

What is an open-ended question?

An open-ended question is one in which a situation is presented and you are asked to communicate an extended response. In most cases, the questions have two or more parts and require fact or opinion responses, supported by examples or text-based and experience-based arguments.

What might be asked in open-ended questions?

The following provides examples of what might be asked in these questions:

1. A task with a request to show a procedure (possibly a combination of tasks).
2. A written explanation of why a stated conclusion is correct or incorrect.
3. A list to meet certain conditions. The student might be asked to list and support three traits of the story's main character.
4. A graphic organizer (list, Venn diagram, etc.) to fit specific conditions.
5. An extension of a story, such as what will happen next, or what might have happened differently if a change had been made in a story.
6. A supported persuasive paragraph on a topic.
7. A how-to explanation, or a summary of a process which was presented in an article.
8. An interpretation of a given text passage (usually one containing an unnamed literary element, such as simile, foreshadowing, or metaphor).
9. An original narrative based upon a picture prompt.
10. An explanation of the author's purpose in writing the selection (or a question about the author's treatment of a story element).

What are some guidelines for answering open-ended questions?

In answering open-ended questions, students will find the following guidelines helpful:

1. If writing a paragraph or more, quickly plan out your writing using an appropriate graphic organizer.
2. Write in complete sentence answers.
3. Be sure to identify each question or question part you must answer, and approach them in that same order.
4. Provide specific examples from the text supplied, plus examples from your own experience with reading and literature (if they are appropriate).
5. Be aware that some questions require a correct answer (since the answer appears in the text), while others ask your opinion. Either way, support what you say with clear examples.
6. Reread story sections in order to gather ideas or evidence for your writing.
7. Reread your response. Check for errors in punctuation, spelling, capitals, etc.
8. Reread your response again. Check for sentences that could be improved with more exact vocabulary or transitions.
9. Double-check your prewriting (graphic organizer) to see that all ideas have been used.
10. If you run out of space or time, note that at the bottom of your writing.