This document provides a summary of Recommendation 3b from the WWC practice guide *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4-9*. Full reference is on the last page.

	CONTENT: **Reading**
	GRADE LEVEL(S): **4–9**
	LEVEL OF EVIDENCE: **Strong**

Recommendation

Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read.

This part of Recommendation 3 includes practices for teaching students how to answer different types of questions and how to develop and answer their own questions about a text. Ultimately, the goal of this recommendation is for students to ask and answer questions to draw inferences and engage in meaningful discussions about a text.

How to carry out the recommendation

1. **Explicitly teach students how to find and justify answers to different types of questions.**

    ### Instructional strategies from the examples

    -   Utilize specific questioning strategies (e.g., Right There, Think and Search, Author in Me) to help students answer questions by justifying their answers from the text.
    -   Draw connections between student's own background knowledge to derive meaning from the text.
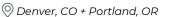
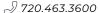   ### South Carolina standards alignment

    ELA: RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5
    TEACHER: INST.AM.4, INST.TH.1, INST.TH.2

    Focus instruction on common questions that may be asked about a text. Encourage students to answer and justify their answers to these questions by connecting the text

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to their own world knowledge or deriving meaning from the context within the passage. Resource 3B.1 outlines three common question types. Work with students to answer each type of question individually and provide justification for their answers from the text. Example 3B.1 shows how to model the use of a "Right There" question in a passage of text. Include more difficult questions centered on the text, such as "Think and Search" and "Author and Me," as students demonstrate understanding. Examples 3B.2 and 3B.3 demonstrate how to move beyond "Right There" level questions into more complex analyses of the passages.

Resource 3B.1. Types of questions

Question type	Description
Right There Question	The information needed to answer the question is considered "right there" because often the words in the question and the words used to answer the question are in the same sentence. This type of question can also be referred to as a text-dependent question.
Think and Search Question	The information needed to answer the question is in different parts of the text so the student needs to "think and search" to figure out the answer. This type of question can also be referred to as a text-dependent question.
Author and Me Question	To answer the question, the student must connect information in the text with information they learned or read previously. This type of question can also be referred to as an inferential question.

Source: corestandards.org; Raphael and Au (2005); Ritchey et al. (2017); Vaughn, Cirino, et al. (2010); Vaughn, Wanzek, et al. (2010).

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Example 3B.2. Teacher modeling how to answer a Think and Search question

The teacher and students continue reading about President Johnson's *War on Poverty*. The teacher stops after the second paragraph to model how to answer a Think and Search question.

> President Johnson worked with Congress to pass laws to create programs to help people who were poor. Many of these programs are still here today. A major program was Head Start. Head Start was a pre-school program for students who were poor to prepare them for school. The Head Start grant office also paid people to make educational television shows such as Sesame Street, The Electric Company, and Reading Rainbow. Anyone with a television could watch these shows. The food stamps program helped those who made little money to buy food. It is still here, but now called SNAP. Other programs were also started that provided jobs and job training. The Job Corps program prepared people to be auto mechanics, cooks, nurses, and emergency medical technicians.

Teacher writes on the board: *What are three programs that were made available to reduce poverty?*

Teacher: *Sometimes when a question asks about naming multiple things, you might have to look in different places in the text for the answer. In other words, you are not likely going to find the answer in one sentence, like a Right There question. This is a Think and Search question. To answer a Think and Search question, you have to put together information from different parts of the text. In the first sentence, the author states that President Johnson worked with Congress to pass laws that would make many programs to help people who were poor. The third sentence says that one program was the Head Start program.*

The question says to name three programs, but I have not come across another one yet. So, I will keep searching for more.

As I read further, I see that television shows such as Sesame Street and The Electric Company were made, but not to reduce poverty. So, I am going to skim past these to find another program. As I read, I see other programs like food stamps and Job Corps programs. So, I found one program, Head Start, in the third sentence. Then I had to skim through further in the passage to find other programs such as the food stamps and Job Corps programs.

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Example 3B.3. Teacher modeling how to answer an Author and Me question

Teacher writes on the Board: *How did the Job Corps help people who were in poverty?*

Teacher: *This is an Author and Me question. The answer to the question is not in the text we just read. I will have to think about the information the author gives and what I already know to answer the question. The author's information provides clues to help me answer the question.*

This question says: How did the Job Corps help people who were experiencing poverty? Hmm… I am not sure if the answer to this question is in the text or if I need to determine the answer in another way based on information I already know. Well, I don't remember the text saying how the Job Corps helps people. I am going to skim the text again and make sure. The author said that the Job Corps prepared people to be auto mechanics and nurses. But how does that actually help people? This might help them get a job, which can probably help people who are experiencing poverty.

The teacher reads a sentence that gives these clues.

Teacher: *I am going to think about what we read about poverty last week and what I already know. We learned that people who are in poverty have very little money. I also know that my friend's family owns an auto repair shop and that my dad is a nurse and both of them earn pretty good money. So, the information or clues the author gave me said that the Job Corps program prepared people to do auto repair and nursing. These are jobs that provide more money. So, I'm thinking that if you learn a skill of some kind like nursing or auto repair, then you would probably be able to earn enough money so you would no longer have to live in poverty. In a story we read last week, we learned that you have to learn how to repair cars before you can get a job fixing them, or you have to learn how to take care of people who are sick or are injured to help them get better. So, I think that the Job Corps helped people by teaching them the skills they needed so that they could get jobs and make money so they can probably have a better life.*

2. Provide ample opportunities for students to collaboratively answer questions.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Utilize specific questioning strategies (e.g., Right There, Think and Search, and Author in Me) and ensure students can answer questions using these three strategies.
- Model how to select pieces of relevant information from the text to answer the questions and determine what information is less important.
- Work with both simple and complex questions and use the "Author and Me" protocol.
- Provide scaffolding, such as "prompt" cards to support students in discovering the answers to the guiding questions.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5
TEACHER: INST.MS.3, INST.AM.7

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Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read

Using the three levels of questions mentioned above, have students demonstrate that they can answer each type. Make sure to include both basic and complex questions within each lesson. Guide students to the appropriate sections of the text where answers can be found but avoid directly providing the answer or the exact place in the text. Work with the whole class to identify portions of the text that provide answers to the questions and write out this information for the whole class. Support students in selecting the pieces of relevant information and identifying those sections of the text that are less important. Example 3B.4 demonstrates how to guide students through an "Author and Me" level question. Consider creating "Prompt" cards to share with students to support the process of discovering answers to the guiding questions. Resource 3B.2 shows an example of a prompt card.

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Example 3B.4. Teacher guiding students in answering Author and Me questions

The teacher and students read the following passage:

> I live on Whidbey Island in the state of Washington. Every Sunday, my family and I visit my grandmother. The five of us pile into our car and drive to the waterfront, where there are many boats in the water. We drive onto a ferry and the ferry takes us across the beautiful blue water of the Puget Sound. We always have a good time when we visit our grandmother. This time was different. Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to see and what was about to happen.

Teacher: *Let's read the first three sentences again. Tell me in your own words what is happening.*

The students respond that a family of five is going for a car ride to their grandmother's house, which is near the water.

The teacher: *Read the next three sentences. What does the author mean by "This time was different"?*

The teacher asks students to reread the last three sentences and identify clues in the text.

The students respond by saying that at the start of the day, things seemed to be going well and the family was taking their usual trip across the water to grandma's house. Then, the author said that they usually have a good time when they visit their grandmother but this time it was different.

Teacher: *Do you think* different *is in a good way?*

Fran: *No.*

Teacher: *Could it be in a good way?*

Stace: *No.*

Teacher: *How do you know that?*

Students connect two ideas in the text that say that "we always have a good time," and "this time was different" to make the implication that something bad was about to happen. Students read the rest of the paragraph.

Teacher: *Think back to your own experiences or other things you may have read when someone says, "Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to see and what was about to happen." What does that usually suggest?*

Students respond with something surprising or different.

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> **Example 3B.4. Teacher guiding students in answering Author and Me questions (continued)**
>
> **Teacher:** *What does the author mean by "Nothing could have prepared us for what we were about to see and what was about to happen"? Remember when we answer Author and Me questions we need to connect something in the text with something we read or previously learned. What we know should help us make a decision about what the author meant. Do you think the author meant something good or something not so good is about to happen?*
>
> Students respond with whether they think it is something good or not good.
>
> **Teacher:** *It could be something devastating or something exciting like brand-new bikes for all of the kids. Based on what we discussed earlier, though, the author probably wants us to think that they are about to witness something that is not good.*

> **Resource 3B.2. Prompt card for answering Author and Me questions teachers pose**
>
> 1. Read the paragraph.
> 2. Make connections between the text and something you have learned or read about or experienced.
> 3. Decide what you think the author meant.
> 4. Justify your answer by identifying information in the text that supports what you are thinking.

Source: The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (2014).

3. Teach students to ask questions about the text while reading.

Instructional strategies from the examples

- Create a list of common questions that can be used with a variety of reading texts. Guide students to create their own list.
- Have students share their questions and answers with peers in a small group or pair.

South Carolina standards alignment

ELA: RL.MC.5, RI.MC.5
TEACHER: INST.MS.2, INST.MS.3, INST.AM.5, INST.Q.1

Creating questions for a text can lead to a deeper understanding of the meaning within the text. Establishing a list of common questions to be answered while reading can encourage independence and confidence in the reading process. As students

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demonstrate skill on these basic, pre-made questions, have them develop their own set of guiding questions. Consider creating prompt cards with common questions and space for them to create their own. As comfort with this process grows, encourage students to share and discuss questions and answers in small groups and pairs. Resource 3B.3 includes common question stems.

Resource 3B.3. Question stems for students to use when asking questions about the text

- Who is (are) _____?
- What happens (happened) when _____?
- What is (was) _____?
- Why did (does) _____?
- How do (does) _____?
- How do _____ and _____ compare?
- What can you say about _____?
- What would happen if _____?

Source: Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

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Potential roadblocks and how to address them

Roadblock	Suggested Approach
My students are having difficulty formulating justifications for their answers.	Students will need support as they practice justifying their answers. Model with the text how to pose and answer relevant questions and extract the phrase or phrases that support their response.
When the questions use words that don't exactly match the text, my students are stumped.	Briefly demonstrate how words can mean the same even when the words themselves differ. Clarify confusing or unclear uses of pronouns.
My students still can't answer Author and Me questions even after I have modeled how to do it.	Focus on the appropriate instructional level for the text; students will struggle when their world knowledge is not developed enough to understand the context in the text. Begin with simpler texts and use a mixture of peer work and independent practice before incorporating more complex subject areas.
My students sometimes make seemingly irrelevant connections to their world knowledge.	Encourage students to evaluate their connections and compare them to what they already know on a topic. Lead the discussion to discover why some information is relevant and ask leading questions to help students evaluate the importance of the information to the meaning of the text.
My students are really struggling with generating questions as they read.	Begin with a focus on "Right There" questions before moving to more complex evaluations of the text. Provide a prompt card with common question stems. Have a student read the passage out loud first and generate questions orally before engaging independently.

Reference: Vaughn, S., Gersten, R., Dimino, J., Taylor, M. J., Newman-Gonchar, R., Krowka, S., Kieffer, M. J., McKeown, M., Reed, D., Sanchez, M., St. Martin, K., Wexler, J., Morgan, S., Yañez, A., & Jayanthi, M. (2022). *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9* (WWC 2022007). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://whatworks.ed.gov/.

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