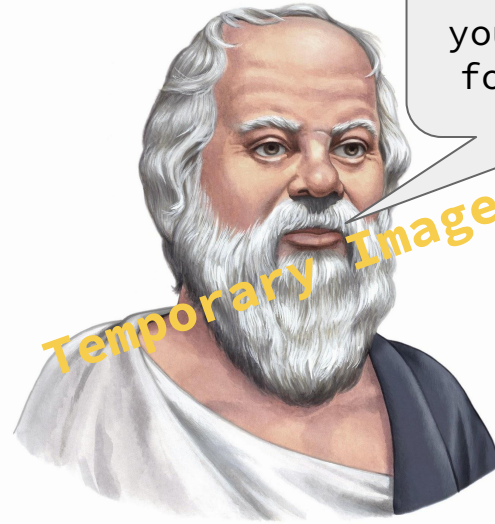


THINKING TOOL 1: SOCRATIC METHOD

WHO IS SOCRATES AND WHY DOES HE LIKE USING QUESTIONS TO LEARN?

Socrates was a philosopher and thinker from Ancient Athens who encouraged his students to learn through questions and inquiry. Socratic Reasoning is a method of questioning that pulls knowledge from within you rather than just giving you the answers. It's designed to help you dig beneath the surface of what you think you know to find deeper truths.



“To find yourself, think for yourself.”



FOUR CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCRATIC METHOD

There are four principles to remember about Socratic Reasoning. Flip the cards to see examples.

Disciplined Inquiry:
Questions follow a focused pattern and path aimed to lead thought in a specific direction.



Guided Discovery: The person who acts as the questioner or interviewer takes the role of an “ignorant inquirer” who helps guide you to knowledge.



Higher-level Thinking:
You're going beyond memorizing facts or information. You start analyzing, evaluating and creating or building other things from what you're learning.



Ownership of Learning:
You learn independently through your own reasoning. You own what you've learned. This is not passive learning, it's active. You **keep** what you've learned.



Cards flip to reveal items in the next slide.

FOUR CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCRATIC METHOD

There are four principles to remember about Socratic Reasoning. Flip the cards to see examples.

When debating the Greatest of All Time (GOAT) in Hockey, ask "How exactly would you define greatness in the sport" or "What signs do you have from a GOAT candidates' stats that support greatness?"

In *Doctor Stone*, the character Senku uses this with his friend Chrome. Instead of just telling Chrome how scientific reactions work, Senku asks questions that force Chrome to use his own observations to discover the principles of minerals and science on his own.

The Apothecary Diaries, Maomao instead of just memorizing the properties of herbs and poisons, she actively *analyzes* crime scenes, evaluates physical symptoms, and synthesizes her medical knowledge to deduce how court conspiracies are orchestrated.

In *To Your Eternity*, Fushi embodies the absolute ownership of learning. Every skill Fushi acquires: from learning how to speak and cook to mastering the transformation into a wolf or a giant bear, comes from independent reasoning, sensory experience, and active trial and error.



USING AI AS A THOUGHT PARTNER

You can use AI not just as an answer engine, but as a teammate and learning partner. By having a conversation with iterative dialogue, you can have discussions that help you incorporate what you learn, and sometimes lead to both insight and innovation. In the next page you'll see a cheat sheet of Socratic questions you can use with AI that can help you challenge assumptions, identify hidden patterns, and leverage adaptive thinking to your advantage.



SIX TYPES OF SOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR AI

Category	Objective	AI Prompt Example
Clarification Questions	To understand "just the facts" behind a concept.	"Can you break down the core components of [Topic] using only neutral, objective data and figures? What information is currently missing from this overview?"
Probing Assumptions	To surface blind spots and detect emerging ideas.	"Identify the overlooked contributors to this theory. What are we taking for granted in this argument, and what hidden patterns are we potentially ignoring?"
Probing Reasons and Evidence	To shift from "output to quality" by verifying foundational data.	"What specific research, peer-reviewed data points, or empirical evidence support this conclusion? Are there any logical fallacies in the current reasoning?"
Viewpoints and Perspectives	To bridge cultural/language gaps and avoid spurious logic.	"How would a critic from a [Specific Background or Culture] perspective interpret this idea? How can we explain this concept in that context to ensure the logic remains sound?"
Probing Implications	To move beyond symptoms to long-term effects.	"If this proposal is implemented, what are the potential 'Black Hat' risks and 'Yellow Hat' feasibility benefits over the next five years?"
Questions about the Question	To engage in meta-cognition (Blue Hat thinking).	"Is this the most effective question to help us reach our goal of [Goal], or should we pivot our focus to manage the thinking process more productively?"



The Six Types of Socratic Questions for AI

The Socratic Shift for AI

Clarification Questions

Objective: To understand "just the facts" behind a concept.

AI Prompt Suggestion:

"Can you break down the core elements of [Insert Topic] using only neutral, objective data and figures? What information is currently missing from this overview?"

Probing Assumptions

Objective: To surface blind spots and detect emerging ideas.

AI Prompt Suggestion:

"Identify the overlooked contributors to this theory [Name Theory or Idea]. What are we taking for granted in this argument, and what hidden patterns are we potentially ignoring?"

Probing Reasons and Evidence

Objective: To shift from "output to quality" by verifying foundational data.

AI Prompt Suggestion:

"What specific research, peer-reviewed data points, or empirical evidence support this conclusion? Are there any logical fallacies in the current reasoning?"

From Output to Quality

Shift AI from providing generic data to delivering high-quality, verifiable insights.

Meta-Cognitive Engagement

Use structured prompts to manage the thinking process more productively with AI.

Viewpoints and Perspectives

Objective: To bridge cultural gaps.

AI Prompt Suggestion:

"How would a critic from a [Specific Background] interpret this? How can we ensure logic remains sound?"

Probing Implications

Objective: To find long-term effects.

AI Prompt Suggestion:

"If this proposal is implemented, what are the potential risks and feasible benefits going forward?"

Questions about the Question

Objective: To engage in meta-cognition.

AI Prompt Suggestion:

"Is this the most effective question to reach our goal, or should we pivot focus?"

USING AI AS A THOUGHT PARTNER

Let's listen to a conversation between the Tanuki and his AI Robot companion AX0LTL.

Listen now

[Read a full transcript of the conversation](#)



Access the script from the link above

Which questions did the Tanuki and AX0L0TL use? Select all that apply.

- ☐ A) Clarification Questions
- ☐ B) Probing Assumptions
- ☐ C) Probing Reasons and Evidence
- ☐ D) Asking for Different Perspectives
- ☐ E) Asking Questions About the Question



Answer: One question that was not asked by either Tanuke or AX0L0TL was a question about the overall question. Otherwise all other questions listed were used in the conversation.

2. When Tanuki asks about why they feel down and stressed, XLOTL points out that the statistical link between general screen time and well-being is less than 1%. What type of Socratic question or response archetype is XLOTL introducing here?

- ☐ A) A conceptual clarification of what is meant by screen time
- ☐ B) An evidentiary counterpoint that challenges the underlying assumption of direct causality of screen time and feeling negatively.
- ☐ C) A meta question analyzing why Tanuki decided to start the conversation
- ☐ D) A question probing emotional implications



Answer: B. By comparing screentime to eating potatoes, XLOTL uses data from the Oxford study to show there's no causality or correlation between amount of screen time use and depression.

2. Which of the types of interactions in Socratic thinking did Tanuki and Axolotl NOT explore in their conversation?

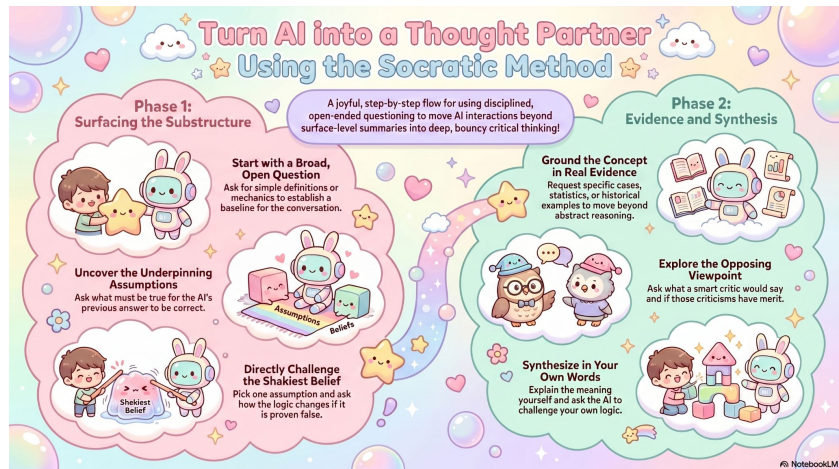
- ☐ A) Uncovering underpinning assumptions
- ☐ B) Directly challenge the shakiest belief
- ☐ C) Ground a concept in real evidence
- ☐ D) Explore an opposing viewpoint
- ☐ E) Synthesize in their own words



Answer: Explore an opposing viewpoint. While X0L0TL does share counter evidence about the correlation between amount of screen time and depression, the two do not explore it in depth.

SUMMARY: TURNING AI INTO A THOUGHT PARTNER.

Now that we've seen a conversation that shows how you can use AI as a thinking partner. Take some time to review this process from a 2-phase process. Select the image to see a larger version



Turn AI into a Thought Partner

Using the Socratic Method

Phase 1: Surfacing the Substructure

A joyful, step-by-step flow for using disciplined, open-ended questioning to move AI interactions beyond surface-level summaries into deep, bouncy critical thinking!

Phase 2: Evidence and Synthesis

Start with a Broad, Open Question

Ask for simple definitions or mechanics to establish a baseline for the conversation.



Uncover the Underpinning Assumptions

Ask what must be true for the AI's previous answer to be correct.



Directly Challenge the Shakiest Belief

Pick one assumption and ask how the logic changes if it is proven false.



Ground the Concept in Real Evidence

Request specific cases, statistics, or historical examples to move beyond abstract reasoning.



Explore the Opposing Viewpoint

Ask what a smart critic would say and if those criticisms have merit.



Synthesize in Your Own Words

Explain the meaning yourself and ask the AI to challenge your own logic.



NOW YOU TRY IT

Using the Six Question Types and the Two Phases of Socratic Discussion shared, conduct your own conversation with AI regarding a topic of your choice.

If you're not sure what topic to use for your discussion, you can select one of the options by selecting the **Topic Options** button.

When you're finished answer the following questions:

- 1) What was your experience like?
- 2) What did you learn?

Topic Options



Topic Options <For pop up>: 1. Does 'fairness' mean treating everyone exactly the same, or giving everyone what they individually need? 2. "Is popularity in school based on being genuinely liked, or is it based on power and fear? 3. Does high screen time actually cause lower well-being in teens, or is there more to the story? 4.If AI can write essays and solve complex problems, what is the actual purpose of doing homework?