

**INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN POLITICS**  
**Susan Thomson, Winter 2010**  
**ASKING AND ANALYSING: A FRAMEWORK**

Both asking and analysing questions are important parts of the research process. Such skills undergird your literature review that in turn is a central part of your Issue Paper project. A teaching scholar named Benjamin Bloom (<http://oaks.nvg.org/taxonomy-bloom.html>) identified six types of cognitive levels that can guide you as you think about your own research.

Thinking through these questions will help you focus your research, pique your curiosity for academic research, reinforce key points you learn through reading and writing and encourage active learning (i.e. what we do in group work). They are:

**Knowledge** (meaning identification and recall of information):

- Who, what, when, where and how questions
- Descriptive questions

**Comprehension** (meaning organisation and selection of relevant facts and ideas):

- Retelling of facts
- Summaries of ideas

**Application** (use of facts, rules and principles):

- How is ... an example of...?
- How is ... related to ....?
- Why is .... significant?

**Analysis** (meaning separation of a whole into component parts):

- What are the parts or features of ...?
- How does X compare/contrast with Y?
- What evidence can you list for...?

**Synthesis** (meaning combination of ideas and facts to form a new whole):

- What can you infer or predict from...?
- What ideas can you add to ...?
- How would you create new knowledge about ...?
- What solutions, if any, can you suggest based on your present knowledge...?

**Evaluation** (meaning your opinion of and reaction to the ideas and facts of others):

- Do you agree with the arguments or ideas of authors you have studied...?
- What do you think about the work of other authors?
- What do you think is most important...?
- How would you prioritise the arguments and evidence you have studied?
- What criteria would you use to assess their arguments and evidence?