**Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)**

Asking questions is one of the most important skills to have to become a better critical thinker. Being able to recognize, ask, and answer different types of questions is another essential, related skill.

In QAR, there are four types of questions, that have different levels of complexity:

* **Right There**
* **Pulling It Together**
* **Author and Me**
* **On My Own**

**Right There (RT)**

These questions can be answered by looking and pointing directly at something, e.g.:

* What time does the clock say?
* What color is my shirt?

In a text, these questions can be answered by looking and pointing directly at the text, e.g.:

* What does the character say is the problem with his life? (the answer could be a word, a phrase, a sentence or even a paragraph)
* Where does the first scene take place?
* These types of questions may use the following words:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Who is....? | Where is...? | What is...? |
| When is...? | How many...? | When did...? |

**Pulling It Together (PIT)**

These questions are like **Right There** questions, except that they require looking in more than one place for the answer, e.g.:

* How many people are wearing glasses?
* Where are there books in the room?

In a text, answers to these questions will be found throughout the text, and may help you understand the text better, e.g.:

* How many times does the character lie to people?
* To what does the author keep comparing a certain character?
* These types of questions may use the following words:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| For what reason...? | How did...? | Why was...? | What caused...? |

**Author and Me (AM)**

To answer these questions, combine schema/background knowledge AND information from other sources, e.g.:

* What is the best way to arrange the desks in this classroom for a test?
* How can you tell when your regular desk has been moved?

In texts, these are often the most difficult questions to answer when reading a text, e.g.:

* Do you think that the character’s choice was a good idea?
* Who is the most honorable character in the story?
* These types of questions may use the following words:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Why does…? | Would you...? | Which character...? |
| Did you agree/disagree with...? | What did you think of...? |  |

**On My Own**

The answers to these questions are opinions and only rely on schema/background knowledge (but are on the same topic as whatever is going on in the discussion or text) e.g.:

* What’s the best way to arrange desks in a classroom?
* Is it destruction of property or art when students draw on desks?

In texts, these questions should be open-ended, meaning they could be answered with different opinions, but to ask and answer these questions, it is important to discover the theme, universal truth, or big ideas that relate to the text, and ask questions that relate to our world e.g.:

* Is stereotyping ever a good idea? (think *American Born Chinese)*
* Are parents always right? (think *Romeo and Juliet)*
* These types of questions may use the following words:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Is/Are…? | Do you know…? | Have you ever…? | Would you ever…? |

Another way to look at QAR questions is that they are different “levels” of thinking:

**Bloom's Taxonomy—**classification of the levels of thinking

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Bloom’s Taxonomy** | **QAR questions** |
| Higher Level Thinking  Lower Level Thinking | Evaluation | **On My Own questions** require you to weigh several points of view **(Evaluation)** and support your point of view based on research **(Synthesis)**. |
| Synthesis |
| Analysis | **Author and Me questions** |
| Application | **Pulling It Together Questions** |
| Comprehension |
| Knowledge | **Right There questions** |