

Curiosity

Syllables
cu•ri•os•i•ty

Pronunciation
kyoor-ee-os-i-tee

Definition

Eager to learn or know more.
(Matan's **curiosity** made research fun for him.)
Simply put: wanting to know things.

Related Terms

Inquisitive: Extremely curious.

Fundamental Question:

Is curiosity a thing of the past?

Students will investigate the idea that though fundamental to our survival, curiosity may not play as central a role in the lives of children as it once did and, while several factors may be contributing to this change,* people are entitled to wonder about things and to play an active role in finding their own answers.

Objectives

Each student will:

1. Identify outcomes related to curiosity such as exploring, investigating, and learning.
2. Suggest curiosity boosters and test out the effectiveness of each booster.
3. Hypothesize about what the world might be like if curiosity were forbidden.

Before you begin

- Print out one copy of *Just Curious* ~ for each student.
- Prepare a box on which you have stenciled a large question mark and into which you have placed one treat for each student.

Suggested Sidebars:

Speaking of Curiosity (Discussion Idea)

What is one thing you've always wanted to know, but to which you never found a full answer?

Taking It to the Next Level

Survey the teachers in your school. Find out if they think today's students have a higher or lower level of curiosity than students of the past. If so, what do they think caused the change?

* example:

"... the technological age is making us much too lazy and far less curious. Students are growing up thinking of the web, for instance, as a place for instant answers (reliable or not) to any question they may want to ask."
Neil Henry, professor of journalism

Curiosity

Procedure

1. Place the sealed treat box on the table, but do not mention it. If questions arise, respond with “That’s something to think about, isn’t it?”
2. Say: “Today we are going to talk about curiosity. Can you think of words that tell what some results of curiosity might be? I’ll start you off. (Write exploring on the board.) Ask, how would exploring come from curiosity? (Discuss.) What are some other things that may be outcomes of curiosity? (Add students’ responses to the list.)
3. Walk over to the treat box and rest your hand on it, but as before, do not mention it. Say: “Suppose you were a teacher and you wanted to boost the curiosity of your students. What are some of the things you might do? (Allow for many, varied, and unusual answers.) I hope that when you do your next report or presentation you will try out your booster to get your classmates especially curious about your topic.”
4. Distribute the *Just Curious* ~ sheets and review the directions with the students. Have them complete the assignment.
5. **Follow Up:** Refer to procedure number 1. Say “Some of you were curious—there’s that word again—about this box. What do you think is in it? Let’s play 20 Questions to find out. (Record an abbreviated version of each of the 20 questions and their answers on the board.) When the game is over:
 - If someone has figured out what is the box, share its contents with everyone.
 - If no one has figured out what is in the box, wait until the next child asks “What’s in there?” and open the box. As you distribute the treats say “Now aren’t you glad that your curiosity lead you to be persistent and to ask one more time?”

Teachers:

“When students are magnetized by a new idea or a new situation and are compelled to explore further, regardless of external rewards, they can be said to be truly motivated.”

Marilyn P. Arnone

As Alfie Kohn (2000) noted of the research “ ... universal curiosity tends to trail off sharply during elementary school, at least in the United States – right around the time that artificial inducements such as stickers and grades begin to kick in.”

So, remember to expose your class to a wide variety of activities and experiences, recommend and make available materials related to subjects about which the students are passionate, show an active interest in their interests (and share your own interests with them), and encourage questions ... and answers! (Helping the children to learn to use the library, interview experts, and so forth will empower them with the ability to nurture and direct their own curiosity.)

Name _____

Reminder: Curiosity means eager to learn or know more.

Just Curious ~

Imagine what the world would be like if no one were allowed to be curious about anything! Imagine what your life would be like! In the space below, write down some of your ideas.

Select your favorite idea from the list above. Use it as you write a slogan about what the world would be like without curiosity.

Slogan:

Today's Thought: *Be less curious about people and more curious about ideas.* — **Marie Skłodowska-Curie, physicist and chemist**