



RLS Inquiry Provocations: Who Am I in the World We Share?

30 real-life questions for learners who are not merely studying communities, but learning how to become responsible contributors to them

These questions should not be treated as comprehension questions with one correct answer. Each begins with an **RLS—Real-Life Situation** that a child could genuinely encounter, observe, photograph, map, investigate or participate in. The purpose is to move the learner from “**What is happening?**” to “**What does this reveal about the kind of community member I am becoming?**” The spirit is particularly strong for inquiries around **Sharing the Planet** and **Who We Are**: interdependence, responsibility, fairness, belonging, stewardship, relationships and agency.

Instructions to the Mindgleian

Choose an RLS that genuinely disturbs your curiosity. Do not rush to answer it. First use the **4C–Q Inquiry Compass**: **Content** — *What exactly is happening and what knowledge/evidence do I need?* **Concept** — *What larger idea—fairness, interdependence, systems, responsibility, identity, change, perspective—is hiding inside it?* **Context** — *Why does this matter here around me, and where does it matter globally? To whom does it matter?* **Connection** — *Which other disciplines, people, systems or experiences could help me understand it differently?* Then face the **Quotient Mirror**: *What did this inquiry awaken,*



*challenge or change in me? Which of my CQ, BQ, AQ, ReQ, RQ, MQ, ResQ, SoQ or ERQ had to grow? Your final response should not end only with an explanation. It should reach **responsible possibility**: Now that I understand more, what might I notice, question, change, contribute or help others understand?*

A. SHARING A WORLD WITH OTHER LIVES

Interdependence • Habitat • Perspective • Stewardship

1. If our school garden looks beautiful to us but provides no food, water or shelter for birds and insects, is it really a successful garden?

Concept: Perspective + Interdependence

Context: School garden → biodiversity in human-designed cities

Connection: Science + Design + Art + Mathematics

Q Mirror: CQ, RQ, MQ, SoQ — *Whose needs did I forget when I called the space “beautiful”?*

2. If mosquitoes, weeds or street dogs inconvenience us, does inconvenience give humans the right to decide that another species should not belong?

Concept: Belonging + Perspective + Responsibility

Context: Neighbourhood species → human–wildlife coexistence globally

Connection: Biology + Ethics + Social Studies

Q Mirror: RQ, MQ, ERQ — *How do my feelings influence which living things I consider valuable?*

3. A tree outside school drops leaves, blocks a sign and cracks part of a pavement. Is the tree the problem—or does the problem depend on whose perspective we begin with?



Concept: Perspective + Systems

Context: One neighbourhood tree → urban planning and green infrastructure

Connection: Science + Geography + Design + Civics

Q Mirror: CQ, AQ, RQ — *Can I redesign the problem instead of simply removing what causes inconvenience?*

4. If feeding wild birds makes us feel caring but changes their natural behaviour, can a kind intention still produce an unhelpful consequence?

Concept: Cause and Effect + Responsibility

Context: Local feeding practices → human intervention in ecosystems

Connection: Biology + Ethics + Behaviour

Q Mirror: ReQ, RQ, MQ — *Is being caring enough, or must care also be informed?*

5. If a lake becomes cleaner for people but the plants, insects and fish that once lived there disappear, has the lake really been restored?

Concept: Systems + Interdependence + Change

Context: Local lake → wetland restoration globally

Connection: Ecology + Chemistry + Geography + Data

Q Mirror: CQ, BQ, SoQ, MQ — *What counts as improvement, and who gets included in that judgement?*

6. If an animal survives in a city only by changing its natural behaviour around humans, is that adaptation—or evidence that we have changed its world too much?

Concept: Adaptation + Human–environment interaction

Context: Urban wildlife → global habitat fragmentation

Connection: Biology + Geography + Design

Q Mirror: CQ, ReQ, RQ — *When does resilience hide a deeper problem?*



B. THE COMMONS: WATER, AIR, SOIL AND SHADE

Resources • Equity • Systems • Shared Responsibility

7. If the water coming from my tap is clean, why should I care about the condition of the river from which it came?

Concept: Systems + Interdependence

Context: Household tap → watershed and global freshwater systems

Connection: Science + Geography + Civics

Q Mirror: MQ, SoQ, RQ — *Do I value resources only after they enter my personal space?*

8. If one neighbourhood has large trees and shaded pavements while another has almost none, is shade simply part of nature—or can shade become an issue of fairness?

Concept: Equity + Environment

Context: Local streets → urban heat globally

Connection: Science + Mathematics + Geography + Social Studies

Q Mirror: CQ, MQ, SoQ — *Who receives the benefits of environmental design?*

9. If rain is natural, why can the same rainfall become a flood after humans cover soil with roads, parking lots and buildings?

Concept: Systems + Cause and Effect

Context: School/neighbourhood surfaces → urban flooding globally

Connection: Science + Mathematics + Design + Geography

Q Mirror: CQ, AQ, RQ — *When we call something a “natural disaster,” what human choices might be hidden?*



10. If everybody owns the air equally, who is responsible when the actions of some people make it harder for everybody else to breathe?

Concept: Commons + Responsibility + Fairness

Context: Traffic near school → global air-quality challenges

Connection: Science + Civics + Mathematics + Health

Q Mirror: MQ, SoQ, ERQ — *What does responsibility mean when nobody owns the resource being harmed?*

11. A school can save water by telling children to use less. But what if leaking pipes waste more than the children do? Where should responsibility begin—individual behaviour or system design?

Concept: Systems + Responsibility

Context: School water use → resource management

Connection: Mathematics + Design + Science + Civics

Q Mirror: AQ, RQ, SoQ — *Do we sometimes ask individuals to solve problems created by systems?*

12. If groundwater is invisible beneath us, why is it so easy to behave as though it is unlimited?

Concept: Visibility + Sustainability

Context: Local borewells → groundwater depletion globally

Connection: Earth Science + Mathematics + Geography

Q Mirror: CQ, ResQ, MQ — *Does invisibility make responsibility harder?*

C. WHAT WE THROW AWAY DOES NOT GO AWAY



Consumption • Consequence • Circularity • Responsibility

**13. If my dustbin becomes empty every morning, has my waste problem disappeared—or
or has it merely moved somewhere I cannot see?**

Concept: Systems + Perspective

Context: Household/school waste → landfills and waste chains

Connection: Environmental Science + Geography + Civics

Q Mirror: CQ, RQ, MQ — *Does “away” actually exist?*

**14. If a plastic bottle is useful for ten minutes but remains in the environment for
generations, how should we judge its usefulness?**

Concept: Time + Consequence + Sustainability

Context: One drink bottle → global material life cycles

Connection: Chemistry + Design + Economics

Q Mirror: MQ, ReQ, AQ — *Should usefulness include what happens after I finish using
something?*

**15. If recycling makes us feel responsible but we keep buying more disposable things,
are we solving the problem or making ourselves feel better about it?**

Concept: Responsibility + Consumption

Context: Personal habits → global waste economy

Connection: Behaviour + Economics + Environmental Science

Q Mirror: RQ, ReQ, MQ — *When does a good action become an excuse not to question a
larger habit?*

**16. Why is leftover food called “waste” in one place when somewhere else the same food
could still be valuable?**

Concept: Value + Perspective + Resources



Context: Cafeteria leftovers → food loss and hunger globally

Connection: Science + Economics + Social Studies

Q Mirror: CQ, SoQ, MQ — *Who decides when something has lost its value?*

17. If a school event produces hundreds of decorations used for only one day, should beauty be judged only by how the event looks—or also by what remains afterwards?

Concept: Aesthetics + Responsibility

Context: School celebration → event waste and sustainable design

Connection: Arts + Design + Mathematics + Environment

Q Mirror: AQ, MQ, RQ — *Can creativity become more beautiful by using less?*

18. If repairing something costs more than replacing it, why might replacement still be the more expensive choice for the planet?

Concept: Value + Systems + Time

Context: Personal objects → global production and resource extraction

Connection: Economics + Design + Environmental Science

Q Mirror: CQ, BQ, MQ — *What costs disappear when we look only at the price tag?*

D. WHO MAKES OUR COMMUNITY WORK?

Dignity • Invisible Labour • Contribution • Interdependence

19. Before school begins each morning, who has already worked so that my day can start normally—and why do I rarely notice them?

Concept: Interdependence + Visibility + Dignity

Context: School community → invisible labour in societies



Connection: Social Studies + Language + Economics

Q Mirror: RQ, MQ, SoQ — *Whose contribution becomes visible only when it stops?*

20. If everyone wants to lead a group project, who performs the quiet work that actually allows the group to succeed?

Concept: Leadership + Contribution

Context: Classroom team → organisations and communities

Connection: Psychology + Language + Social Learning

Q Mirror: SoQ, ReQ, BQ — *Do I confuse visibility with importance?*

21. If a cleaner keeps our classroom healthy, why might the learner who litters still think cleanliness is someone else's responsibility?

Concept: Responsibility + Dignity

Context: Classroom → shared public spaces

Connection: Health + Civics + Ethics

Q Mirror: RQ, MQ, SoQ — *Does paying someone to care for a space remove my responsibility for it?*

22. If a community has people who need help and people who have resources to help, why does the gap sometimes remain?

Concept: Agency + Systems + Empathy

Context: Local community needs → civic participation

Connection: Social Studies + Economics + Psychology

Q Mirror: BQ, AQ, MQ, SoQ — *What turns caring from a feeling into contribution?*

23. Is community service still service if the learner gains certificates, photographs and recognition from it?

Concept: Motivation + Ethics + Contribution



Context: School service projects → philanthropy and civic action

Connection: Psychology + Ethics + Language

Q Mirror: RQ, MQ, ReQ — *Would I still contribute if nobody knew I had done it?*

24. When we say we are “helping” a community, have we first asked whether that community wants the help we have decided to give?

Concept: Perspective + Agency + Respect

Context: School outreach → development and community partnerships

Connection: Social Studies + Ethics + Communication

Q Mirror: RQ, SoQ, AQ — *Can helping become harmful when we listen too little?*

E. WHO WE ARE WHEN NOBODY IS MAKING US

Identity • Character • Choice • Belonging

25. If I behave responsibly only because an adult is watching, have I become responsible—or merely obedient?

Concept: Identity + Responsibility

Context: Classroom behaviour → citizenship

Connection: Psychology + Ethics + Language

Q Mirror: RQ, MQ, BQ — *Who am I when external control disappears?*

26. If my friends laugh when somebody is excluded and I remain silent, have I stayed out of the problem—or become part of it?

Concept: Belonging + Agency + Courage

Context: Peer group → inclusive communities

Connection: Psychology + Language + Social Studies



Q Mirror: ERQ, SoQ, BQ, MQ — *What does courage look like when speaking costs me social comfort?*

27. If I strongly believe I am a kind person, what evidence from my ordinary daily behaviour would prove it?

Concept: Identity + Evidence + Integrity

Context: Daily relationships → ethical identity

Connection: Psychology + Language + Philosophy

Q Mirror: RQ, ReQ, MQ — *Is identity what I say about myself or what my repeated actions reveal?*

28. If two children receive exactly the same thing but one needed much more support to participate, has everybody been treated fairly?

Concept: Equality + Equity + Perspective

Context: Classroom participation → wider access and inclusion

Connection: Mathematics + Social Studies + Ethics

Q Mirror: CQ, RQ, SoQ — *Does fairness always mean sameness?*

29. If a new learner enters my class and must adapt to everything we already understand, whose responsibility is belonging—the newcomer's or ours?

Concept: Belonging + Community + Adaptation

Context: Classroom newcomer → migration and inclusion

Connection: Language + Social Studies + Psychology

Q Mirror: AQ, SoQ, ERQ, MQ — *Can a community adapt to the person instead of demanding that only the person adapt to the community?*

30. If every child asked, “What can this community give me?” what kind of community would we create—and what changes when the question becomes, “What can I give to



this community?”

Concept: Identity + Contribution + Reciprocity

Context: Classroom/home/neighbourhood → citizenship and shared humanity

Connection: Social Studies + Language + Ethics + Economics

Q Mirror: MQ, BQ, SoQ, ReQ — *Am I growing only as an individual learner, or also as someone whose growth creates value for others?*