

## Enhancing Critical Thinking Tip #6

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### Enhancing Critical Thinking: Tip #6

#### ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO BEGIN GENERATING QUESTIONS OF THEIR OWN.

- *What is the topic?*
- *What is the author's purpose?*
- *Who is the author's audience?*
- *What is the author's writing pattern?*
- *What is the author's point?*
- *What conclusion can you draw?*

*Scenario: Working in small groups, students analyze a short reading passage by asking themselves critical thinking questions.*

#### Reading Passage:

When a person is arrested for committing a crime, he or she is first brought to a police station. At the station the suspect is questioned, fingerprinted and, usually within twenty-four hours, arraigned. At the arraignment, the suspect appears in court before a judge and pleads guilty or not guilty to the crime with which he or she is charged. The judge then sets bail. Bail is an amount of money that must be left with the court until the person's trial, to insure that the suspect will appear back in court for the trial. Suspects who are unable to post bail must remain in jail until they can be tried. (*Single Skills Series*)

Tom: Let's skim this passage together to get the gist of it.

Ann: I think this passage talks about the process a criminal goes through from the time of his/her arrest to the time of his/her trial.

Sam: I agree!

Tom: And **what is the author's purpose?** *Is it to inform, instruct, persuade or entertain?*

Sam: It's not to persuade or entertain, for sure. Nor is it teaching us how to do something. I would think the author's purpose is to inform.

Ann: I concur.

Tom: And **who is the author's audience**—*general public, a specific group or a specific individual?*

Ann: I would choose general public. This information is general information.

Sam: I disagree. I think it is written for a specific group—first time offenders. The paragraph delineates the sequence of events a criminal has to go through from the time of arrest to the time of trial. So when a criminal gets arrested for the first time, he/she will know what to expect.

Tom: You both have a point. Shall we compromise and choose general public and/or specific group?

Sam: Sure, why not?

Ann: As Sam has said earlier, the paragraph delineates the sequence of events. Therefore, **the writing pattern the author uses** is "sequencing."

Sam: That's right.

Tom: **How about the author's point? What is his point?**

Sam: The author's point is that there are several procedures a criminal has to go through before he/she gets a trial for his offense.

Ann: That's correct. The supporting details specifically describe the sequence of events that occur before the trial.

Tom: **What conclusion can we draw** from this passage?

Ann: If suspects who are unable to post bail must remain in jail until they are tried, then those who are able to post bail must be allowed to go free until they are tried.

Sam: I would conclude that most people suspected of serious crimes are not allowed bail.

Ann: That may be true in reality, but the passage doesn't say anything to that effect. Remember, we can only make a judgment based on facts found in the reading passage.

Tom: Ann's right, Sam. So, shall we go with Ann's answer then?

Sam: Yes, let's do that.