

Using Socratic Questions for Power Thinking

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.

In using the Socratic method, learning takes place in the form of a question asking and answering session. As you'll see later you can use the types of questions asked in your own inquiries with AI



Four Core Principles of the Socratic Method:

These principles describe the approach used by the Socratic method.

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

Guided Discovery: In guided discovery, the person who acts as the questioner or interviewer adopts the role of an “ignorant inquirer.” The questioner acts as guide or coach who helps you discover knowledge. EXAMPLE: “Why do you think the social media algorithm sends you controversial clips?”

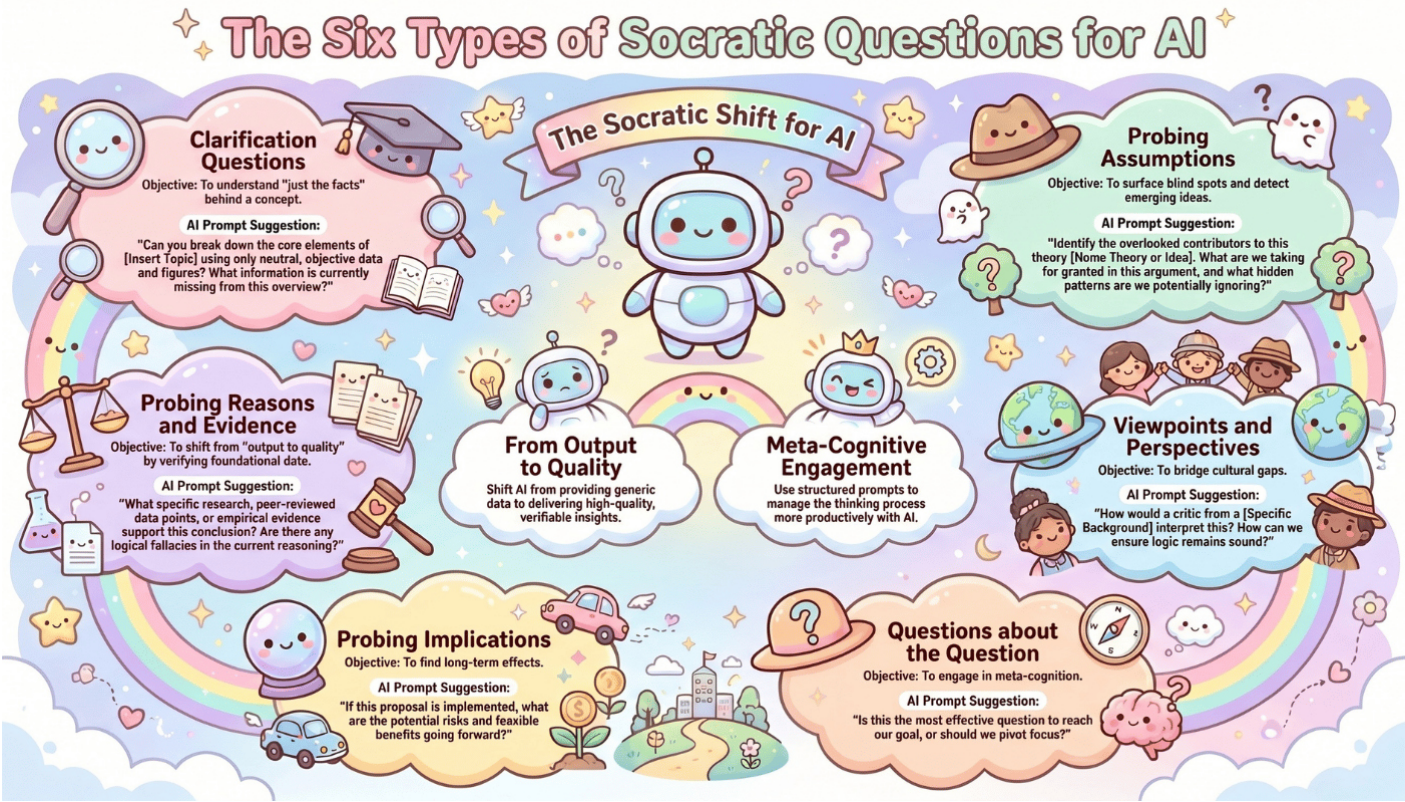
Higher-level Thinking: This just means you’re going beyond memorizing facts or information. Instead you will start analyzing, evaluating and creating or building other things from what you’re learning. You’re asking “how” and “why. EXAMPLE: “What do you think is behind the logic of why town centers are structured the way they are?”

Ownership of Learning: When you learn independently through your own reasoning, you own what you’ve learned. This is not passive learning, it’s active and it helps you keep what you’ve learned in your head. EXAMPLE: Now that you've reviewed how Six Hats Thinking works, how do you think you'll use it in everyday life?"

Six Types of Socratic Questions for AI:

You can use these six questions to help engage in a discussion with anyone to delve deep into a topic or issue.

Question Type	Objective	AI Prompt Example
Clarification Questions	To understand just the facts behind a concept or topic.	Can you break down the core components of the [Topic] using neutral, objective data and facts? What information might be 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 information.	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 risks and "Yellow Hat" feasibility benefits over the next five years?
Questions About the Question	To engage in meta-cognition (understanding on one's own thought processes)	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?



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