

ASKING QUESTIONS AS YOU READ

Successful readers ask questions and seek answers when they read. Asking questions helps readers monitor their comprehension and stay engaged and interested in their reading. Good readers are aware that questions help them focus on and understand what they read. Questions propel readers forward and help them understand what they read more deeply.

Before, During, and After Reading Readers ask questions before, during, and after reading. Before reading, good readers speculate about what might happen in the story. Readers also ask questions while they are reading to clarify confusion. They reread or read on to clarify their understanding when they are confused. During reading, readers also wonder what will happen next. Sometimes readers ask questions because they wonder about something that is not answered in the text. We need to help students become aware of the questions that naturally arise in their minds. We must get them to stop and recognize their own questions before, during and after reading.

Types of Questions Good readers understand that there are different types of questions. For example, there are questions that can be answered in the text, some from using the reader's background knowledge, some from inferring, and some questions can be answered from engaging in discussion or research. Some of the most interesting questions are the ones that the reader cannot answer from the text, but instead are open to interpretation. Most of all, we need readers to experience how questioning enhances their understanding.

Questions are at the heart of understanding what we read. Students need to see that proficient readers have many questions about what they read. Asking questions helps readers know when they understand and when they don't understand. Asking questions is about interacting with the text to develop a profound understanding.

Proficient readers ask questions to:

- Clarify meaning when they are confused.
- Wonder about what will happen next.
- Determine the author's intent, style, content, format.
- Locate a specific answer in text.
- Consider questions that cannot be answered in the text.

QUESTIONING LESSON

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Explain what the strategy is and explain how, when and why readers use this strategy. Pick a picture book, poem, or short excerpt to model this strategy.

I have a lot of questions about this book. When I read it, I wonder about a lot of things. Stopping to listen to the voice inside my head when I read helps me to understand what I'm reading better. Raise your hand if you ever hear a voice inside your head when you read. Sometimes the voice inside says, "Wow, that was amazing!" Sometimes it says, "That was funny!" Sometimes the voice in my head also asks questions. Sometimes the voice in my head has questions that start with:

I wonder ...

Why ...

How is (a character) feeling ...

I'm not sure why ...

How come ...

I'm confused about ...

Good readers know that asking questions helps them understand the text a whole lot better. The strongest readers ask the most questions! Asking questions helps readers to focus on parts that are hard to understand, stay interested in their reading, and better understand what they read.

Readers ask questions before, during, and after they read. Some questions can be answered from the story, and some questions can be answered by using background knowledge to make an inference.

MODELING THE STRATEGY

Demonstrate how you use the strategy while reading the sample text and stopping to think aloud as you read. Explain to students that you will be sharing what you are thinking as you read. This lets your students see and hear the invisible, cognitive processes of reading. Select a text excerpt to use during the modeling and think aloud.

Now I am going to model questioning. I want you to listen for questions that I have before, during, and after I read. Many questions start out with, "I'm wondering ..."

Stop at crucial points and ask "I wonders." Add them to a list on a piece of chart paper [or other "teaching tool" that you are using – see Independent Practice below]. The chart paper should have a section for questions before, during, and after reading. Write questions in the appropriate columns. Students need to observe a proficient reader pondering her/his own questions. Do not attempt to answer the questions, but instead let the questions live by themselves for awhile.

As you model, be sure to articulate what you are doing inside your head. Be as specific as you can so that students hear not only *what* you are doing, but also *why* it helps you as you read. This is the most critical component of modeling.

As I look at this first subheading, I'm thinking to myself, "What questions will help me focus on the important information?" Listen as I read the first subheading aloud and then use it to form a question. Once I have the question in mind, I'll look for answers in the paragraph.

GUIDED PRACTICE

After you have explicitly modeled the strategy, guide students to practice questioning as a class. Use the same text for all students and have them share their questions before, during, and after reading. Help them articulate their thinking by asking questions such as, "What helped you form that question" or "How might that question help you look for important information?"

Just as you demonstrated in the modeling, the purpose of guided practice is to guide students to use the strategy as well as to be able to think aloud about what they are doing in their heads.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Provide an opportunity for students to practice this strategy on their own. You can use a variety of "teaching tools" to help students refine their ability to ask good questions as they read:

CODING: Teach students to collect questions on sticky notes with specific codes:

? = Question about what's happening

☹ or **HUH?** = Confused

☺ = Clarified a Confusion

QUESTION COLLECTION: See below

QUOTE AND QUESTION: See below

Additional teaching tools and lesson ideas:

http://classes.seattleu.edu/masters_in_teaching/teed521/professor/Literacy/stratinstruct.html

DEBRIEFING

Ask students to explain the strategy in their own words. See if they can explain why readers ask themselves questions and if students understand how to ask good questions before, during, and after reading. In the debriefing, it is important for students to be able to articulate what they say inside their heads as they use the strategy.

QUESTION COLLECTION

Name _____

Date _____

Good readers ask themselves questions before, during, and after reading. Preview the text by looking at the title, the cover and the chapter titles. Write down questions you have. While reading, jot down questions that come to you. After you have finished reading, you can write down any questions that you still have. If your questions are answered or you speculate about possible answers, write these down as well.

QUESTIONS BEFORE READING

QUESTIONS DURING READING

QUESTIONS AFTER READING

ANSWERS

QUOTES AND QUESTIONS

QUOTE FROM TEXT	MY QUESTION

Adapted from *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis.