

THE 10

Ask Questions

Build Awareness of the Strategy

Build students' consciousness of how to ask questions in a deliberate way and to use this strategy for comprehension. *Asking Questions* is key to readers' purposeful interaction with text. The goal is to shift the view of questioning that students have been ingrained with—something the teacher asks to elicit a correct answer. Instead, we hope to reawaken in older children the curiosity that young children have when they ask, “Why is the sky blue?” We want to unearth real questions students have as they take ownership of the reading process.

Suppose you are reading a text about adolescence in different cultures worldwide. You might pose an essential question such as, “Would it better to have a shorter or longer time for adolescence?” Discussing this establishes prior knowledge and generates other questions. Developing a “question tree” is also helpful. You and your students will use these questions to interrogate the text. Include the following types of questions: literal (What is adolescence?), inferential (How does adolescence affect society?), author's intention (Is the author in favor of or against a long adolescence?), and your own evaluation (In what ways do you agree or disagree with the author?). Add more questions as well as answers found while reading. Students should become aware that the best questions may be unanswerable.

Talk Through the Strategy

Model the strategy for the selection your students are reading. Use think-alouds and invite discussion as you model what active readers do to build and deepen comprehension. Use differently colored sticky notes to tag the text with questions and answers. Post a question tree or a question map to which students add comments.

Include as many of these as apply in your modeling:

1. **Set the stage** for *Asking Questions* by articulating your own questions as you begin to explore the book. Give examples of questions that don't necessarily lead to answers in the book. Show how good questions lead to other questions.
2. **Model the strategy** by referring to questions you have as you read and showing your thinking. Demonstrate how it helps to remember previous questions as you read. Use the prompts for *Ask Questions* on the Teaching Card and add your own.
3. **Review the strategy** by focusing on the questions that lead to other questions the text can't answer. Invite students to participate. Bring out that having the text raise an interesting question is as important as having questions answered by the text. Discuss ways of following up on unanswered questions.

Additional active reading techniques:

- Chart questions before, during, and after reading.
- In partners or groups, discuss and solve questions together.
- Keep a two-column log with questions alongside information, thoughts, and other related questions.
- Question the author about intent, style, content, and point of view while reading.
- Post questions where students can write answers, new questions, and opinions.

Independent Practice

Have students work collaboratively or independently to *Ask Questions* for the book listed on the Teaching Card in the Read Across Texts section. They can share their questions. Find common questions across both texts and note where answers are similar or different.