

QAR

Question Answer Relationship

Teaching Children Where to Seek Answers to Questions

What is it?

Taffy Raphael developed QAR as a tool for clarifying how students can approach the task of reading texts and answering questions. It helps them realize the need to consider both information in the text and information from their own background knowledge. Without QAR instruction students often over rely on text information or background knowledge.

Why use it?

This strategy:

- explicitly shows the relationship between questions and answers;
- categorizes different types and levels of questions;
- helps student to analyze, comprehend and respond to text concepts; and
- helps refute the common misconception held by students that the text has all the answers.

How to teach it?

Teachers need to keep the following three ideas in mind whenever they want to teach a strategy to independence:

The zone of proximal development:

Will this child or the children in my class be able to gain control of this strategy or parts of this strategy if given assistance?

Raphael states that students of different age levels benefit from different amounts and types of QAR instruction. Students prior to second grade seem to respond best when introduced initially to a two category distinction of sources of information: the book or story just completed, and the reader's background knowledge. Middle schools students can learn all of the categories in a single lesson, but would benefit from more extensive use of the category system, such as using it as a framework for considering text structures.

The gradual release of responsibility:

How will I release the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student?

The easiest way to describe this is by using Jeff Wilhelm's model of show me, help me, let me. First, the teacher models the desired behavior. In this case, the desired behavior is asking questions, finding answers, and then categorizing the question-answer relationship. Then, the teacher guides students as they practice the desired behavior, gradually releasing the responsibility for learning to them. Finally, the teacher provides opportunities for the students to try the strategy on their own as he/she observes and evaluates student performance to inform instruction.

Metacognition:

How do I increase the likelihood that my students will independently use the strategies I teach?

Students need to be explicitly taught the answers to these four questions to increase the likelihood of independent strategy use:

- What is the strategy?
- How do you perform the strategy?
- When would you use the strategy?
- Why would you use the strategy?

The first two are literal and the second two are metacognitive. The answers to all four questions should be explicitly taught at the same time as the strategy is explicitly taught. The answers are taught as think alouds during instruction.

How do I get students to determine the question-answer relationships?

Begin by helping students create a clear picture of the differences between *In the Book* and *In My Head* question-answer relationships. Many teachers begin with *In the Book* and then expand to *Right There* and *Search and Locate*. Once that is developed, they move to *In My Head*. When students have a clear understanding that their background knowledge is a relevant

source of information for answering questions they expand to *Author and Me* and *On My Own*.

The key distinction is whether or not the reader needs to read the text for the question to make sense. Keep in mind that sometimes the category for a response is not clear-cut. It is not important that there be a single correct category for every question. What is most important is that students can support their choice of category.

QAR as a framework for comprehension instruction

QAR is useful as a tool for conceptualizing and developing comprehension questions. QAR creates a way of thinking about the types of questions that are most appropriate for different points in guiding students through a text. Questions asked before reading are usually *On My Own* QARs. They are designed to access relevant prior knowledge. In creating questions asked during reading it is important to balance text based and inference questions. *Search and Locate* QARs should dominate and should build to the *Author and Me* QARs. Finally, after reading questions are primarily *Author and Me* and *On My Own* QARs. Please remember that too many *Right There* QARs may indicate and overemphasis on literal, detail questions.

QAR is useful as a student tool in providing a basis for three comprehension strategies: locating information, determining text structures and how they convey information, and determining when an inference would be required. It initially helps children understand that information from both texts and their knowledge base and experiences are important to consider when answering questions. It helps students search for key words and phrases to locate the appropriate information for answering questions. Finally, QARs help students recognize whether or not information is present in the text and, if not, that it is necessary to read “between or beyond the lines” to answer the question.

Using QAR with given questions

Following the text below are some questions that students might answer after reading the text. After reading the text, work with a partner to decide the question-answer relationship for each question, tell why it fits that category.

Tom has lived in Marysville his entire life. However, tomorrow, Tom and his family would be moving 200 miles away to Grand Rapids. Tom hated the idea of having to move. He would be leaving behind his best friend, Ron, the baseball team he had played on for the last two years, and the big swing in his backyard where he liked to sit and think. And to make matters worse, he was moving on his birthday! Tom would be thirteen tomorrow. He was going to be a teenager! He wanted to spend the day with his friends, not watching his house being packed up and put on a truck. He thought that moving was a horrible way to spend his birthday. What about a party? What about spending the day with his friends? What about what he wanted? That was just the problem. No one ever asked Tom what he wanted.

1. How long has Tom lived in Marysville?
2. What is the name of the town where Tom and his family are moving?
3. What might Tom do to make moving to a new town easier for him?
4. Does Tom like playing on the baseball team he has played on for the last two years?
5. In what ways can moving to a new house and to a new city be exciting?
6. What is Tom's best friend's name?

Using QAR to create questions

With a partner use the following Question-Answer Relationships worksheet to create questions for before, during and after reading that fits each of the four QAR categories. Use any interesting article.

QAR Practice – Given Questions

Directions: Think of some questions that could be answered from reading the text. Write at least one question under each QAR heading.

In the Book---Right There

In My Head---On My Own

In the Book---Think and Search

In My Head---Author and Me

After each question write the answer in parenthesis.

QAR Practice – Given Questions

Directions: Read the text. Answer the questions and identify the QAR. Then write three possible answers to make a multiple-choice question.

Question 1.

Question 2.

Question 3.

Answer:

Answer:

Answer:

QAR:

QAR:

QAR:

Possible multiple-choice
answers

Possible multiple-choice
answers

Possible multiple-choice
answers

1.

1.

1.

2.

2.

2.

3.

3.

3.

Understanding and Applying QAR

Directions: Answer each question as thoroughly as you can.

1. What is QAR?
2. How do you use QAR?
3. When do you use QAR?
4. Why do you use QAR?

Understanding and Applying QAR

Directions: With your group, brainstorm a list of the various settings and situations that you can use QAR with during the rest of the school year.

QAR Practice – Creating Questions

Directions: Create questions for the following situation. After writing the questions for each situation, identify the QAR for each.

You are going to be in a book discussion group. Identify a book that many people in the class have read this year and then write two questions that will make for a good group discussion.

Book: _____

Question 1:

QAR: _____

Question 2:

QAR: _____

QAR Practice – Creating Questions

Directions: Create questions for the following situation. After writing the questions for each situation, identify the QAR for each.

A new student has arrived in your class. She notices the charts and posters on the walls of the classroom. You point out several that you say are the most important. Identify those charts and posters and then write two questions that you could ask your new classmate to see whether she understands what the charts and posters say.

Charts and Posters: _____

Question 1:

QAR: _____

Question 2:

QAR: _____

QAR

IN THE BOOK

Right There

The answer is in one place in the text.

- reread
- scan
- look for key words

Think and Search

The answer is in several places in the text.

- skim or reread
- look for important information
- summarize

IN MY HEAD

Author and You

The answer is not in the text. Think about how what you know and what is in the text fit together.

- reread
- think about what you already know and what the author says
- predict

On My Own

The answer is not in the text.

- think about what you already know
- think about what you've read before
- make connections

- **I can use QAR when I need to answer questions or create questions.**
- **I can use QAR whenever I need to especially during social studies, science, math, or on tests.**
- **I can use QAR to help me understand and talk about what I read.**