



Interpretive Questions Based on Each Major Law of Structure

1. Comparison – What is the meaning of each of the elements compared (def.)? What is the similarity(s) between them, and what is the meaning of this similarity(s) (def.)? Why is the similarity(s) emphasized by the author (rat.)? What are the full implications of the comparison (imp.)?
2. Contrast – What is the meaning of each of the contrasting elements? What is the difference(s) between them, and what is the meaning of this difference(s)? Why is the difference(s) stressed? What does this imply?
3. Recurrence (includes both Repetition and Continuity) – What does the recurring element mean? Why does the author use it recurrently? What are the full implications of its recurring use?
4. Climax – What is the meaning of the high point of this unit? How do the preceding materials lead to this high point? Why does the author use this climatic movement? What are its full implications?
5. Pivot – What is the meaning of the pivotal portion? How does it serve to change the direction of the book? How does what precedes lead to it, and how does what follows flow from it? Why does the author use this pivot? What is implied by it?
6. Interchange (secondary law used to reinforce a primary relationship) – What is meant by each of the alternating elements? Why does the author use interchange? What are its full implications?
7. Particularization or Generalization – What is the meaning of the general statement and of the particular statement(s)? How does the general statement illuminate the particular statement(s)? How does the particular statement(s) illuminate the general statement? Why use such particularization/generalization? What does it imply?
8. Causation or Substantiation – What is meant by the cause(s) and by the effect(s)? How does the cause(s) result in the effect(s), or how does the cause(s) substantiate the effect(s)? Why use this causal/substantive movement? What is implied by it?
9. Instrumentation – What is meant by the end or purpose, and what is meant by the means? How does the means serve as an instrument(s) for realizing the end? Why does the author use this instrumental relationship? What are its full implications?
10. Preparation/Realization or Introduction – What is meant by the preparatory material, and by the material for which preparation is made? How does the preparatory of introductory material make you ready for what follows? Why use this preparatory movement? What does it imply?
11. Summarization – What is the meaning of the summary statement? How does it summarize the materials involved? Why such summarization? What is implied by it?

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12. Interrogation – What is the meaning of the question (problem) and of the answer (solution)? How does the answer (solution) resolve the question (problem)? Why use such interrogation? What are its full implications?

Note the following regarding the use of these questions:

1. Primary use is made of the three major types of questions: definitive, rational, and implicational. These are the questions, which are the most meaningful in exploring structural observations. Sometimes, however, the auxiliary topics of questions (who, when, where, and how) may be relevant, depending on the specific material involved in the relationship.
2. Structural questions should be asked about each primary law operative between mayor units. It is best to ask the questions when each law is observed rather than waiting until all of the laws are observed.
3. The questions should follow an orderly sequence: definition, reason, and implications.
4. The questions above are expressed in general terms. They should be particularized as much as possible by including the specific materials involved in the use of the law. At the same time, unnecessary details should be avoided.
5. Questions should be asked in a variety of ways when possible. Note the use of “how” questions above for definitions.
6. If all of the instances of the use of a law are not discovered, it is sometimes helpful to ask an observational question: What are the contrasts here? What are the recurring elements in the unit? Similar observational questions can be asked regarding the other laws.
7. A mechanical use of these questions should be avoided as much as possible. These examples are provided to increase your understanding as a basis for asking structural questions without reference to this list.
8. Questions based on complex relationships are not included in the above list. Such questions will involve a combination of those asked under the appropriate laws. For example, if recurrence of contrast is observed, questions listed under recurrence and contrast should be used.
9. Questions should be raised during the survey stage but not answered until the interpretation of individual parts and the synthesis of the book as a whole. The same principle applies to the survey of any unit within a book, such as division, section, sub-section, or segment.