



## Questions to Your Audience

Questions are a great way to involve your audience. They pay attention because you're requesting information from them, and they become more involved because they are participating. There are different ways to ask questions of your audience members. The way you pose a question guides your audience in how they think about the topic. One thing to keep in mind is not to overdo it with questioning. Too many questions may cause confusion or passivity among members of your audience!

Four primary types of questions are:

### A. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

These are designed to provide an opportunity for all of your audience to participate and to obtain a body of information (ie. facts, concepts, ideas).

Example: "What do you see as you look at that hillside?"

### B. FOCUS QUESTIONS

These are designed to focus thought on specific information, which often will be compared and contrasted with other information later in the program.

Example: "What do you notice about the trees on the slope?"

### C. INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS

These are designed to compare, contrast and see logical relationships between specific points brought out in the focus questions. The audience is asked to express an inferred relationship based on their observations.

EXAMPLE: "How do you account for the differences between the trees on the north-facing and south-facing slopes?"

### D. SUMMARY QUESTIONS

These are designed to obtain conclusion, summary or closure. No new data is introduced. Instead, generalizations or encompassing questions are presented that could be applied to a variety of situations.

Example: "How could we state a general rule about north-facing and south-facing slopes everywhere?"

Tip for children's groups: Be specific with your questions or they won't understand how to answer. Instead of "What do you notice about the great horned owl?", say "What do you notice about the great horned owl's eyes? Are they big or small? Point to where you think its ears are."

Remember, an interpreter does not explain everything there is to know about a topic/area. Instead, you want to encourage your audience to interpret it for themselves.