

The Question Tool

Every text represents a set of answers to a list of questions. Most questions are obviously 'reader's questions', but some must be articulated carefully by the author, who identifies them as important to the reader for grasping the storyline. The Question Tool for building an introduction of a research article can help you identify not only the relevant questions but also the short answers for your text. You do not always need all five questions; maybe you only need three or four of them. Also, note that question 2, 3 and 4 are overlapping, as they cover one move. On the other hand, possibly, you need more detailed questions that build on the more general ones.

Apart from a handy tool to identify your content, the Question Tool may be of help in talking about your text with a peer or your supervisor. Explain the content you noted in the Tool and learn from their questions or remarks. Any reader can help you overcome the *curse of knowledge*. This curse of knowledge is a key cause for bad writing - a text that is not connected to the needs and the questions of the reader - because the author is blinded by his own knowledge, unable to imagine how it is *not to know*.

To do

Try out this tool for your own (real or imaginary) research project and fill in the blocks with short answers.