Dense questions is an instructional tool that cultivates critical thinking by asking questions at increasing complexity. Initially, students ask questions about the text, themselves, and the world in the context of the selected topic. Then, students combine questions between the text and self, the text and the world, and self and the world. Finally, students generate one question, a dense question, that combines the text, self, and the world.

World

In what ways are the rights of women being stymied in Afghanistan?

Text

In our reading, what rights is Miriam’s mother denied? What reasons, social and cultural pressures, etc., could explain why her rights are denied?

Me

In what instances have my own rights been violated? How did I react and what happened as a result? How could I have reacted differently for a different effect?

Dense Question

How do and will social and cultural forces affect my personal efforts both individually and as part of larger movements to preserve and promote the rights for myself and for others?

Me and World

How do my rights compare to that of my peers in other parts of the world, or at other times in history?

Text and World

How can governments use a historical understanding of human rights to promote human rights in other countries not under their control?

Me and Text

How would I rank the pervasiveness of the reasons people have been denied human rights throughout history?