

K–2 MULTI-GRADE BRIDGE

Teacher Reference Materials

Theme Three: *Deep in the Forest*

Book 1 – *When Rain Falls*

QUESTION-ANSWER RELATIONSHIPS

Question-Answer Relationships (QARs) is a powerful strategy and is being introduced in the second grade, but mastery is not expected until grades 3 and 4.

QARs were originally developed by Taffy Raphael (1982, 1984) as a way to teach middle-grade students how to develop and answer questions. Through a series of research investigations, Raphael learned that teaching students about questions led to improved comprehension not only with specific questioning tasks, but with standardized tests of reading comprehension.

She simplified the world of questions for students by first classifying them into two broad categories: "In the Book" questions and "In My Head" questions. With "In the Book" questions, information for generating questions and answers are found directly in the text. She then further divided "In the Book" questions into "Right There" or "Think and Search" questions. Similarly, she classifies "In My Head" questions into two types: "Author and You" and "On My Own" questions.

Examples of each type of question are shown in the following sample text and questions:

Mark felt his way across the unlighted room. "Ouch!" he grumbled as his bare toe hit the cold metal leg of a kitchen chair. Why was it always more difficult finding your way back to bed than going to the kitchen for that cherry pie? In the last week, Marc had cut his finger on a carelessly placed knife and then bruised his knee when he missed the top step of the stairs. *"I wish I had some magic, see-in-the-dark glasses. I'd be a millionaire. Everybody who has ever heard a chocolate chip cookie whisper alluringly or a pickle cackle 'come here' should buy my stalker glasses. I would.... OOOO!"* Mark stopped dead as the back of *the* couch punched him in the stomach.

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| Right There: | What did Mark say when he hit his toe? |
| Think and Search: | What injuries did Mark suffer? (hurt toe, cut finger, bruised knee, punched stomach) |
| Author and You: | If you were Mark, what might you do to eliminate all injuries? |
| On My Own: | If you could invent anything in the world, what would it be? |

The four question types introduced by Raphael are useful for helping students develop their own questions. Some second grade teachers will just introduce the two overall types of questions: "**In My Head**" and "**In the**



Book." Others have had some success introducing their students to all four. When introducing QARs, use the following sequence:

1. Introduce QARs with a selection from a theme book.
2. Make sure that each student has access to a copy of the QAR framework summary, (Activity Master 3.1.9a)
3. Go over the framework stressing the two types of questions: "In the Book" and "In My Head."
4. Teach the two types of questions in each category if students are ready.

Notice that there are two kinds of "In the Book" questions: "Right There" and "Think and Search." With "Right There" questions, the answer is found in one place in the selection. "Right There" questions are easy to answer and require very little thinking because the answer is found in the book.

Another type of "In the Book" question is "Think and Search." These are a bit harder to answer because the answer is in more than one place in the selection.

"In My Head" questions take more thinking than "In the Book" questions. There are two types of "In My Head" questions: "Author and You" and "On My Own." With "Author and You" questions, information from the story is combined with background knowledge. The answer cannot be found in the book, but the story has to be read in order to answer the question.

With "On My Own" questions, answers come directly from the reader's own head. Reading the story helps access background information, but the question can be answered without having read the story.

5. After modeling several questions for each type, explain to students that they will be leading discussion of this selection. It is better for students to ask their own questions than to answer the teacher's questions. Tell them: "You understand more and become a better reader when you ask your own questions. Therefore, I am going to let you take turns being teacher and lead your own discussions for this selection."
6. Divide students into cooperative teams. After each team produces examples of the four types of questions, have the teams present their questions to the class. Use the following steps:
 - a. Read the question.
 - b. Discuss what type of question it is before having students answer. Explain why it is that type of question and how to go about finding the answer. Be sure to stress whether the answer is coming from the book or from students' heads.
 - c. Have students answer the question.

A discussion of the type of question is more important for critical thinking than the answer. So make sure students explain why they think a question fits a certain category before answering the question. Justifying the question type always produces lively debate, particularly if the question happens to be a "Think and Search" or "Author and You" question. Often students have valid arguments supporting a question as both a "Think and Search" and an "Author and You" question. Justifying the reason for



the question type is more important than the end result.

7. After students understand how to develop the questions and have practiced conducting their discussions as a whole class, they are ready to begin leading their own discussions in small groups.

DEVELOPING DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

In a book discussion, the focus shifts from teacher-directed to student-directed dialogue. It is important to help students develop guidelines for discussion groups. Suggestions for guidelines include the following:

- Sit in a circle.
- Let each person complete his/her thought before speaking. Don't interrupt.
- Listen to one another. Look at the person speaking.
- Stay on the topic.
- Let every person talk at least once.
- Repeat the main point of the speaker before making a comment. (Repeating another person's idea will help develop listening skills and will also let the speaker know that his/her message has been heard.)

At the close of a discussion period, conduct a community share where students talk about one of two of the most important things discussed in their groups. Also discuss how the group followed the guidelines and how they could improve. These can then be shared with the entire class. Hold community shares routinely at the conclusion of small group discussions.

CLOSING COMMENTS

This lesson explored one comprehension strategy. Successful readers know how to apply strategies to reading and writing tasks. In the early grades, students start on the path to becoming independent learners, readers, writers, and thinkers. Demonstrate, encourage, and model this and other strategies taught. Then gradually step aside and assist only when necessary as students begin to apply these strategies on their own.

