

## Question and Claim Weekly Response Assignment

<b>Course Type/ Level:</b>	Literature/100-300 Note: this simple activity could work for FYSEM and social sciences as well as literature and language courses.
<b>Assignment Goals:</b>	Students generate a discussion question and a (provisional) claim about the shared reading.
<b>Materials to Provide Students:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) No-tech version: All you will need are the instructions and the shared text.</li> <li>2) Google Classroom or Moodle version: Access to Internet and familiarity with “Question” (in GC) or “Forum” (in Moodle)</li> </ol>
<b>Technological Resources Needed:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) No-tech version: none (besides email and Word).</li> <li>2) Tech version: see above.</li> </ol>
<b>Preparatory Steps:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) No-tech version requires no prep beyond giving the instructions.</li> <li>2) Tech version requires only that you set up the Question or Forum function on your classroom site.</li> <li>3) Here are sample instructions from my LIT252 syllabus. I’ll describe modifications in the Tasks/Activities section:</li> </ol> <p><u>Weekly Questions and Claims</u> As a seminar, the course will depend on student participation and shared expertise. To facilitate this, each week before the beginning of class (<u>beginning in week two</u>), you should post to our Moodle forum a question and a claim that you would like us to consider about the literature or criticism for that day. <u>You should also bring a copy of your Q&amp;C to class.</u> The questions need not be lengthy, just substantive and genuine. Likewise, your claim need not be long or even fully developed, but it should be thoughtful. It can be a strong opinion you’re beginning to form, an observation about a character or passage, a connection between texts, etc. I want to emphasize that <i>questions and claims should always be linked to a specific passage or passages from the work we’ve read for that day.</i> Here is a sample:</p> <p><u>Question:</u> I’m interested in and puzzled by Joseph’s dialect in <i>Wuthering Heights</i>. What is Brontë trying to communicate with his impenetrable speech—for example, when Lockwood first encounters him? Is there more to it than just parody or local color?</p> <p><u>Claim:</u> The rustic discourse of Clare’s bird poems often belies the polish of his stanzas. His bird poems, in this respect, are like nests. Consider, for instance, the sonnets from his Northborough period.</p> <p>Clearly, your questions may include claims, and vice-versa. We will not necessarily</p>

	<p>get to everyone's questions and claims every time, but I will <i>always</i> respond to them in writing before our next class meeting. The QCs will not receive a letter grade--just a completion check.</p>
<p><b>Tasks/Activities:</b> (Outline of the steps this activity or assignment requires)</p>	<p>Here are two step-by-step scenarios for our remote learning situation:</p> <p>No-Tech (besides email and Word) Version</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Professor creates peer groups of three.</li> <li>2) Each week by a time determined by the professor, students email their Question and Claim to the professor and the two others in their peer group.</li> <li>3) The peers respond to the Q and C either in the body of the text or using the Insert/Comment function in Word or Google Docs.</li> <li>4) Peers return Q and C to its owner by time designated by professor. They copy the professor.</li> <li>5) The professor reads through the QC's and comments, then emails the entire class a synthesis of major ideas and, importantly, a new question or claim of the professor's own.</li> <li>6) Class is invited to respond to the professor's QC in the body of an email message, copying everyone.</li> </ol> <p>Tech Version (asynchronous)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Each week by a time determined by the professor, students post their questions and claims to the "Question" blog (in Classroom) or Forum (in Moodle)</li> <li>2) Each student is required to respond to a minimum of three others.</li> <li>3) Professors post a single response to the class in order to synthesize the major points and set a question and claim of their own.</li> <li>4) All students are encouraged to respond to the professor's post.</li> </ol> <p>In effect, this becomes a slowed down, asynchronous class discussion in writing.</p>

**Additional Tips or Advice:**

I've found that in the beginning, I need to comment individually to students about the QCs to help them refine how they ask a question or make a claim. It's important to provide a model and to point to strong examples.

I've also found that the QCs become the groundwork for short essays. In fact, students often write longer questions or claims than they're required, as they use the activity to work out their ideas.