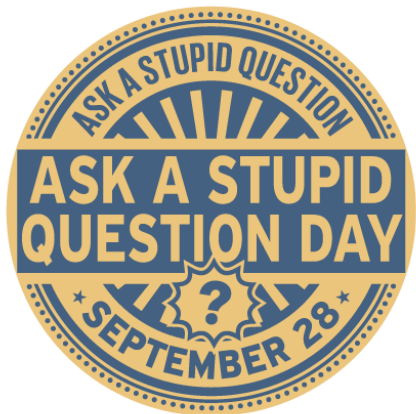


Did you know?

DYK? Ask a stupid question day



Is *Ask a stupid question day* actually a thing? This is the day to ask all those questions which we usually think are too daft to say in front of others.

Do you remember at school when you were bursting to ask a question but you stayed quiet because you felt it was too stupid; it might have aroused derision or laughter from your classmates? A while ago, some American teachers realized that many students had this experience and consequently they decided to actively encourage so-called stupid questions. Being given the space to ask any questions – even the ones which students felt were too simple or embarrassing – offered students the opportunity to improve their learning.

For teachers of course it provides the opportunity to evaluate where learning and understanding needs some extra assistance. Allowing students the safe space to ask those questions creates a friendly and positive classroom environment. Asking questions – regardless of their 'worth' – is an important part of the learning process. The more questions we ask, the more we learn.

So how do you generate these questions? Maybe it's the sort of question that come to you as you're driving along: Why are most cars white? Or in the shower: How does soap work? Or for students in the English classroom: Why does English have that annoying *do* or *did* in questions? Or: Why can't I say *many money*? Or: Why can't I say *we meet us tomorrow*?

The teachers in America who noticed that many students were being silenced by their anxiety about asking their 'stupid questions' launched a national *Ask a stupid question day* back in the 1980s. In the intervening 40 years it has spread to this side of the Atlantic and to India.

So go ahead with your class on 28 September and encourage those questions that students would love to ask but have held back for fear of looking stupid. What have you got to lose?

© Shutterstock (astudio)

Did you know?

If you would like to use *Ask a stupid question* as a topic in your class, then we have provided you with an activity: **Go on, ask!**

Teacher's notes

Go on, ask!

- Make a copy of **Go on, ask!** and cut into strips.
- On the board write: *Why do dogs have four legs?* Encourage all responses! There may be funny, physiological or philosophical answers. Explain something about *Ask a stupid question day* and that it gives students an opportunity to ask any question.
- Tell students they are going to answer some stupid questions. Divide the class into threes.
- Hand out one set of questions to each group of three students. (You can of course write more 'stupid questions' that are appropriate for your class.)
- In turn, they pick up and read out a question and the three of them discuss possible answers.
- When they have finished answering the questions, ask them to write their own 'stupid questions'.
- Ask students to share these new questions with the rest of the class.
- Encourage 'stupid questions' at regular intervals during teaching.

Go on, ask!

--- ✂ -----

Why can't I say: *I've seen her yesterday?*

--- ✂ -----

Is it wrong to say: *There are two mens?*

--- ✂ -----

Can I say: *We meet us tomorrow?*

--- ✂ -----

Why can't I say: *The cat walked very quiet?*

--- ✂ -----

Is it wrong to say: *How many money do you have?*

--- ✂ -----

Can I say: *I am born in Berlin?*

--- ✂ -----

Why can't I say: *I'm going at Monday?*

--- ✂ -----

Is it wrong to say: *I live here since three years?*

--- ✂ -----

Can I say: *You are not allowed smoking here?*

--- ✂ -----

Why can't I say: *If the weather will be good, we'll have a picnic?*

--- ✂ -----
