

Good Questions Make A Quiz Good – But What Makes A Good Quiz Question?



The longer you present quizzes, the more of a feel you will get for

creating great questions. After all – great questions make a great quiz.

Here are my tips to making quiz question better.

Read The Crowd

As you put questions out on the night, interpret the audience reaction. There are two reactions that you want to avoid.

1: They all start writing the answer down immediately. This means it's too easy. Sure have a good mix of easy and difficult questions, but if they all know what the answer is before you've even finished asking the question, what's the point? Even easy questions should evoke thought, conversation.

2. Blank expression or the look of "How are we supposed to know that?" A dead-end question that they don't even have a chance of guessing.

Reactions To A Good Question

As you read the audience, here are the types of reactions you want to see.

- Head in hands trying to remember something. Something that they know but just can't remember.

- Arguing (OK well debating) amongst team members. Each pitching why their answer is the correct one that should be submitted.
- Collective solving. Teams clubbing together to figure out the answer.

Example

OK I'm going to pull a random question from the [archive](#).

Q "What shape is a Stop road sign?"

A "Octagonal."

Now everyone has seen a stop sign. First they all have to collectively agree that there are 8 sides. At least one member of the team will question this and even draw a picture of it and show the others.

The question appears easy on the surface. But will involve a team effort to decide what answer should be submitted.

Had you asked "How many sides does an Octagon have?", too easy. Answer is written down and the team haven't been involved.

Expand On This

Rework the question. *What is the total if the outer sides of a Stop sign are added to the those of the 50p coin that was in circulation between 1969 -1994?*

Do you see what we have just done " make them question whether the new 50p is actually a different shape than the old one. Throw the doubt in there. Furthermore if they get one half of a double-barrel question wrong, it's a point lost. (Equally on this example get both wrong and the answer might up to be correct).

Lucky Guesses & "We Should Have Got That"

Lucky guesses are always good. When announcing answers and cheers go up in some parts of the venue, this is often down to a lucky guess.

Even better than lucky guesses, are the questions that they got wrong, but should have known.

When you announce the answers and the reaction around the room is "wow" of course it is, why didn't we put that?

This gives them the hope that if they raise their game, they can *win this thing* next week.

Rework The Question To Add Interest

When crafting a question for a quiz, take the subject of the question and look at different ways of making it more interesting.

Subject example: Union Jack flag.

The end question we have crafted here is:

On the Union Jack, the white saltire of St Andrew for Scotland is present. The red saltire represents which Saint?

Not which country – which Saint. Many will put St George. But of course a saltire is a diagonal cross. Many may be surprised that the cross of St Patrick is on the Union Jack. But that’s the answer. Some will get the answer right, others will react with “oh, I didn’t know that”.

When prepping a quiz it may not be possible to enhance every question. But take a moment to research the subject a little more. Scratch at the surface and there may be a more interesting question in there.

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