

Reading Strategy—ASK QUESTIONS

Some Suggestions



Goal: To encourage students to interact with the text and to create questions about the reading for a deeper understanding of content.

Asking Questions...

1. Guides students to create a mental dialogue with the reading—to determine the author's intent, to glean basic meaning, to seek out the source of an opinion, etc.;
2. Allows students to ask their own kinds of questions about the reading;
3. Enables students to see that there are many different ways to think about questions (thick vs. thin, fact vs. concept, process vs. cause-and-effect);
4. Helps create active, metacognitive readers when the process is internalized;
5. It is IMPORTANT...
 - To honor real questions that arise for students as they read;
 - To encourage students to read aloud critical passages to help them discern answers from the text for themselves;
 - To be alert for situations in which a black-and-white answer does not exist;
 - To realize that sometimes the best response to a student question is a another question;
 - To help students see that almost everything they read is, in fact, an answer the author found to a question that initially prompted the writing;
 - To help students realize there are lots of ways to think about questions.
 - Thin Questions—help readers with the basics of what they are reading.
 - Often these are 'just-the-facts' questions (a word, a name, a place)
 - 'How does it work?' questions
 - Answers to these questions often involve explaining a series of steps or stages.
 - Thick Questions—get at bigger topics, and often begin with words like "Why?" and "I wonder..."
 - These generate powerful discussions, but unless readers clear up thin questions, the thick ones aren't possible.
 - These questions are usually looking for a cause-and-effect relationship and answers often require the word 'because'.

Tools for ASKING QUESTIONS...

- The **Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) Activity** provides a series of questions to guide student reading. The intent is that students will begin to ask these questions themselves as they approach a new reading piece.

Adapted from "Reading to Learn"—The Vermont Strategic Reading Initiative 2004

Question-Answer Relationships



The Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy presents a three-way relationship between

- questions,
- text content, and
- reader knowledge.

Simply put, the QAR strategy shows that students who understand how questions are written are better prepared to answer questions. These activities help students "demystify" the question-building process as a step toward better reading comprehension.

The QAR strategy divides questions into two broad categories;
--**In the Book** (text-explicit) questions and
--**In My Head** (text-implicit) questions.

- **In the Book** questions are generated directly from a reading selection. These explicit questions fall into two subcategories:
 - "Right There"—questions found in one place in a selection and
 - "Think and Search"—questions built around cumulative information found throughout a document.

- **In My Head** questions are created by the reader when confronting a text. These questions are not explicitly found in the reading; rather, these questions arise as the reader engages the selection's content through active thought, comparison, evaluation, etc. These implicit questions fall into two subcategories:
 - "Author and You"—questions that the text provokes in the reader and
 - "On My Own"—questions arising from the reader's prior knowledge and experiences.

From **Raphael, T.E.** (1986). Teaching question-answer relationships. *The Reading Teacher*, 39, 516-520.

Question-Answer Relationships Instructions

In the Book	In My Head
<p>Right There</p> <p>The answer is easily found in the text. The exact words for the questions and answers are located in the same sentence.</p>	<p>Author and You</p> <p>The answer is not in the text. The reader combines previous knowledge with text information to create a response.</p>
<p>Think and Search</p> <p>The answer is in the text, but requires gathering information from different places in the selection.</p>	<p>On My Own</p> <p>The answer is not in the text. The reader uses previous experience to respond.</p>

**Steps
QARs:**

to

1. Explain the two broad categories of questions (and the four subcategories) to students as an introduction to the QAR strategy.
2. Provide a reading selection and a set of questions about its content. Model the placement of the questions in the framework of the QAR model.
3. Next, divide the class into small groups and provide each with a reading selection and a set of questions. Have the groups place the questions in the QAR framework.
4. Finally, provide the groups with a new reading selection and ask them to develop questions from its content. Have the students evaluate their own questions in light of the QAR framework.

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Question-Answer Relationships Activity

Write your questions relating to the selected reading in the boxes below.

In the Book	In My Head
Right There	Author and You
Think and Search	On My Own

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