

Pre-Reading Strategy: Opinionaire by Jeffrey Wilhelm

Similar to Anticipation Guides, an Opinionaire is a survey activity that gives students voice as they begin to immerse themselves in a major theme, Essential Question or inquiry question for a reading/viewing.

The survey is open-ended reveals background knowledge and cultural experiences.

To get started, simply search any topic with the word “quotations.” Use your own experiences to build an effective Opinionaire.

After reading/viewing, students can review some of the questions from a character’s viewpoint. Also, the questions that resonate can be used for debates, formal and informal.

This pre-reading strategy is a great example of personalizing learning. The possible extensions are vast.

Steps:

1. Create an Opinionaire (see model)
2. Have students determine whether they agree (A) or disagree (D) with each statement independently.
3. Then each student chooses one statement that particularly resonates to write a brief comment about why they feel that way. This begins the opinions based on evidence process.
4. Students can share and justify their responses with a partner, small group, etc. This small group discussion is very important.
5. Students can reflect on the perspectives and justifications they heard.

See below for Tips for Creating Effective Opinionaires from Jeffrey Wilhelm

The successful opiniaire will:

- Be framed. The students will know why they are doing this, how it is tied to the inquiry, and why they should buy in to it.
- Carefully consider the texts to be read. Determine the challenges they offer students in terms of major ideas—both implicit and explicit—and procedures they will need to use, and introduce students to the foundational concepts and strategies in the opiniaire.
- Brainstorm cultural beliefs and sayings about the topic:
 - a. Brainstorm from different perspectives; make sure you cover stuff from different points of view, cultural and affinity groups, political perspectives.
 - b. Get at edgy and debatable issues—must cover the ground—and make sure you get at what will interest students.
 - c. Use *Bartlett's Quotations* on different themes/issues.
- Write the major ideas in quick and clear statements that students will understand and react to with a cognitive and emotional charge. Make sure they are provocative as possible!
- Ask students to read through and respond individually with agreement, disagreement or uncertainty to each statement. You might ask them to justify their responses. Ask students to share and justify their answers in small groups, then perhaps in larger groups. Ask them to reflect on what they have learned about the perspectives surrounding the issue and if there are further issues to discuss or consider.
- Use the opiniaire as the basis of debates: as a template for considering what various authors or characters would say about the statements; for discussion of how students' views on each statement are becoming stronger, or evolving or changing—and why—as they work through the unit; as a basis for writing arguments and extended definitions, etc. In other words, consider how the discussion and writing that follows from the opiniaire will help students develop particular strategies of reading or writing: e.g., to see simple or complex implied relationships, predict, make other kinds of inferences or connections, understand how to find and warrant evidence for a claim.

Option: Have different people, different ages and situations respond and then crunch the results to see pattern.

- Be inviting and fun.

- From *Engaging Readers and Writers With Inquiry* by Jeffery D. Wilhelm