

Question Basic Language and Critical Thinking Skills

Students are held accountable for every language skill in the story. These questions are developed and asked during oral reading. They serve to reinforce all basic language skills and develop a more profound understanding and knowledge of basic reading comprehension and English.

During oral reading, every language component must be questioned by the instructor. This focuses student's attention to every detail of the text which helps develop the same skills needed for understanding language. If grammar or punctuation mark is unknown by the group, then instructor stops and proceeds to clarify the topic.

All parts of speech and punctuation rules are to be questioned and if needed, an immediate clarification lesson is developed. This inquiry may take several forms for student closure.

It is important for the instructor to constantly monitor the reader's understanding of the text. At this level we are concerned with questions that ask:

- for the meaning of a word or words
- for the meaning of a sentence
- for the meaning of a paragraph
- for the sequence of events in the story
- for identification of who, what, when, where, why, and how
- for identification of a pronoun referent
- for identification and use of punctuation marks
- for identifying parts of speech.
- for visualizing and/or imaging people, places, objects, events

This basic list of questions should almost be automatic during any reading process.

Vocabulary development - words in context: Before looking up a word to verify meaning, the instructor may direct the reader to apply one of the following vocabulary hints imbedded in the sentence structure. This should be the first step practiced by the reader, especially when reading silently.

- Meaning separated in the sentence by punctuation marks.
- Meaning stated in the sentence structure but not separated by punctuation marks.
- Meaning given by comparing and contrasting that is a clue.
- Meaning that is implied by the structure of the sentence; a word, idea or type of event contained therein giving a clue to the word.

Reading is a process whereby all of the skills suggested in this program are brought together into a logical whole.

Establishing purpose and monitoring progress are similar but not exact for fiction and nonfiction work. It is not necessary to use a structured lesson approach every time as this would be too routine and boring to the reader. A flexible approach is preferred and simply following the suggestions contained in the Question Section will provide a quality lesson.

Fluent readers interact with the text by constructing meaning in their minds as reading progresses. They are always filling in the blanks and inferences are constantly made.

STUDENTS must actively be involved in thinking and constructing text materials during reading in order to think effectively after reading. This is the purpose for dialoging and the sample questions.

When an unknown word is met in oral reading, the teacher starts a decoding episode.

The following example is a probing sequence that is used during initial stages to master the 3-Step System and to begin the process for critical thinking. Once students become familiar with the 3 steps, this type of analysis is not needed for a word but is needed for reading and critical thinking skills.

Decoding & Word Episode - Instructor questions reader:

- Any Combinations?
- How do you know it is a Combination? Or, where is the Combination on the chart?
- How do you say (_____)?
- Let me model it for you?
- Are there any Borrowers?
- What is the rule for saying the y?
- Yes, y says i in the middle of a word.
- Can you give me other words that require that rule?
- Are there any vowels not part of a Combination?
- What is the rule for the A?
- Yes, when a final E has a vowel followed by a consonant before the final E, vowel is long.
- Jane do you agree with (student)? Why? Please explain.
- What does the word mean as it is used in that sentence?
- Can you use other words in the sentence to help with the meaning?
- Billy, do you know what the word means?
- Mary, do you know?
- Dictionary people, find the word and raise your hand when you locate it.
- There were three meanings. What meaning fits our sentence?
- John, why did you say (_____) was the meaning to use?
- Have you read this word before?
- What hint did you get from the meaning that Jill read from the Dictionary?
- Ron, do you agree with John? Why? What evidence do you have?
- Reader, reread that sentence and let's try to reach an understanding.

Using clarifying and defending questions to decode a word is critical during initial stages implementing the system. Dialoging would then be directed toward reading and critical thinking skills using the same questioning strategies.

Most words requiring a decoding episode are usually words requiring a vocabulary episode.

Want to develop a simple method about thinking during a dialog or while reading a text? Ask true and false questions.

- After the student responds, ask, "Tell me what you found or didn't find in the dialog (or text) that made you believe it was (true or false)?"
- "What words led you to think that?"
- "Can you find other words or reasons that support your answer?"
- Continue until you call on another student, "Do you agree or disagree with (_____) answer? Why or why not."
- This procedure is very effective and completely by-passes structured sequence questions and helps the instructor refine his/hers questioning strategies. It all started with true-false questions.

Select the direction to focus on for follow-up questions and continue with the dialog. This is an excellent procedure when reading a novel, short story or non-fiction. Again, in-depth and probing questions develop from a very common, initial question. This is also excellent for analyzing a sentence and other topics.

Critical thinking requires teacher and student to use precise language when analyzing the text or responding to a question.

Refer to Bloom's Critical Thinking, and Socratic Dialog sections for content and questioning strategies.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The sample questions are presented here as possible ways the instructor might probe for clarification or to discuss in-depth; concepts, characters, language structure, vocabulary, story line, evaluation of the circumstances, understanding of technical text, and development of the student's thinking processes.

Whenever a question is asked of a student by the teacher, it is intellectually important for the student to be asked to "defend" the answer. All answers must be defended.

This process of asking to "defend" or explain why an answer was given produces a "different kind of student", a more mature kind of thinker. The first change in a student is the gradual elimination of thoughtless or flippant answers. If a student is made to pause and reflect on the reason for his/her answer, as well as the answer itself, then the mental process is set into motion that elevates the thinking abilities.

This process of "reason" is at the heart of all intellectual inquiries we call critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, scientific thinking, logic, philosophy, and sometimes, good common sense.

Extended list of sample questions are not generally organized by a topic because this often misleads the teacher or parent or tutor. Time is wasted when they search for the exact place in the reading where that precise question could be asked. The sample questions are to be used as a "guide" to help the instructor to formulate similar questions and follow a process of continuing to probe the reader's evaluation of the text. Probing leads to Socratic Dialog.

To check for understanding of the reading, the following question types might be used.

- The letter 'F' before a sentence indicates the question is more appropriate for fiction. All other questions are appropriate for both fiction and nonfiction material.
- Most, if not all, questions, when initially implementing direct teaching, should be asked in such a way to elicit an answer as to who, what, why, when, where, and how, or the True/False approach.
- This is a random list of questions from different taxonomies and personal experience. Questions from Blooms Taxonomy" and "Critical Thinking Skills" By Dr. Richard Paul, found in the PDF page for reproduction for specific questions for specific purposes.

REMEMBER:

Answers are to be defended (what did you base your answer on? Why did you give that answer?) clarified, explained, elaborated, and personalized to develop thinking abilities in the reader.

- F What words make _____ come alive?
- F What are they saying?
- F What is the main idea of the story?
- F What details gives us the main idea of the story?
- F What was the first thing that happened in the story? The second? The third?
- F What was the last thing that happened?
- F What happened before _____?
- F What happened after _____?
- F What details tell us about the main character? About _____?
- F Which statements support the main idea?
- F Imagine yourself in the same situation, what would you do? Why?
- F Why do you think the author used this word (this setting), (this time frame),(this event)?
- F What is the conflict that _____ has?
- F Are there other conflicts?
- F Can you identify the problem?
- F What words does the author use to describe the problem?
- F Can you recognize the author's purpose? Plan? Reason? Plot?
- F Evaluate the behavior (attitude, thoughts, conditions, etc.) before _____ and after _____.
- F What word (words, statement, actions) did the author use that gave you a clue that _____ would happen?
- F Who are the characters in the story?
- F Who is the main character?
- F Why do you think _____ is the main character?
- F Why do you think _____ is the main character and not _____?
- F If _____ is not the main character, what does he/she have to do with the story?
- F Where does this story take place?
- F When does this story take place?
- F Can you give details that help to identify the location? The time?
- F What is it that the main character is trying to do? (plot)
- F What is stopping the main character from solving his problem or completing his task?
- F Yes, _____, (the other character), is in the way of the protagonist, (main character). What is he/she doing to get in the way of or to stop or prevent, (main character), from being successful.
- F Can you give some other specific examples to show how _____ is preventing _____ from completing his efforts (or solving his problem).
- F What is the literary term for the main character? (Protagonist)
- F What is the literary term for _____ who is stopping _____? (Antagonist)
- F Is nature, in any way a problem?
- F Is society, laws or social structure, interfering with the solution?
- F Does the main character have a problem with himself/herself, such as feeling lonely, or afraid, or over confident, or unable to get along with people ?
- F How does the protagonist solve the problem?
- F Is that the way you would solve the problem?
- F Have you ever had a problem similar to the protagonist?
- F Do you know of anyone or hear of anyone who had a similar problem?
- F Would the problem be solved better in a different way? How?
- F What part of the story tells you that the problem was resolved?
- F Is the climax what you expected? Why?
- F What information did you get from the beginning of the story?
- F What happened in the middle of the story that were actions around the stories problem?

- F Was the climax the ending the main character wanted?
- F How was it different?
- F Analyze the behavior of _____?
- F How would you evaluate the language of _____ with _____? (Or, any element of any story with any other story.)
- F Provide two or more endings to this story.
- F Provide two or more beginnings to the story.
- F How do you think ___ felt?
 - ~ Tell me in your own words what is meant by, the sentence, the paragraph, the story line, the description, etc.
 - ~ Give an example of _____.
 - ~ What do you think about _____?
 - ~ What did you learn from _____?
 - ~ What did you discover from _____?
 - ~ What words give us a clear picture about _____?
 - ~ What words describe?
 - ~ How would you feel if you were _____?
 - ~ Condense this paragraph, (page), (section), (chapter).
 - ~ What seems to be _____?
 - ~ What seems likely regarding _____?
 - ~ Which are facts? Opinions? What words or events demonstrate your answer?
 - ~ What would happen if _____?
 - ~ Explain what is happening.
 - ~ What is the most important thought? Why do you think that?
 - ~ Can you give a reason for your answer?
 - ~ How does _____ differ from _____?
 - ~ What do you think will happen next? Why?
 - ~ Newspaper questions: who? what? when? where? why? how?
 - ~ What conclusions can you make? How did you arrive at your answer?
 - ~ What do you remember?
 - ~ Where did _____ happen?
 - ~ Why was _____?
 - ~ How would you do _____?
 - ~ How would you change _____?
 - ~ Could you find the word (or words) that mean (or tell about) (or change) (or mislead)?
 - ~ Can you explain why you believe _____?
 - ~ Locate the section in the reading that best describes (tells, compares, concludes, etc.).
 - ~ What is this punctuation mark? How is it used? (comma, period, colon, semi-colon, hyphen, quotation mark, exclamation mark, question mark, apostrophe, brackets)
 - ~ What is the name of a person, place, thing or idea? (noun)
 - ~ What words describe a person, place or thing? (adjective)
 - ~ What words describe actions? (verbs)
 - ~ What words describe verbs? (adverbs)
 - ~ What words take the place of a noun? (pronoun)
 - ~ See this pronoun (he, she, it, they, them, etc.), who or what does it refer to?
 - ~ See this word _____, it is a good example of a (part of speech).

When the teacher is monitoring for understanding after discussing a specific part of speech, the student should be asked to locate other samples of that part of speech in the story.

- ~ What did we read about yesterday?
- ~ Can you remember any specific details about the readings from the previous

lessons?

- ~ What else can you remember about the reading?
- ~ What does _____ mean?
- ~ What meaning of that word best fits the sentence? Why?
- ~ What does _____ paragraph mean?
- ~ Have you ever (known, experienced, heard of,) that (idea, event, way of acting, etc.) before?
- ~ Could you give exact examples to explain your answer?
- ~ Can you locate any sentences that support your answer?
- ~ What reasons do you give for your answer?

If answers are fairly complete and some mastery is demonstrated, instructor may decide to stop further probing and continue reading.

OR

If answers are incomplete, instructor must reword the oral question and continue probing. If answers are still unknown or incomplete, then instructor must reteach or explain the information needed by reader.

OR

Instructor may decide to continue to probe by asking more complex questions. Without knowing the exact material, it is nearly impossible to suggest precise questions except those dealing with the text. Remember, answers must be defended, clarified, explained, elaborated, and personalized to develop thinking abilities in the reader.

- ~ Why did you say _____?
- ~ What do you mean by _____?
- ~ Where did you get that idea? Information?
- ~ Is there any evidence to support your answer?
- ~ How does your answer relate to the question? The reading?
- ~ Can you say that in a different way?
- ~ Is there a passage that shows the reason for your answer?
- ~ Are you able to add more detail to your answer?
- ~ What other events you are aware of that is like _____?
- ~ What other details do you recall?
- ~ Is there any more evidence about _____?
- ~ Are you able to give other examples about _____?
- ~ If you were _____, how would you feel about _____? Why?
- ~ Have you had a similar experience?
- ~ How would you compare (contrast), _____ to _____?
- ~ Is there a social significance about _____?
- ~ How does _____ relate to our history?
- ~ Why is _____ an example of _____?
- ~ Does that behavior, (act, attitude, idea, item, location) relate to other behavior, etc., or is it the same as?
- ~ What is the effect of?
- ~ What caused _____?
- ~ What do you think the author meant by _____?
- ~ What are the consequences of _____?
- ~ What evidence do you have to support your conclusion?
- ~ What would you do to change the results?
- ~ What would be the consequences of your method?

- ~ What else can you say?
- ~ Good! What else?
- ~ Any other possibilities?
- ~ Are there patterns or themes in your answer?
- ~ Can you make a broad general statement that explains ____?
- ~ What are some possible causes for?
- ~ Who was the ____ ?
- ~ When was the ____ ?
- ~ Where was the ____ ?
- ~ What did they ____ ?
- ~ How did they ____ ?
- ~ Describe the facts.
- ~ Describe the attributes (characteristics or properties) of the object (idea or event).
- ~ List the similarities and differences between ____ .
- ~ Compare and contrast the following ____ .
- ~ Contrast ____ with ____ .
- ~ What are the important parts that are alike between ____ and ____ ?
- ~ What are the main differences?
- ~ What belongs together? What are the reasons?
- ~ Group the following ____ on the basis of one or more common parts.
- ~ Describe the steps or procedures to ____ .
- ~ What are the essential factors involved in the problem (or experiment) ?
- ~ List the parts of ____ and describe how they are related.
- ~ In describing ____ problem, list the steps you would take.
- ~ Think about the given information and name the facts and fallacies. What caused you to arrive at your answer?
- ~ Think of an original or interesting solution to ____ .
- ~ List all of the ____ .
- ~ What ways can you ____ ? Different ways?
- ~ How does ____ relate to ____ ?
- ~ Could you put that another way?
- ~ What do you think is the main issue?
- ~ Is your basic point ____ or ____ ?
- ~ Let me see if I understand you; do you mean ____ or ____ ?
- ~ How does this relate to the problem/issue?
- ~ What are you assuming?
- ~ What could we assume instead?
- ~ What would be an example?
- ~ What are your reasons for saying that?
- ~ What other information do we need to know?
- ~ Could you explain your reason (s)?
- ~ Is that good evidence for believing that?
- ~ Are those reasons adequate?
- ~ Is there reason to doubt that evidence?
- ~ What would you say to someone who said ____ ?
- ~ What do you think the cause is?
- ~ By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?
- ~ How could we go about finding out whether that is true?
- ~ How do you know?
- ~ Why did you say that?
- ~ Why do you think that is true?
- ~ What led you to that belief?
- ~ Do you have any evidence for that?
- ~ How does that apply to this case?

- ~ What difference does that make?
- ~ What accounts for that?
- ~ How did this come about?
- ~ What would someone who disagrees say?
- ~ What is an alternative?
- ~ What are you implying by that?
- ~ When you say ____, are you implying ____?
- ~ If that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?
- ~ What effect would that have?
- ~ What would necessarily happen or only probably happen?
- ~ What is an alternative?
- ~ How can we find out?
- ~ How could we settle this question?
- ~ Is the question clear? Do you understand it?
- ~ Is this question easy or hard to answer? Why?
- ~ Does this question ask us to evaluate something?
- ~ To answer this question, what other questions would you need to answer first?
- ~ Can you break this question down at all?
- ~ Why is this question important?
- ~ Do you need facts to answer this?

The following questioning strategies are designed to provide the instructor with a mental roadmap to draft questions that demand the reader **visualizes** specific parts of the printed word or is guided by the teacher to formulate a closure of the size, shape, color, location, purpose, movement, relationship, plot, or scene; in short, the total mental picture as seen by the reader with instructor using comparing questions; “is it soft like a pillow?”, “Larger than a _____, or smaller than a _____?” “As far away as _____ or closer like?”

Each text contains a variety of words that act alone or interrelate with other words to create a mental picture we call visualization. This process requires a variety of questions designed to elicit from the reader a comprehensive analysis of his/her picture. Often times, students are able to visualize very elaborate and sophisticated images and only need an opportunity to verbalize their existence.

- ~ What do you see from the printed words?
- ~ Describe any people, animals, physical location, trees, weather, and colors, etc.
- ~ Describe the shape that you see.
- ~ Is it more like a circle, oval, rectangle, or another shape?
- ~ How large is it?
- ~ Is it larger than a _____? Or smaller than _____?
- ~ What is it doing? Moving? Or not moving?
- ~ What is the color of the object? Is it lighter than or darker than _____?
- ~ Do you see other colors? Are they part of the main picture or the background?
- ~ What do the events or items have to do with each other?

Student (s) should learn very basic stick drawing for visual memory recall, prepare for a test, clarify information or concept in reading material.