Hierarchy of Questions

1. Factual Question
   - Is verifiable: answers found on the page, in literal black + white.
   - Responds to questions: who, what, when, where?
   - Takes readers into the text + confirms comprehension.

Examples:
- What is Charles Wallace warming on the stove in the opening scene?
- What two adjectives does Macbeth use in his first line of the play?
- When and where is the story set?

2. Inductive Question
   - Is verifiable: answers found in the text, based on details and examples.
   - Responds to questions: why, how, and so what?
   - Takes readers through the text, allowing them to evaluate and interpret evidence from the visual, spoken, or written text.

Examples:
- Why does Mrs. Whatsit want the children to see their home planet?
- How do Macbeth’s first words subtly link him with formerly introduced characters?
- Why did each child receive his or her particular gift before returning to Comazotz?

3. Analytical Question
   - Connects the text to other texts, ideas, or situations through analysis.
   - Responds to questions: How are these similar, different, related?
   - Takes readers beyond the text, allowing them to analyze the relationship between this text and other texts, ideas, events, or situations.

Examples:
- What are our preconceived notions of "genius" and which genius in history is L’Engle alluding to through Charles Wallace's introduction? How does this suggestion inform his character?
- How do the juxtaposed words "fair and foul" introduce the theme of moral ambiguity in Macbeth, and how could this theme be relevant to us as contemporary readers?
- Calvin's "gift" is a reference to Shakespeare's Tempest. How does this description of Ariel help readers better understand Calvin's role?
Explanation of Process:

It is important to start with an understanding of the differences between the three types of questions and their functions.

- **Factual Questions** should not be dismissed, as they are the foundation for comprehension. When it is evident that students have a full grasp on the story, then encourage them to ask factual questions about setting and character, as these probing questions are often ignored by young readers and easily lead into inductive thinking. For example: recognizing first that *Macbeth* is set in Scotland (factual), can lead us to question why this setting would be significant. A Scottish king had just assumed the English throne when Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*, and that same Scottish king had just experienced an assassination attempt. The English hated the Scots. So, why then would Shakespeare write a "Scottish play"? See how a simple factual question can lead to inductive and analytical thinking here. (Answer, in case you're wondering: the play is a piece of political flattery, could even be considered propaganda. King James appointed Shakespeare's acting troupe as his "celebrity spokesmen" when he became their patron. So Shakespeare wrote a play to turn public opinion in favor of all things Scottish, making Banquo, King James's distant ancestor, the moral compass of a play in which the main theme is moral ambiguity.) This example shows how a good factual question can actually set up the thinking process for excellent inductive and analytical questions, allowing them to work together on one focused theme. I love when this occurs!

- **Inductive Questions** stay in the text, but lead us into deeper, interpretive thinking. Don't move outside of the text yet. This is the stage where you are interpreting passages and analyzing characters in relation to theme and big idea. These questions almost always start with HOW or WHY. For Example: How does Meg evolve as a character throughout the story, and why are her "faults" so important in the end?

- **Analytical Questions** lead us outside of the text, but this should only be done once we've thoroughly explored the text for itself. Don't go global too early, or it will lead to a shallow understanding of the literature. But once you feel you have adequately explored the text (in relation to a specific theme or big idea), then move outside of it. This is when literary discussion gets exciting, because it connects us with the deeper purpose of great literature: great ideas! This is the stage where we explore allusions in the text and connect themes with other literature, art, history, culture, our current world, and even our personal experiences. This stage of questioning makes literature relevant and meaningful outside of its own value as a work of art.