**Open-Ended Questions for Teaching with Authentic Texts**

*NB These questions are phrased for use with written texts, but many can be adapted for use with audio or video materials.*

*Not all questions will be suitable for all texts. A great time-saving technique is to set a couple of gist and vocabulary tasks to get the students started, then while they’re doing that, choose what discussion questions to set.*

**Gist Questions**

* Read the text, without taking any notes. Afterwards, tell your partner as much as you can remember.
* Summarise the main idea of the text in one sentence.
* What is the one feeling or idea that stands out to you most as you think back over the text?

**Vocabulary**

* Underline all the words you don’t know. Mark them as follows: X for words that you don’t really need to know in order to understand the text. ? for words whose meaning you have a vague idea of, or which you can guess from context. -> for words that you really need to look up in order to understand the text.
* Work in groups of three. One person finds interesting new phrases or expressions in the text. One person finds interesting new words that are formed from a familiar root (e.g. revolutionary from revolution). One person finds totally new words.

**Difficulties**

* Which sentences were the most difficult to understand? What made them difficult – unknown vocabulary, idiomatic phrases, complex sentence structure, a need for cultural knowledge, or something else?

**Favourites**

* Choose your favourite word in this text. Why do you like it so much? Write a new example sentence using this word.
* Choose your favourite sentence in this text. Why do you like it so much? Write a new sentence using a similar structure.

**Argumentation**

* Summarise the arguments in the text.
* What main points does the writer make? How does he/she support them?
* Does the writer provide a balanced argument? What points are made on either side?
* Do you think the writer’s arguments are valid?

**Audience, Genre and Purpose**

* What genre is this text from? How do you know?
* Who do you think is the target audience for this text? What makes you think that?
* What is the writer’s aim in this text – to entertain, to describe, to persuade, to provoke reflection, to inspire action, or something else?
* What style is the writer using – informal, formal, objective, personal, literary, academic, colloquial, descriptive, factual, exaggerated, etc. etc. What language does the writer use to create this style?

**Reliability**

* Where do you think the writer got the information for this text from?
* Do you detect any bias in the writing?
* Is there any information which is missing?
* Overall, how reliable do you think the text is?
* Would you want any further information before deciding to trust this text?

**Response**

* What response do you think the writer expects from the readers?
* Did the text create this response in you?
* Are you going to change your behaviour at all in response to this text? In what ways? Why?
* Has this text changed your opinions or your attitudes at all? If so, how much, and in what way?