and actionable questions using four criteria.

**What is the question you are asking?
Record it here:**

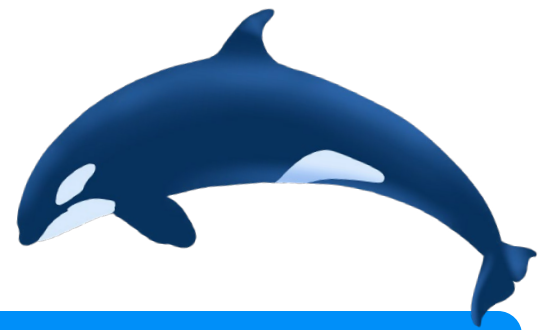
O **Open**
Is your question open-ended?

R **Relevant**
Is your question meaningful to you?

C **Critical**
Does your question explicitly critique systems of oppression and power?

A **Actionable**
Will your question lead you (and others) to action?

IS MY QUESTION...?



Using the ORCA criteria, analyze and revise your question.

		Use the space below to revise your question or to share how it meets each criterion.
O	<p>OPEN Is your question open-ended?</p> <p>Can your question be answered with a “yes” or “no?” If so, revise it to be open. You shouldn’t already know the answer to your question before asking it. Open questions lead to new learnings!</p>	
R	<p>RELEVANT Is your question meaningful to you?</p> <p>Consider your question’s relevance in the moments surrounding your world(s). If your question is not relevant to you or your communities, revise it. Relevant questions lead to engaged inquiries!</p>	
C	<p>CRITICAL Does your question explicitly critique systems of oppression and power?</p> <p>How does your question contribute to imagining or building a more just world? Consider a question that leads to transformation. Critical changes happen when we think critically about the world around us!</p>	
A	<p>ACTIONABLE Will your question lead you (and others) to action?</p> <p>Consider how action-oriented your question is. It should provoke an action rather than just being an unactionable observation. Inquiry is the motivator of change, and your question could inspire an actionable movement for change!</p>	

MY QUESTION IS...

After revision, what is the question you have created?
Record it here:

My question is... (check all that apply):

OPEN

RELEVANT

CRITICAL

ACTIONABLE



Congratulations on creating a great question using the ORCA format! Now, you should have a question that promotes inquiry which is open, relevant, critical, and actionable. Keep this strategy in mind when forming questions to ensure they promote inquiry and justice.

At Social Studies Network, we believe that all students deserve inquiry-based and justice-centered learning experiences and want to support teachers in creating those contexts of exploration and action. To meet these goals, we conduct research, offer professional learning experiences, and share resources including the one you are reading right now! Take a look at the links below to see some of the other amazing resources we offer!

SOCIAL STUDIES NETWORK

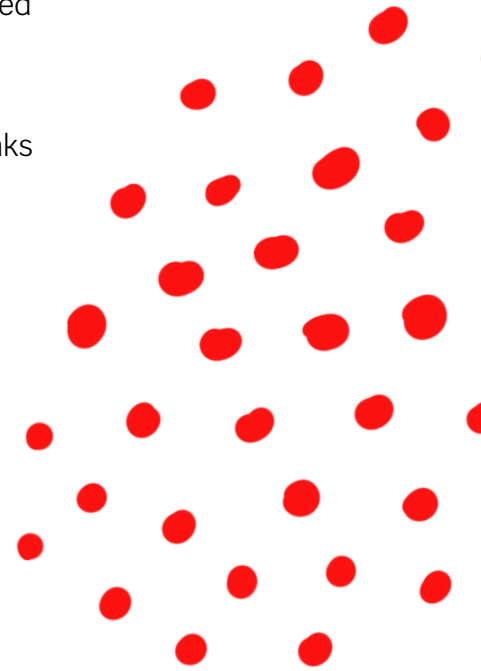
[WEBSITE](#)

[YOUTUBE](#)

[SPOTIFY](#)

[TIKTOK](#)

[APPLE PODCAST](#)



Take a look at some of the Social Studies Network's other Toolkits:

[Incorporating Inclusivity in the Classroom](#)

[Action Plan Toolkit](#)

[Inquiry With and In Community](#)

[Towards Inquiry & Inclusion in Social Studies](#)

[Critical Civics Toolkit](#)

This toolkit was created by Asif Wilson and Emma Greenberg as part of **I3: Inclusive, Inquiry-based Social Science for Illinois** professional learning series. Designed by Kayce Bayer, Good Scribble Studio.

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