

Thomas Sowell: Maverick Intellect

K-8 Critical Thinking Questions & Assignment Prompts

*Use these questions to develop critical thinking skills and invigorate group discussions. These questions can be distributed in any form to students **after** students have seen the Slide Deck. Questions for grades 6-8 can be also used as writing assignment prompts.*

K-2

What struggles did Sowell have when he was young?

Why did some Black Americans move to northern cities? Have you ever lived in a different part of the country? What is hard about moving to a new place?

What is an economist? Why did Sowell care so much about laws and jobs?

Why did Sowell love to learn? What hard things did Sowell learn about life?

What hobby helped Sowell have a safe experience as a marine? What hobbies do you have? Why are hobbies important?

What problems did Sowell want to fix?

How do good ideas and bad ideas affect people? Why is it good to be a thinker?

3-5

How did a love for learning help Sowell as he grew up? What is the benefit of reading non-fiction books?

What is an economist? Why did Sowell care so much about income, job opportunity, and business? What is a theory?

What is a policy? What did Sowell think about welfare, unemployment policies, and civil rights laws?

Why did Sowell speak against ideas that he did not support? What ideas did he have about race, inequality, and education?

What is an intellectual? Why is critical thinking a skill we need to develop?

What criticisms did Sowell have about intellectuals and policy makers? Can you name people that have acted on their good ideas?

Why do people have different ideas and solutions for problems we face? What is a debate? What criticisms did Sowell have for public schools? Why did he endorse charter schools?

Are there problems that you would like to actively solve one day?

What can we learn from the life of Thomas Sowell's son, John?

6-8

How did a love for learning and reading help Sowell as he grew up? Why is it good to be a critical thinker? What is the benefit of reading non-fiction books?

How can reading and critical thinking help people solve problems? What problems did Sowell want to fix? What economic, social, or educational problems do you want to fix? Can you name people that carried out good ideas through action?

What is an economist? Why did Sowell care so much about income, jobs, and business?

Differentiate between Marxism and capitalism. Which did Sowell end up thinking worked best and why?

What is a theory? How do good ideas and bad ideas affect people? Name political or economic ideas that have affected you positively or negatively.

What is a policy? Why is data (facts) and observation (witness) important when developing educational, economic, and federal policies?

Why did Sowell speak against ideas that he did not support? What is an intellectual? What criticisms did Sowell have about intellectuals and policy makers?

What is an expert? Are those that are considered "experts" always correct in their analysis of problems and/or solutions?

Why do people have different ideas and solutions for problems we face? What is a debate? What criticisms did Sowell have of schools? Why did he endorse charter schools?

What can we learn from the life of Thomas Sowell's son, John?

Why are Sowell's ideas economics and social policy becoming popular with younger audiences on platforms like YouTube?