

## Questioning Techniques

Curiosity generates questions which are the master key to understanding. Questions clarify confusion and stimulate research efforts. As adult readers, asking questions engages us and keeps us reading. When students ask questions and search for answers, they are monitoring comprehension and interacting with the text to construct meaning.

### Share Your Questions About Your Own Reading

**Purpose:**

Using adult text to show the questions we have when we read

**Description:**

Choose a text that generates many questions. Write those questions on sticky notes and place them next to the passage and code them with ?. When the answer is read, move the sticky note to the spot where the question was answered, write the answer and recode it A for answered.

### Some Questions Are Answered, Others Not

**Purpose:**

Beginning questioning, listing and categorizing questions to promote understanding

**Description:**

Share questions before, during and after reading, and talk about them. Using a favorite text, solicit questions at the end of each page. These questions can be recorded on chart paper. Start to help students categorize questions by providing these codes:

A - Questions answered in the text

BK - Questions answered from someone's background knowledge

I - Questions whose answers can be inferred from the text

D - Questions for further discussion

RS - Questions requiring further research to be answered

Huh? or C - Questions that signal confusion

Additional categories can be added as expertise is acquired by readers.

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## Knowing When You Know and Knowing When You Don't Know

### **Purpose:**

Monitoring comprehension to clarify confusion or answer questions about the text.

### **Description:**

To address confusion when reading magazines or self-selected text, use a sticky note with Huh? on the top and leave the bottom blank. As you continue to read or reread to clarify meaning or answer a question, the confusion is often cleared up in the text. Move the sticky note to the place where the confusion was cleared and mark the sticky note with a light bulb on the bottom of the note.

## Gaining Information Through Questioning

### **Purpose:**

Writing in Wonder Books (nonfiction notebooks that support inquiry) to explore thinking and wondering.

### **Description:**

Share questions in notebooks reserved for wonder and exploration. List or code questions or use two or three column note forms such as Questions/Facts or Facts/Questions/Response. Expose students to a variety of possibilities for asking questions, organizing thinking, and responding in writing.

## Thick and Thin Questions

### **Purpose:**

Differentiating between large global questions and smaller clarification questions in a content area.

### **Description:**

When reading newspapers, magazine articles, trade books, or textbooks use this technique to sift large global questions from smaller clarification questions. Thick questions address large, universal concepts and often begin with *Why? How come? I wonder?* or address large content areas. The answers are often long and involved and require further discussion and research. Thin questions are asked to clarify confusion, understand words or access objective content. Answers are shorter and can be

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answered with a number or simple yes or no. As you read, use the 3 x 3" sticky notes for thick questions and the smaller sticky flags for thin. Answers can be attempted on the back.

## Questioning That Leads to Inferential Thinking

### **Purpose:**

Making meaning through asking questions

### **Description:**

When reading poetry with images and metaphors, have students think out loud about the poem, and ask questions to help them better understand it. The teacher can share doubts about the meaning and then provide the opportunity for students. Write questions and read the complete poem. Use the questions as prompts to the interpretation of the poem and inferences about its meaning. Students will learn that questions need not always be answered, but open our minds to interpretation.

## Using Question Webs to Expand Thinking

### **Purpose:**

Organizing content knowledge to answer a specific question.

### **Description:**

Similar to other semantic webs, this web has a question at the center. The lines from the center are used to add information that relates in some way to the question, with the ultimate goal of building an answer from all the bits of information. Question webs can be useful as students work individually to answer specific questions or in small groups studying particular content.

*Adapted from:*

*Harvey, S., Goudvis, A. (2000) Strategies that work: teaching comprehension to enhance understanding. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.*