

# READINGrockets®

---

## How to Increase Higher Order Thinking

By: Alice Thomas and Glenda Thorne (2009)

Parents and teachers can do a lot to encourage higher order thinking. Here are some strategies to help foster children's complex thinking.

### In this article:

- **Answer children's questions in a way that promotes HOT**
- **Strategies for enhancing higher order thinking**
- **Evaluation/Assessment**

Higher order thinking (HOT) is thinking on a level that is higher than memorizing facts or telling something back to someone exactly the way it was told to you. HOT takes thinking to higher levels than restating the facts and requires students to do something with the facts — understand them, infer from them, connect them to other facts and concepts, categorize them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to new problems.

### Answer children's questions in a way that promotes HOT

---

Parents and teachers can do a lot to encourage higher order thinking, even when they are answering children's questions. According to Robert Sternberg, answers to children's questions can be categorized into seven levels, from low to high, in terms of encouraging higher levels of thinking. While we wouldn't want to answer every question on level seven, we wouldn't want to answer every question on levels one and two, either. Here are the different levels and examples of each.

#### Level 1: Reject the question

Example:

*"Why do I have to eat my vegetables?"*

"Don't ask me any more questions." "Because I said so."

#### Level 2: Restate or almost restate the question as a response

Example:

*"Why do I have to eat my vegetables?"*

"Because you have to eat your vegetables."

*"Why is that man acting so crazy?"*

"Because he's insane."

*"Why is it so cold?"*

"Because it's 15° outside."

#### Level 3: Admit ignorance or present information

