

# Text Dependent Questions

## Wisconsin State Standards

Reading: Literature and Information Text

– Range of Reading and Text Complexity

## Grade Level

K-5

## Purpose

Use with students to support comprehension: ask a variety of text dependent questions to critically examine a text

## When to Use

During Reading  
After Reading

## Grouping

Whole Group  
Small Group  
Partners  
Individuals

## ABOUT THE STRATEGY

TEXT DEPENDENT QUESTIONS require students to provide evidence directly from the text in their answers to questions. In order to ask these types of questions, teachers must have read the text in advance. Text dependent questions include questions about (a) general understandings, (b) key details, (c) vocabulary and text structure, (d) author’s purpose, (e) inferences, and (f) opinions, arguments, and intertextual connections. Students can also ask text dependent questions as a way to critically examine a text. Questions can be asked and answered during or after reading.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

- Select the text passage to be used (three paragraphs to two pages). The text should be a complex text and should warrant further investigation and understanding.
- Read the text yourself and then create several text dependent questions you could ask students.
- Introduce the strategy in the context of a close read and establish its purpose.
- Have students answer and/or ask text dependent questions, modeling how to answer text dependent questions and ask text dependent questions with a think aloud.
- Have students practice answering and asking text dependent questions with multiple print and digital texts in diverse media, formats, and lengths.

## MEASURING PROGRESS

- Teacher observation
- Conferencing
- Student journaling

## RESEARCH

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012). Close reading in elementary schools. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(3), 179-188.

Taboada, A., Bianco, S., & Bowerman, V. (2012). Text-base questioning: A comprehension strategy to build English Language Learner’s content knowledge. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 51(2), 97-109.

## TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. Select the text based on the standards selected for learning.
2. Read the text to identify the sections that warrant text-dependent questions, sections that will enhance students' understanding of the text in service to the standards. Mark these sections, so you can stop and ask the questions during and after reading and/or cue the reader.
3. Write text-dependent questions. Not all texts will require the same types or amount of questions, so be sure to ask questions that will lead students toward understanding the text in service to the standards.
  - a. **GENERAL UNDERSTANDING** questions orient the reader to the main idea of the text and are appropriate for all texts because readers need to have an overall understanding of the text before they can analyze it.
  - b. **KEY DETAILS** questions orient the reader to important details that the author uses to inform the reader. These questions often include the who, what, where, when, why, or how in the stem and can include more nuanced details that add clarity to the reading. Key details are appropriate for all texts and should be used to scaffold students' understanding as they respond to more complex questions.
  - c. **VOCABULARY AND TEXT STRUCTURE** questions orient the reader to the vocabulary used by the author and the structure of the text itself. Locate key text structures and the most powerful words in the text that are connected to the key ideas and understandings, developing questions that illuminate these connections. Questions about vocabulary and text structure will be more relevant to specific texts.
  - d. **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE** questions orient the reader to the genre of the text and the use of narration to help readers make sense of what they are reading. Questions about author's purpose will be more relevant to specific texts.
  - e. **INFERENCE QUESTIONS** require students to read the entire selection so that they know where the text is going and how they can reconsider key points in the text as contributing elements of the whole, especially where the text leaves matters uncertain or unstated. Inference questions will be more relevant to specific texts.
  - f. **OPINIONS, ARGUMENTS, AND INTERTEXTUAL CONNECTION** questions generate opinions about what readers have read, and readers should be able to argue their perspectives using evidence from the text and from other texts, experiences, and beliefs that they hold. Typically, these questions should be asked only after readers have read and reread a text several times to fully develop their understanding.
4. Situate text-dependent questions within a larger context that connects to a standard/s, e.g., a close read, collaborative discussions, or a culminating activity around the key ideas or understanding.

Asking text-dependent questions that require a single response or a paragraph response prepares students for the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Additionally, using questioning and discussion techniques is a critical component of Domain 3b: Instruction of the Danielson Framework for Educator Effectiveness.

Adapted from Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2012). Text-dependent questions. *Principal Leadership*, 70-72. Retrieved from [http://www.fisherandfrey.com/admin/filemanager/File/Text\\_Dependent.pdf](http://www.fisherandfrey.com/admin/filemanager/File/Text_Dependent.pdf)

## TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

### General Understanding

- What is the main idea/theme of the text? How do you know this?
- How did the author organize the ideas?

### Key Details

- Which key details support the main idea? Look for the Who? What? When? Where? Why? How much? How many?
- How did the author develop the argument, explanation, or narrative?
- Are there any shifts or patterns in the writing? Look for signal words and phrases.
- Are there any nuances in meaning?

### Vocabulary & Text Structure

- What role do the individual paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words play?
- How does organization contribute to meaning?
- Why do authors begin and end when they do?
- Does the meaning of words go beyond the denoted meaning? What is the connotative meaning of the words?
- When is figurative language used and to what effect?
- How can meaning be altered by changing key words?
- Why may have the author chosen one word over another?

### Author's Purpose

- What is the author's purpose for writing? How do you know?
- From whose point of view is the text told?
- How reliable is the narrator? How do you know?
- Who's story/perspective is not represented?

### Inferences

- Where does the text leave matters uncertain or unstated?
- How do the parts build to a whole?
- What are the arguments in persuasive texts?
- What are the ideas in informational texts?
- What are the key details in literary texts?

### Opinions, Arguments, Intertextual Connections

- What is your opinion about the text? What evidence do you have to support your opinion?
- Which forms of rhetoric are used? To what effect?
- What other texts support or refute the claims and counterclaims made in this text? What other texts represent a similar or different experience/perspective?