

FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month

Adopted and Adapted by Dr. Vicky Zygouris-Coe & Catherine Glass



MODIFIED QAR

February 2005



(Developed by Glass, C. & Zygouris-Coe, V., 2005)

Rationale:

"No comprehension activity has a longer or more pervasive tradition than asking students questions about their reading, whether this occurs before, during, or after reading (Duke & Pearson, 2002) **Questioning** has long been used by teachers as a way to guide and monitor student learning. "Research shows that teacher questioning strongly supports and advances students' learning from reading (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001)." Questioning is effective for improving comprehension because it gives the students a purpose for reading, focuses attention on what must be learned, helps develop active thinking while reading, helps monitor comprehension, helps review content, and relates what is learned to what is already known (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). Research findings suggest that a student's understanding and recall can be readily shaped by the types of questions to which they become accustomed (Duke & Pearson, 2002) Therefore, if inferential understanding is desired, a student's question answering behavior can be shaped by the questions that require them to connect information in the text to their knowledge base. In the state of Florida, the FCAT Reading Test requires such inferential understanding of text.

Taffy Raphael spent time observing students and the strategies students employ while answering questions. She found that many students fell into one of two categories: (1) Those who relied only on their memory or prior knowledge to find answers or (2) those who relied only on the text. These observations revealed the importance of teaching students the relationships between questions and answers. As a result, Raphael (1986) developed an approach called **QAR or Question-Answer-Relationships** which teaches students how to distinguish questions with answers that are found "in the book" and questions with answers found "in my head." Raphael's (1986) research with QAR has proven that when students are taught to use the strategy their ability to answer questions correctly improves. Raphael also found that through QAR, students developed a language for talking about the strategies they use to answer questions.

Understanding how Question-Answer-Relationships work is crucial for learning. Many students are unaware of the different thinking levels questions may elicit (Buehl, 2001). Students often times take a literal approach to answering questions, searching for direct statements within the text that answer the question. Many times they feel betrayed and give up when they don't find an explicit answer. Other students rely solely on what they already know regardless of the text. For these students, answering questions becomes an exercise in common sense rather than a thoughtful consideration of new information encountered in print (Buehl, 2001). Question-Answer-Relationships help students to realize the need to consider information in the text and information from their own background knowledge (Raphael, 1986).

Raphael identified two categories of questions: those whose answers are supplied by the author (*in-the-book QARs*) and those that have answers that need to be developed based on the reader's ideas and experiences (*in-my-head QARs*). These two categories of questions also have two different types of questions.

In-the-book questions are classified as either *Right There questions* or *Think and Search questions*. The answer to *Right There questions* can be found in one sentence in the text. Students can point to these answers. The answers to *Think and Search questions* are pieced together using information from different parts of the text.

In-my-head questions are classified as either *Author and You questions* or *On My Own questions*. The answer to *Author and You questions* are not found in the text. Instead they require students to think inferentially. Students must think about what they already know, what the author is telling them, and how both pieces of information fit together. *On My Own questions* can be answered without even reading the text. The answers to these questions rely solely on their own experiences.

In-the-Book Questions	In-My-Head Questions
<p>Right There Questions</p>  <p>The answer is in the text. The words used to make up the question and words used to answer the question are found in the same sentence.</p>	<p>Author and You Questions</p> <p>The answer is not in the story. You need to think about what you already know, what the author tells you, and how it fits together.</p> 
<p>Think and Search</p>  <p>The answer is in the selection, but you need to put together different pieces of information to find it. The answer comes from different places in the selection.</p>	<p>On My Own</p> <p>The answer is not in the text. You can answer the question without even reading the text. The answer is based solely on your own experiences and knowledge.</p> 

(Information for chart from Santa, Havens, Valdes (2004))

How to Use the Strategy:

This is intended as an introduction to the QAR technique. QAR takes time to develop with students. Students will need a fair amount of instruction and guided practice using QAR. The teacher should invest time in modeling using think alouds when teaching students this strategy.

Teacher-directed whole-group instruction:

1. **Explain the strategy.** Explain to students that there are essentially two categories of questions:

In The Book: the answer can be found in the text.

In My Head: the answer cannot be found in the text and must come from the reader's own knowledge or experiences.

For each category of questions there are two types of questions. (You can use QAR posters to illustrate and highlight this information.)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right There: The answer is clearly stated 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Author and You: the answer cannot
--	---	--	---

<p>In The Book</p>	<p>in the text. You can point to the exact sentence in the text. You should point out to students that typically the wording from the question comes from the sentence in which the answer is found.</p> <p>2. Think and Search: The answer is in the text, but the reader must locate the information and assemble the answer. The information is found in different locations within the text.</p>	<p>In My Head</p>	<p>be found explicitly in the text. The answers are constructed partly from hints in the text and partly from the readers personal knowledge base. The text will not directly address the question, but the answer is implied.</p> <p>2. On My Own: answers to these questions rely solely on the reader's personal knowledge. The answer is not based on the text. These types of questions can be answered without reading the text.</p>	<p>2. Demonstrate the strategy. To teach this strategy, teachers should use an example that clearly distinguishes between the different types of questions. Demonstrate how you determine question type. For in the book questions, show students how to find the answers to the questions in the text. For in the head questions, demonstrate the though</p>
--------------------	---	-------------------	---	--

processes used to answer these questions.

3. **Guide students to apply the strategy.** As a class, have students decide the QAR for each question and explain their reasoning. Discuss using the QAR strategy. The teacher should give students feedback on their use of the strategy. *You can use the Modified QAR worksheet below to guide students in using the QAR strategy.*

4. **Practice individually or in small groups.** Divide students into groups of three and have them practice using QARs. Students should identify the QAR for each question and then give the answer. *Students can use the Modified QAR worksheet below to independently practice using the QAR strategy.*

5. **Reflect.** Discuss the QAR technique and how it helps students to better understand the text. Talk about which types of questions require the most thought and how students identified the QAR. At this point, students can complete a journal activity answering these two questions: How does understanding the QAR strategy help you comprehend information? How can you apply the strategy on your own?

You may need to go through this routine a few times before students catch on to the strategy. For those students who need additional work, you can form small groups of students who need additional help using the QAR strategy. It is important that students learn to generalize this strategy across settings and see the value of the strategy when completing work from other content areas.

Variations:

QARs do not have to be used exclusively with text. They can be used with tables, graphs, pictures, music and art. Included in the resources is a lesson plan for using QAR with pictures.

As students become comfortable with identifying types of questions and answering them, students can begin writing examples of their own questions in lieu of responding to your questions. Student-generated questions can be exchanged with other classmates who then answer and classify the student-produced questions.

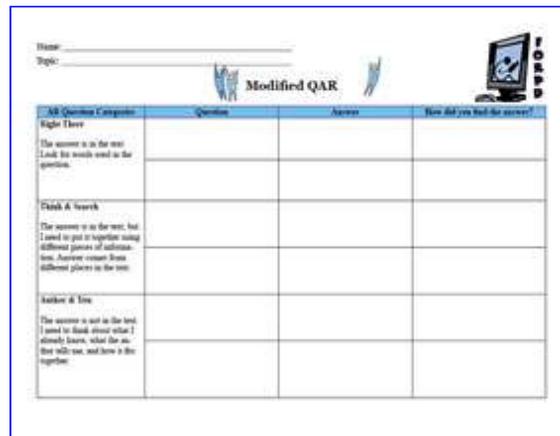
Teaching QAR is also an excellent way of preparing students to take standardized assessments such as FCAT. See Duke and Ritchhart's online article [No Pain, High Gain](#).

Ideas for Assessment:

Teachers can use several different forms of assessment when evaluating the student's ability to use QARs. Assessment can be done informally using anecdotal records and observations. You can evaluate the student's understanding of the QAR strategy by using comprehension sheets that are completed during lessons and activities. Students can also write journal entries explaining the QAR strategy and why or how it is helpful in comprehending what they read.

Teachers can also use a rubric to assess student understanding of the QAR strategy. The following rubric comes from a lesson plan found on www.readwritethink.org.

Criteria	Points
The student accurately identifies each of the four question types (1 point each) ___ Right There ___ Think & Search ___ On My Own ___ Author & Me	
The student's responses demonstrate a close, careful reading. (4 points) Notes:	
The student makes appropriate links to the text for "In the book" questions. (4 points) Notes:	
The student makes appropriate connections for "In my head" questions. (4 points) Notes:	
The student demonstrates reflective reading habits during group conversation. (4 points) Notes:	



(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of the Modified QAR worksheet.)

The elementary example below used an [FCAT sample passage for fourth grade](#) - The Red Fox pg. 4-9.

Theme: Elementary Example
Topic: The Red Fox - FCAT Passage

Modified QAR

All Question Categories	Question	Answer	How did you find the answer?
Right There The answer is in the text. Look for words used in the question.	Why did the farmer fix nearly every acre from the farm?	He moved away from the farm because the way of farming.	The answer can be found in one sentence on the first page of the story.
Think & Search The answer is in the text, but I need to put it together using different pieces of information. Answers come from different places in the text.	What did the farmer do right after he got the fox out?	He looked around for the fox.	On page 1, it tells me that he got out the fox and then on the next page it tells me he looked for the fox.
Author & You The answer is not in the text. I need to think about what I already know, what the author tells me, and how it fits together.	Why did the farmer make wheat for the fox and his kids in his field?	He knew why the fox had invented it was outside the farm, so protect her babies.	I used my own knowledge. The fox doesn't say it, but the farmer knows why the author looked at him, to help save her babies.

(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a sample elementary Modified QAR worksheet.)

The secondary example below used an FCAT sample passage for ninth grade - Dive In! Careers in Oceanography.

Theme: Secondary Example
Topic: Careers in Oceanography - FCAT Passage

Modified QAR

All Question Categories	Question	Answer	How did you find the answer?
Right There The answer is in the text. Look for words used in the question.	What do oceanographers do?	Marine geologists study physical features, designate some boundaries, and/or marine structures, predict natural resource and offshore sites.	Answer that is one sentence found in the text.
Think & Search The answer is in the text, but I need to put it together using different pieces of information. Answers come from different places in the text.	What do the sections "Frank Fennel" and "Frank the Elder" emphasize as an important part of ocean-related careers?	Both emphasize the necessity of getting work experience.	The questions asked are to use different sections of the text. I had to gather information from both to use in the answer.
Author & You The answer is not in the text. I need to think about what I already know, what the author tells me, and how it fits together.	What is the main difference between oceanographers and biologists?	Oceanographers study oceans, which are salt water, while biologists study life and animals, which are fresh water.	I found information on oceanographers in the section titled "A World of Possibilities," and I found information on biologists in the section titled "Frank Fennel."
Author & You The answer is not in the text. I need to think about what I already know, what the author tells me, and how it fits together.	In the first paragraph, the author mentions "the deeper" and asks you to show what about deep oceans?	The author mentions that you go to where that deep ocean and find the "deeper" is a surface where water equipment is needed for a closer to ocean.	I know from experience that water goes to work to get through the surface of the ocean and helps support life by giving oxygen. I also know that help goes on the ocean floor.
Author & You The answer is not in the text. I need to think about what I already know, what the author tells me, and how it fits together.	According to the article, what will the ocean's resources face greater threat in the future?	The article states that "growing populations place increased pressure on the ocean's resources and pose greater threats than pollution. The implications for the Earth's population will continue to grow and that, in a few, the growth will ultimately affect conditions in the ocean."	I know from common sense that as the world's population increases, it puts more pressure on our resources. I also know from common sense that some of the things that pressure our resources affects the ocean.

(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of a sample secondary Modified QAR worksheet.)

Resources

For more informative links on prediction strategies see the following:

QAR Handout -

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson232/question.pdf

Lesson Plan: Guiding Comprehension: Self-Questioning Using Question Answer Relationships

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=227

Lesson Plan: Using QARs to Develop Comprehension and Reflective Reading Habits

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=232

Lesson Plan: Applying Question-Answer Relationships to Pictures

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=370

Reading Quest QAR Information

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/qar.html>

The Winter, 2005 edition of the Project CRISS newsletter has additional information on Question-Answer-Relationships

<http://www.projectcriss.com/projectcriss/newsletters/comments.pdf>

References

- Armbruster, B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. (2001). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read*. Washington, DC: The U.S. Department of Education.
- Buehl, D. (2001). *Classroom strategies for interactive learning, 2nd edition*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Duke, N. & Pearson, D. (2002), Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In Farstrup, A. & Samuels, S. (Ed.) *What research has to say about reading instruction* (pp. 205-242). Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Duke, N. & Ritchhart (n.d.) No pain, high gain: Standardized test preparation. Retrieved February 10, 2005, from <http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/assessment/nopain.htm>
- Raphael, T. (1986). Teaching question answer relationships, revisited. *The Reading Teacher* (39) 6, 516-522.
- Santa, C., Havens, L., Valdes, B. (2004). *Project CRISS: Creating independence for student-owned strategies*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.



[Go to Adobe PDF instruction page.](#)

Last Updated December 06, 2004
forpd@mail.ucf.edu | (866) 227-7261 (FL only)

FOR-PD is a project of the [ITRC @ UCF](#) College of Education and administered under a grant from the [Florida Department of Education](#) and [Just Read, Florida!](#)