

How to use it:

4E

1. Introduce the strategy by giving students a written and verbal description of each question-answer relationship.
2. Assign short passages to be read from the textbook. As students finish reading each passage, ask them one question from each QAR category. Point out the differences between each question and the kind of answer it requires.
3. After students demonstrate that they understand the differences among the four QAR levels, assign several more short passages to be read. Again, ask one question for each category of QAR per passage, provide students with answers to the questions, and identify each question's QAR type. Discuss why the questions represent one QAR but not another.
4. Next, assign short text passages, and provide the questions and the answers. This time, however, have students identify each question as a particular QAR and explain their answer. Repeat the reading and questioning process, but have students work in groups to determine which QAR each question represents and write out their answers, accordingly.
5. At this point have students read a longer text passage. Give them several questions, not necessarily one per QAR level. Have students individually determine the QAR and write their answers. Continue assigning longer passages and various QARs for students to identify and answer.
6. Eventually, when reading is assigned in class, students should generate various QARs on their own that they present to the rest of the class for identification and answers.

Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)

What is it?

QAR (Raphael, 1982; 1986) is a strategy that is "designed to demystify the questioning process, providing teachers and students with a common vocabulary to discuss different types of questions and sources of information for answering these questions...." (Anthony & Raphael, p. 319). Four levels of questions are studied during strategy use and practice. Two are text-based QARs:

- "Right There" questions ask students to respond at the literal level; the words used to formulate the question and used to answer the question can be found "right there" in the same sentence of the text. "Right There" questions begin with words or statements such as "who is," "where is," "ask," "what is," "when is," "how many," "when did," "name," "what kind of." These questions usually elicit a one-word or short-phrase response and require one right answer. Sample questions are "Who discovered America?" or "Who was the first person to walk on the moon?"
- "Think and Search" questions require students to "think" about how the information or ideas in the text relate to one another, and to "search" through the entire passage they read to find information that applies. "Think and Search" questions may begin with words or statements such as "summarize," "what caused," "contrast," "retell," "how did," "explain," "find two examples," "for what reason," or "compare." A sample question is, "Which strategies could the individual described in this chapter use to improve his financial situation?"

The other QARs could be called knowledge-based because students must use their prior knowledge to answer the question:

- "Author and You" questions require students to answer with information not in the text; however, students must have read the text material to understand what the question is asking. A sample question is, "The topic of the passage was cloning. In what instances, if ever, do you think cloning should be used?"
- "On My Own" questions can be answered with information from the students' background knowledge and do not require reading the text.

Students who become skilled at this strategy recognize the relationship between the questions teachers ask and the answers they expect; therefore, they know where to find information needed for a correct response. Although teaching this strategy can take time, Richardson and Morgan (1994) report that students who learned and practiced this strategy for as little as eight weeks showed significant gains in reading comprehension.

Anthony and Raphael assert that QAR can also facilitate the transfer of control of the questioning process from teacher to learner. That is, when students become skilled at QAR, they need to rely less on their teacher because they are able to generate different levels of questions, themselves, during independent reading.