

Hinge Questions

Hinge questions should be used within a lesson to assess all pupils' understanding and thinking at key points (Wiliam, 2016). Hinge questions act as a 'fork in the road' and determine whether the teacher can continue with the planned learning, or whether they need to review and reinforce the learning undertaken up to this point in the lesson.

Hinge questions are usually multiple-choice questions, which usually have more than one *correct* answer. Having more than one correct answer prevents pupils from 'guessing' the right answer and therefore giving the teacher a much more accurate assessment of pupils' learning e.g. it prevents pupils from giving the right answer for the wrong reason (Wiliam, 2016).

Here is an example of a hinge question in primary science:

**Applying Understanding
Hinge Point Question Exemplars
What A Good One Looks Like
Example 2 Primary Science**

Which of the following is true about the Moon?

- **A. It reflects light.**
- **B. It orbits the earth.**
- **C. It can't be seen during the day because there is too much light.**
- **D. It has no gravity.**

This is a good hinge point question as there are multiple correct answers.

This is a good hinge point question as students have alternative ideas about the Moon.

This is a good hinge point question as there are multiple incorrect answers which have been chosen as this is where a common alternative conception about the idea exists

This is a good hinge point question as it would not be easy to guess the two correct responses (A and B), and different combinations of answers would point to students having different kinds of misconceptions

This is a good hinge point question as the students can respond in less than two minutes and the teacher could quickly decide from responses who did or did not understand the concept

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Hinge questions should not take a long time. They are quick fire questions that pupils can respond to using a mini whiteboard. The teacher scans the room and assesses learning.

The 'fork in the road'

If 90%+ of pupils answer the hinge question correctly, the teacher can move forward with the planned learning for this 90%+. This could be through engaging them in an independent activity or moving on to apply their knowledge. The 10%- who did not get the hinge question correct require further support. This could be through support from the teacher, a Teaching Assistant or a computer programme.

If less than 90% of pupils get the hinge question correct, the teacher should not move forward with the planned learning but re-visit what has not been understood with the

pupils. For the few who *have* understood the learning, they can complete an independent activity or apply their learning.

Hinge questions allow teachers to assess learning in a formative manner, ensuring that pupils are ready to move forwards, avoiding the issues often seen at the summative assessment points where gaps in knowledge and understanding are highlighted, albeit too late.