

Suggested Questioning Lessons to be taught in Unit

Strategies That Work Questioning Lessons

Share your questions about your own reading

Let the questions live

Some questions are answered, others are not (listing and categorizing questions)

listing Qs – Conquer the Questions / Attack the Questions

Knowing when you know and knowing when you don't know

Some Qs are answered, some are not

What do you do for unanswered or multiple answer questions?

Gaining information through questioning (your wonder boxes?)

Thick and thin questions

thick/thin Qs

Thick side and a Thin side chart

Thick sticky notes and thin sticky notes

Questioning that leads to inferential thinking

Using question webs to expand thinking

coding Qs

next...

Share your questions about your own reading

Let the questions live

Sharon wrote: I've decided to make this first week a "Let the questions live" week. I've modeled through the think-aloud my own questions when reading and the kids are chomping at the bit to share questions that they have, too. I think it helped when I told them that I wanted them to just listen to the questions that they have when reading or listening to a story and gave them permission not to feel that they had to also come up with an answer to the questions. The kids love the phrase "let the questions live"! The questions have been flowing nicely during their SSR time. My goal is to have them freely questioning the text before looking for how to answer those questions.

Judy wrote: I came across Sharon's "Let the questions live" excerpt and as much as I loved it, loved it even more in its entirety: "**Let the questions live for awhile without any answers.**" It's so interesting how, as someone noted recently, our focus and interpretation of MOT changes as we experience it. I particularly loved Keene's words which precede Sharon's quote: "**They were not questions that led to answers in the book. They were questions that hung in the air and replayed themselves in our minds. They were questions that led to other questions.**" I'm going to try to make these three sentences the core of our study.

Some questions are answered, others are not (listing and categorizing questions)

listing Qs – Conquer the Questions / Attack the Questions

Judy wrote: I introduced the strategy by sharing my own reading and how I ask questions and then I read aloud a picture book I had never read (Golf Night by Miller) and we charted my questions (only my questions as I was modeling). I had the kids ask questions about their reading texts in small groups--oral only. (Tuesday specials--very short day, different kind of reading) So far so good. Tomorrow I'm going to model proficient readers questioning before/during/after reading (Amelia's Road by Altman) and Friday I'll read aloud (The Day of Ahmed's Secret) and the kids will come up with B/D/A questions. Both days they will carry Q into their reading time.

Ginger wrote: For me, I see the gradual release model as a fluid flowing path I take my kids down. We actually go down the path together. By me first modeling the I wonders aloud with several books in different contexts, then inviting them to wonder in writing workshop in a list anything they are wondering about ANYTHING in life (after I have modeled that as well), then having them join with me in wondering as we read more picture books, THEN charting a particular book (before I wonders, during I wonders, and after I wonders) and SAVING those I wonders for several days later.

if they haven't ever done the "I wonder..." part before themselves, it might be too much too soon. You know I am the anal follower of the gradual release of responsibility model. (and my own interpretation is often WAY too drawn out but works for ME!) So sticking to that as my guide (my comfort, when I start my study on questioning I just do the think alouds for a few days with just ME doing the wonderings (not taking to the next step of answering/infering). I tend to use fiction first but your example nudges me to mix all genres in this beginning step. Thanks for that! I would ask the kids to pay attention to what they see me doing and saying as I am reading. I really physically put down the book onto my lap when I am doing the thinking aloud parts. I actually remind them ahead of time that "when I am reading the words from the book I will hold the book like this (show them) and when I am sharing my thinking I am doing in my head as I am reading, I will put the book down on my lap like this (show them). So you will know the difference." I think for young children that really helps them differentiate between the printed words and my thinking.

After I am done with a book I ask them to share what they saw and heard me doing. It is a way to catch those who are getting it and see who is not. I will even do "eye to eye, knee to knee" after reading a book to discuss what they noticed and then share back whole group something they just discussed with a partner. At the same time I am focusing on this in reading workshop I also have them

writing "I wonders" in a learning journal during writing workshop. I model what I am wondering about in general about anything. I write some on the overhead. I invite them to write some "I wonders" in a list for a few days. Sharing if they would like. I really stress them using the actual words "I wonder..." at the beginning of each line. For some reason it gets the questions out more easily. It seems less threatening. Like they can't "ask a WRONG question" that way.

Then I move to a shared picture book. I read, we all wonder together. Verbally. I send them off reading independently to pay attention if they wonder as they read. Have them share back whole group if they noticed themselves wondering. (I work hard to keep bringing out that metacognitive thinking awareness) Then I move to written I wonders done in a shared setting where you are moving from just hearing the "I wonders" in your head to actually taking the next step to seeking the answers.

Does this make sense? I guess I take it SO MUCH SLOWER than I probably have to but when I do I feel almost everyone gets a deeper understanding and hands on practice with the new strategy. So when we move to attacking the questions (which leads to inferring) the wondering is just bubbling out naturally.

Carrie wrote: My unit is progressing along nicely, although we are still in the before, during and after reading questions phase. I've used several books to model--Eve Bunting's Fly Away Home, Patricia Polacco's Appelemando's Dreams, and today Patricia McKissack's The Honest-To-Goodness Truth (which goes along with our character ed program and was a nice connection). Before I began that, though, I had my students brainstorm in groups why we ask questions--beyond just to get the answer. We talked about why we would be looking for an answer to begin with. We made a chart as a class and discussed the WHY of asking questions. This was great and set the stage for our "I Wonder..." lists in our Writer's Notebooks. Then I used art prints from books I borrowed from my local library (thanks for the idea!) and the kids filled chart paper with tons of questions. Each group was given 5 minutes to look at the picture and think of questions that weren't already there. They really enjoyed this!

Knowing when you know and knowing when you don't know

Some Qs are answered, some are not

QUESTION: Is there a drawback to including non-fiction and other genres in a questioning study?

Judy wrote: Well, yes, now that you've asked--I do think there's a drawback (not to including it, but to opening with it like you'd planned). Generally, nf questions will be answered right there in the text or you will have to do more research. Generally the answer is not negotiable. The joy of using Q

for fiction is the wondering. Q in fiction doesn't always have one answer, or even an answer the kids can agree on. This is the beauty of Q--it gets them thinking about the POSSIBILITIES of the story. And then you get to step right into Inference.

Judy wrote: Today we discussed Harvey's suggestion that 'Some questions are answered, some questions are not.' I read aloud (Charlie Anderson by Abercrombie) and charted my questions--I had a space for yes or no on the chart. When I finished, we went through the list of questions and asked if they had been answered IN THE TEXT. You would be surprised how many 3rd graders had trouble distinguishing between 'answered' (as in they know) and 'answered in the text.' This actually turned out to be a great minilesson which had the kids really thinking. Then I gave each kid 2 stickies (thinking of budget woes) and we read the nonfiction basal selection--writing 2 questions. We brought the stickies back to a new chart and they simply read their question as they placed the sticky on the chart--then they wrote Y or N next to it and explained their thinking. Pretty good thinking.

Sharon wrote: Judy, this is an example of why I NEED to hear explicitly what others are doing. I've been struggling with the questions that have been coming my way from the kids and recording them in some fashion to re-visit with our "conquering the questions" (note that I used this group's suggestion there ;)) Anyway, this addresses the GR questioning problem... I'll try the sticky notes (I think limited to two also helps them to choose their most burning questions, too) with them.

Sharon wrote: What did you do... ask them to show you the sentence in the text that answered the question explicitly?

Judy: Occasionally, when we voice disagreement, we may resort to that, but today, when their annoying teacher kept repeating, "But was it answered IN THE TEXT?" they were able to quickly come to consensus.

Ginger wrote: On chart paper, on post its in a basal story that all the kids have copies of, on a copied off short text piece, collect them so you can return to them with answered and unanswered. It is now that the discussion of whether the questions are answered or not answered in the text come in (for me!). I have them return to the text to find the "evidence" of the answer. We write it next to the question (if working on the chart paper I wonders) or at the bottom of our post its, the page number and the evidence even. What the answer is. The debates and the returning to the text are amazing! I love this part of the study.

I made a 2 column chart with A and Un at the top as headings. With a whole class text where they had each individually written post its on each open faced page, I had them discuss in groups their post its for a given page. I had them number themselves off. So person number one would share their post it for the cover/title page (their before question(s)), then person number two would

share their post it for that page, then person number three and then person number four. But after each person THE GROUP would discuss/decide if that post it was answered in the text or not. If it was they ALL had to go back into the text and find the evidence. Write that page down and code it with an A. Even write the answer down if you'd like. Then they stick THAT post it at the BOTTOM of the A (answered column) on the worksheet. The next post it that was answered would be placed on TOP of that one (if will become like one of those flip up books?) layering them all from the bottom of the page to the top. It just works better starting at the bottom for placing them on the sheet.

Lesson: Some Questions are Answered and Others Are Not

1. Choose a book to read aloud that causes you as a reader to ask questions that are answered and unanswered in the text. *Big Al* by Andrew Clements is one I like. Write questions that you have before during and after the book. I do this on post its.
2. Show students the book you are about to read aloud. Read the title and author. Share several of your before questions and record them on chart paper. Let several students share their questions too and record them on the chart.
3. Read the book aloud stopping 4-5 times to record your own or the students questions.
4. After you finish reading record one or two of your own "after" questions and several of the students' questions.
5. Tell the students that some of the questions that are on the chart (especially those asked before the book was read) are answered in the story. Go back and read the story aloud again and put an "A" for answered whenever you find the answer to one of the questions in the story. Students will probably be able to do this without you modeling.
6. Go back and look at the list. What was answered and what was not answered? Remind students that authors often leave us with some things to wonder about. But asking questions, even if they are not answered by the author makes us better readers, because they help us THINK about what we are reading.

QUESTION: What do you do for unanswered or multiple answer questions?

Sharon answered: I'd say for both unanswered and multiple answer questions that you CELEBRATE! One of my favorite quotes from Keene in *MOT* is "Let the question live." Last year when we read the story of Amelia Earhart and there were no firm answers for what happened to her, Steven reminded the other kids, "That's just one of those questions that we have to let live." It was his own first grade way of saying some questions just "are" and we don't why. When I picked up from the kids that they just couldn't leave it at that, I allowed them to write and draw about their own ideas of what happened to her... their own hypotheses. They took what the text said, added what they knew from their own schema and made an "educated" guess about Earhart's demise. They then shared with each

other and discussed the possibilities. It was wonderful. As far as multiple answers... if you mean multiple answers because of how you interpret the text (and the answers aren't negated by the text), then I'd say it's a perfect time to talk once again about how our schemas differ which may give us different perspectives.

Marcia wrote: Yesterday I had some great lessons in which some were unplanned and some were planned. I had planned to begin with a read aloud from a big book that was part of our Scholastic News. The kids all had a copy and I was going to have it be our shared reading as a follow up. Before I began to read, I asked the children what their schema was about MLK, Jr. Two children raised their hands with information indicating they knew who he was; a couple others raised their hands with information, like "He is famous" and "He is a black man." I read the big book to them and they seemed to have a little more schema, but many, many questions. Well thank goodness, for the group who has been discussing questioning online b/c I haven't really prepared for it. I decided to do an impromptu questioning lesson. I talked to them about how good readers do questioning and it helps them pay attention to the text. I used one of the little girl's questions to also point out that because of her question, I knew she was really paying attention to what I was reading.

I had the kids go prepare their copy of the story and then read with a partner while I prepared a little piece of paper on computer and printed out copies for the class which simply said: "My question about Martin Luther King, Jr. I had the children write their questions on the piece of paper and we shared our questions. Many were what we have been referring to as "thin' questions, like "when did he die?" "where was he born?", "how did he die?" There were about 5 that involved "how did the law start that said white and black people would be separated?" which was prompted by my over effusive response to the question being shared orally. :)

We went to lunch and after lunch we reviewed the questions and I assembled them on the floor to read David Adler's "A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr." I told them as I read, if they heard something in the text that answered their question, to raise their index finger. Before I read, I also introduced them to a chart paper that had been divided into 4 sections, lengthwise, entitled, "The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr." I labeled the sections with the children, "Childhood," "Teenage years," "Adult" "What is he famous for?" and explained that many biographies are written in this way. I am trying to introduce how to write an autobiography as well as teach them how to approach an biography when they read it. (We will do more with biography when I teach them about presidents in February.) Also, because of the questioning lesson which I hadn't planned for, I wasn't sure if I was going to complete the chart of his life, but did want to introduce the framework. I read the book aloud and stopped to discuss at

appropriate moments. The kids remembered to raise their finger when their question was answered. At the end, I sent those to their seats to write "T" on their paper to indicate their answer came from the text, and then the answer they received. I really tried to emphasize that with even me going back to the book to locate the information. I would ask them, "Knowing which part of his life this happened in, what part of the book should I look for this information-beginning, middle or end?" They seemed to understand how the biography was laid out. I talked to the children who didn't have their question answered about how some questions are not answered by this text and might be from another text about the same topic.

We ended up completing the chart after the children returned to the floor. They kind of just started taking over at that point. :) They were able to retell what they had learned from the reading.

I may continue the lesson on Tuesday, just not sure. I was going to possibly keep the questions for the fat and thin lesson to show them for deeper understanding, but questions are needed. I had planned on teaching questioning with fiction only right now and possibly doing nonfiction later in April. It was really much easier than I thought it was going to be.

Gaining information through questioning (your wonder boxes?) Thick and thin questions

thick/thin Qs

Jan wrote: I realized how hard it is to ask a certain kind of Q on demand, so this year I just had the kids write down their Qs as I read and then we placed the Qs under thick or thin--this was exceptional. By the end, they were saying which it was immediately. We had about twice as many thin as thick and we discussed that--and our need to clarify as we read. I also went out on a limb (I sure hope this is okay) and told them that I think it's a lot easier to ask thick questions when we have finished the book. Sure enough, some of those Qs were terrific—and deep, I mean thick.

Ginger wrote: I, myself, go into thick and thin before doing answered / unanswered. Just because it is a natural way to discuss the different types of questions we wonder about. It's a way to monitor who is and is not asking deeper questions. Although I always talk about both types of questions are important. Not one better than another. When my students are coding their I wonders in their self selected books I have them meet in small groups to talk together about their questions, even if they are not reading the same book. Having to decide if a question is thin or thick is the focus of the talk, at that point. I take the time for them to really get into asking their questions. Deciding if their questions are answered or unanswered comes naturally after spending some time becoming more metacognitive about the asking of the questions. Then you can do all four together. Sometimes I hear kids feeling badly that their questions are not answered in the text, but over time they come to see the value of those deeper questions that lead to great discussions. With the discussion comes the comprehension. And hearing others questions leads to more questions. Which leads to a deeper understanding.

I am SAVING those I wonders for several days later, I eventually will return to a previously read story and that charted work. It is THEN I talk about thick and thin. On a story we already know and have done I wonders on. Then we kind of do more work with the idea to pay attention to the kinds of questions we have. Are our questions thick ones or thin ones or both? Not for any judgment or right or wrong. Just to let the questions flow and become heard. I really don't do answered or unanswered for quite a while. (Yes, I take a long time and possibly it is stretched out too long????) Save the I wonders from several books along the way. On chart paper, on post its in a basal story that all the kids have copies of, on a copied off short text piece, collect them so you can return to them with answered and unanswered.

Nan wrote: When I did thick and thin I made a chart that was divided in half into a **Thick side and a Thin side**. The kids wrote their questions on post it notes and stuck them on the chart where they thought they belonged. Then we read them one at a time and debated whether it was really a thick question. My

kids were very intent on proving their point and going back to the text to find their evidence. It was a really good lesson. Another idea is to use skinny stickies and wider stickies and tried to connect the idea of thick to important/big issue questions.

Questioning that leads to inferential thinking

Using question webs to expand thinking

coding Qs

Suzanne wrote: I began questioning with my 3rd graders by reading aloud the book *Stranger in the Woods*. I told them we would stop at each page and write down questions we had. We weren't looking for answers, just questions. They came up with some very literal questions, but also some wonderfully deep questions (several kiddos said, "Oooh, good question" when a particularly deep question came up.) I listed them on chart paper. Then I sent them to read independently, writing questions they had in their own books on post-its. At the end of reading time, I grouped them to share their questions. Interesting that some had tons of literal questions, where some only had a few.

The next day, we reread the story *Stranger in the Woods*. I asked the kiddos to listen to see if the questions we had asked were answered in the book - just hold up a finger, not shout out the answer. We went through all the questions and marked them Y for yes and N for no. A few we coded with a question mark because there was heated discussion on whether the question was answered or not (these were some of the inference questions, though I didn't tell the kiddos that.) Then I had the kids go back to the questions they had from their independent reading and code them Y, N, or ? Later, the kids got into groups and shared the information.

The next day, we revisited the questions we had marked with a ? We talked about how the author had not given the answer, but some of us knew what the answer was. I introduced the term inference, and told them what it meant - when we use clues the author gives us and our own schema about the subject to figure out an answer. Then I showed *The Stranger* (Van Allsburg) and asked them if they had a question. They wanted to know who the stranger was. I told them the author never says who it is in the book, but they should listen for clues and use them with their schema to figure it out. I knew I was going to use this book for inference, so I had purposely planned to read aloud *Little House in the Big Woods* before starting this study. There is a chapter there where Laura describes Jack Frost. I hoped that some of my kids would make the connection and they did! At the end of the story, I had the kids whisper who they thought the stranger

was to a neighbor. Several of them were right. Then we went back through the book to look for clues to support the inference.

Next

Then we'll just apply what we've already learned to nf in general. I only plan to spend 2 days on this. Both days we'll Q together with a nf read aloud and then we'll work independently with short pieces of nf which we can write on (I made a copy of an article from Ranger Rick) or put stickies on (we'll use a piece on firestorms from the basal).

I plan to then spend 2 days on Q in poetry--same game plan--and hope this will lead me right in to I.

QUESTION: The only struggle I'm having right now is how to record the questions during the read-aloud AND keep the story itself flowing.

Judy's advice helped me... I tried having a student recorder for the questions but it really distracted my kids. They were watching her more than me... I couldn't keep their attention. Today went much better with each recording in their inventive spelling.

Judy: This is a tough issue--and I've really wrestled with it. I don't know that you, as a firstie, will appreciate my answer (that's why I was a little vague in my first post--I didn't want to make you feel badly). I don't do the recording--the kids do it. These first two days, as I've modeled, I've been fortunate that the students-of-the-day have been fairly literate kids. So I've stated my question and then I can keep reading as the child records it; you'd better believe the others are hawks--if she forgets, I'll hear someone whisper the rest of my Q to her. When the kids listen with stickies--I have them put the stickies on a clipboard. I pause occasionally, but third graders are pretty capable of recording their Qs as I read. Another thing I do that visitors have liked, when individual kids record, I'll call a few up at a time and keep the discussion going with the others as the writers take turns. This moves it along. And please know that my kids make lots of spelling mistakes in this writing--they know that at this time we only care about ideas.