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Sincerely,
Karen Haag

Talking About Thinking:
Modeling Questioning Strategies to Improve Comprehension

"The one who is asking the question is the one who is doing the work," states author and presenter Jamie MacKenzie. Who is working harder in your classroom - you or your students? Put the work of thinking and puzzle solving back on students to improve comprehension and test scores. Add structured talking activities – strategy circles - to complement guided reading and literature circles. Show videos of students at work to help teachers and students visualize possibilities.

I wrote lesson plans to help you teach the different kinds of questions students might bring to discussion groups. They are not in any specific order. These strategies may be taught any time to any student, group of students, or whole class needing to know how to talk about a book. I hope that by writing initial lesson plans for you I can help in that regard.

These lessons are just the beginning of your instruction. Your group may need one day or many days, depending on their grade level and reading sophistication, to be able to ask good questions. The discovery and discussion that correspond with the reading – with reading taking the biggest chunk of time – will help students understand that they will always be asking questions about what they read. As they get to be better readers, they will use these same strategies on more difficult texts. Tell them that.

Encourage your students to discuss with one another. Try not to make ALL the conversation go through you. Instead, facilitate. You will probably have to model by saying things like, "Say that to him, not to me." or, "Do you agree with what ___ just said?" You may want to show your students a video of students talking in book clubs. You may want to go back to last year's *Literacy Leads*, pull out and review Star Charts and Literature Response Sheets to help students learn to talk to one another about books. Or, you may want me to come and demonstrate.

For these lessons, students should continue to keep track of the strategies that they learn in their reader response notebooks on a Thinking Tree Map.

7 Mini Lessons: Types of Questions Good Readers Ask Before, During and After Reading

For these lessons, focus the students on a study of questions that, when discussed, will deepen their understanding of reading.

The students will need a page set up in a response journal.

Response Journal
What kinds of questions make good discussion questions? (Skip every other line.)
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Tell your students that the book *Mosaic of Thought* outlines 7 ways to answer questions that are brought to discussion groups. Your class may discover more! OR, they may decide they want to be more specific in classifying the kinds of questions and answers that come up in discussion groups. Be flexible.

MINILESSON: Start each day by focusing the students on one of the reading selections provided. Lead your students to discover **the kinds of questions** that may be asked in a discussion group and **how to answer** them. Students do not know what kinds of questions to ask so these lessons will help.

Lesson Format

I. Minilesson, Discussion & Response in Triple Entry Journal (Whole Group) (15-20 minutes)
II. Reading Time (Small Groups or Pairs)
III. Discussion (Small Groups)
IV. Closure (Whole Group) (5 minutes)

READING: Then the students put into practice what they discovered by reading and marking the questions they uncover in their own texts. (The questions need to be real questions. That is, questions the students don't know the answers to!)

DISCUSSION GROUPS: The students bring their questions to their group and try to find the answers with the teachers, assistants, leaders, and/or groups' help. Students should share their questions and possible answers with one another to deepen their understanding of the text they are reading. The questions MAY or MAY NOT match the mini-lesson. That's fine! In discussion time, students can ask ANY question and get or give help clarifying confusing parts. Groups record the questions discussed and decide what to share with the whole group in closure time.

CLOSURE: However, in closure time ask your students to share the questions that match the "Question of the Day," BUT only to understand how to answer questions in ways that will help them deepen their understanding of text.
NOTE: You may want to teach these lessons in small groups and eliminate the whole group totally.

Question of the Day 1:
Questions that can be answered by referencing the text.

The young prince was known here and there (and just about everywhere else) as Prince Brat. Not even black cats would cross his path.

One night the king was holding a grand feast. Sneaking around behind the lords and ladies, Prince Brat tied their powdered wigs to the backs of their oak chairs.

Then he hid behind a footman to wait.

When the guests stood up to toast the king, their wigs came flying off.

The king spied him and he looked mad enough to spit ink. He gave a furious shout, "Fetch **the whipping boy!"**

Prince Brat knew that he had nothing to fear. He had never been spanked in his life.

He was a prince! And it was forbidden to spank, thrash, cuff, smack or whip a prince.

A common boy was kept in his castle to be punished in his place.

pg.1, *The Whipping Boy*, by Sid Fleischman

What is a whipping boy?

MINILESSON

1. Post the overhead for lesson 1 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead.
2. Ask the students to read the selection.
3. Some students may already know what a whipping boy is so you want to ask them a 2-prong question: *"What is a whipping boy and what reference in the text helps you know?"*

4. Ask them to record their evidence in a triple entry journal like this…

What is a whipping boy?	How do I know? Line + reference	What do my classmates say?
boy who takes whippings for the prince	line 10 – spanked, whip a prince line 13 – common boy kept to take his punishment	From my classmates I learned…

5. Discuss discoveries with the students as a whole group.

6. Ask students to record what they learned from their classmates in the third column to encourage listening.

7. Ask students to generalize the rule for how to get an answer to some questions: *Some questions can be answered by referencing the text.* Record the rule in their response journals.

READING TIME (See 2 options below.)

8. Assign students reading in their own texts – social studies, science, or literature.

9. Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)

The Whipping Boy, by Sid Fleischman, pg.1

The young prince was known here and there (and just about everywhere else) as Prince Brat. Not even black cats would cross his path.

One night the king was holding a grand feast. Sneaking around behind the lords and ladies, Prince Brat tied their powdered wigs to the backs of their oak chairs.

Then he hid behind a footman to wait.

When the guests stood up to toast the king, their wigs came flying off.

The king spied him and he looked mad enough to spit ink. He gave a furious shout, ”Fetch **the whipping boy!”**

Prince Brat knew that he had nothing to fear. He had never been spanked in his life. He was a prince! And it was forbidden to spank, thrash, cuff, smack or whip a prince.

A common boy was kept in his castle to be punished in his place.

What is a “whipping boy?”

Question of the Day 2:
Questions that can be answered by personal experience.

It was not possibly believable. Not this. He had come through the crash, but the insects were not possible. He coughed them up, spat them out, sneezed them out, closed his eyes and kept brushing his face, slapping and crushing them by the dozens, by the hundreds. But as soon as he cleared a place, as soon as he killed them, more came, thick, whining, buzzing masses of them. Mosquitoes and some small black flies he had never seen before. All biting, chewing, taking from him.

In moments his eyes were swollen shut and his face puffy and round to match his battered forehead. He pulled the torn pieces of his windbreaker over his head and tried to shelter in it but the jacket was full of rips and it didn't work. In desperation, he pulled his T-shirt up to cover his face, but that exposed the skin of his lower back and the mosquitoes and flies attacked the new soft flesh of his back so viciously that he pulled the shirt down.

p. 36, *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

Does anyone have personal experience with mosquitoes that may help explain the kind of problem the mosquitoes caused in this chapter?

MINILESSON

1. Post the overhead for lesson 2 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead.
2. Read the selection to the students as the students follow along. Model fluency!
3. Ask the students to spend 1-2 minutes brainstorming a personal experience they've had they might help someone else understand what Brian is experiencing in this selection.
4. Ask students to raise their hands if they are confident they have a mosquito or swarming bug story that will help others understand how bad the infestations can be! Pair up students who want to listen with students who want to explain.
5. Come back together to discuss discoveries. Ask students to discuss what they learned from their classmates about how to answer a question.
6. Ask students to generalize the rule for how to get an answer to some questions: *Some questions can be answered by remembering personal experiences.*
7. Ask students to record the rule in their response journals.

READING TIME

8. Assign students reading in their own texts – social studies, science, or literature.
9. Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)
10. Bring the sticky notes to discussion and discuss the questions in small groups.
11. Record questions that were answered by sharing personal experiences on the reflection sheet on page 24.

CLOSURE

12. Ask students to share questions they asked – that they truly did not know the answer to – that were answered when someone else shared a personal experience.

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen, p. 36

It was not possibly believable. Not this. He had come through the crash, but the insects were not possible. He coughed them up, spat them out, sneezed them out, closed his eyes and kept brushing his face, slapping and crushing them by the dozens, by the hundreds. But as soon as he cleared a place, as soon as he killed them, more came, thick, whining, buzzing masses of them. Mosquitoes and some small black flies he had never seen before. All biting, chewing, taking from him.

In moments his eyes were swollen shut and his face puffy and round to match his battered forehead. He pulled the torn pieces of his windbreaker over his head and tried to shelter in it but the jacket was full of rips and it didn't work. In desperation, he pulled his T-shirt up to cover his face, but that exposed the skin of his lower back and the mosquitoes and flies attacked the new soft flesh of his back so viciously that he pulled the shirt down.

Question of the Day 3: Questions to clarify meaning.

And soon enough it was bedtime.

Caroline kept the key around her neck, but she put the gray marbles beneath her pillow; and in bed that night, Caroline had a dream.

She was at a picnic, under an old oak tree, in a green meadow. The sun was high in the sky and while there were distant, fluffy white clouds on the horizon, **the sky above her head was a deep, untroubled blue.**

There was a white linen cloth laid on the grass, with bowls piled high with food – she could see salads and sandwiches, nuts and fruit, jugs of lemonade and water and thick chocolate milk.

p. 141, *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman

What does the author mean by a deep, "untroubled" blue in line 6?

MINILESSON

1. Post the overhead for lesson 3 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead.
2. Ask the students to read the selection.
3. Ask the students to spend 1-2 minutes thinking about what the words in bold print mean.
4. Pair up students to talk through how to answer to the question at the bottom of the page.
5. Tell the students that sometimes we come across a phrase or part that is confusing. We need to bring those questions to our discussion groups to clear up any confusion we might have. This would be a good time to relate a story you remember about not understanding a text and having to ask someone about it. Assure the students that no matter how old they get, they will always have questions about the texts they read.
6. Discuss what "deep, untroubled blue" means to you and to the students in your class.
7. Ask students to generalize the rule for how to understand the reading better: Don't be shy about asking questions about parts we don't understand. (Ask questions to clarify meaning.) Students should begin to recognize when text does not make sense. They need to stop and think about what phrases mean and mark those places to discuss.
8. Ask students to record the rule in their response journals.

READING TIME

9. Assign students reading in their own texts – social studies, science, or literature.
10. Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)
11. Bring the sticky notes to discussion and discuss the questions in small groups.
12. Record questions that were answered by clarifying meaning on the reflection sheet on page 24.

CLOSURE

13. Ask students to share questions they asked – that they truly did not know the answer to – that the group talked about a long time trying to figure out the meaning of the text. What questions produced the best discussion because your group was trying to figure out the meaning?

Coraline by Neil Gaiman, p. 141

And soon enough it was bedtime.

Caroline kept the key around her neck, but she put the gray marbles beneath her pillow; and in bed that night, Caroline had a dream.

She was at a picnic, under an old oak tree, in a green meadow. The sun was high in the sky and while there were distant, fluffy white clouds on the horizon, **the sky above her head was a deep, untroubled blue.**

There was a white linen cloth laid on the grass, with bowls piled high with food – she could see salads and sandwiches, nuts and fruit, jugs of lemonade and water and thick chocolate milk.

What does the author mean by a deep, "untroubled" blue in line 6?

Question of the Day 4: Questions about what's coming next.

Within a week after the article was published in *The Westfield Gazette*, the kids at the junior high had stopped using the word *pen* and had started using the word *frindle*. They loved it.

Nick became sort of a hero for kids all over town, and he quickly learned that being a hero – even if you're only a local hero – isn't a free ride. It has a price.

p. 70, *Frindle*, Andrew Clements

What "price" may this local hero (Nick) have to pay?

MINILESSON

1. Post the overhead for lesson 4 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead. Cover up the question.
2. Ask the students to read the selection.
3. Ask the students to spend 1-2 minutes thinking about what question they might ask their discussion group as a result of reading this selection.
4. Ask them to record their questions in their response notebook.
5. Pair up students to share their questions.
6. Tell the students that sometimes authors plant clues in the text that good readers are supposed to discover. In this text, Andrew Clements, the author, states that Nick "quickly learned that being a hero isn't a free ride. It has a price." Tell them that a reader may bring that quote to group to discuss. Discuss the question at the bottom of the overhead.

   *What price may this local hero (Nick) have to pay? (*In effect, the students are reading text and making predictions based on evidence, not just guesses. If someone brought this question to discussion group, it could not be answered correctly. However, the students could make their best predictions based on what they know about Nick and what has happened in the story so far. In well-written nonfiction, students may find foreshadowing clues. However, I doubt whether they will find foreshadowing in their science or social studies book.)
7. Tell the students that when an author plants clues such as this one, it is called, "foreshadowing." It's an indication before an event takes place that it will take place. Good readers look for, in fact search for, those clues. It makes reading fun! Good readers love to talk with one another about whether they have found a clue in the reading or not.
8. Ask students to generalize the rule for how to understand the reading better: *Look for foreshadowing clues. Ask questions about what's coming next.* Students should begin to find clues in the text as they become better readers. They need to stop and think about the phrases authors choose to use and mark those places to discuss when they think they have found a foreshadowing clue!
9. Ask students to record the rule in their response journals.
10. If time, another question you may want to ask about this passage is a style question: Why does the author use Italics for *The Westfield Gazette, frindle and pen?*

READING TIME

12. Assign students reading in their own texts –literature books or a literature selection.

13. Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)

14. Bring the sticky notes to discussion and discuss the questions in small groups.

14. Record questions about what's coming next on the reflection sheet on page 24.

CLOSURE

16. Ask students to share questions they asked – that they truly did not know the answer to – where the group predicted what might happen next.

***Frindle*, Andrew Clements, p. 70**

Within a week after the article was published in *The Westfield Gazette*, the kids at the junior high had stopped using the word *pen* and had started using the word *frindle*. They loved it.

Nick became sort of a hero for kids all over town, and he quickly learned that being a hero – even if you're only a local hero – isn't a free ride. It has a price.

What price may this local hero (Nick) have to pay?

Question of the Day 5: Questions about unfamiliar words or phrases.

Up, up, up… UP! went Stanley, being a kite.

He knew just how to **manage** on the gusts of wind. He faced full into the wind if he wanted to rise, and let it take him from behind when he wanted speed. He had only to turn his **thin edge** to the wind, carefully, a little at a time, so that it did not hold him, and then he would slip gracefully down toward the earth again.

Arthur let out all the string, and Stanley soared high above the trees, a beautiful sight in his red shirt and blue **trousers**, against the pale-blue sky.

Everyone in the park stood still to watch.

Stanley swooped right then left in **long, matched swoops**. He held his arms by his sides and zoomed at the ground like a rocket and curved up again toward the sun. He **side-slipped** and circled, and made figure eights and crosses and a star.

Nobody has every flown the way Stanley Lambchop flew that day. Probably no one ever will again.

p. 22, *Flat Stanley*, by Jeff Brown

MINILESSON

Post the overhead for lesson 5 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead.

Ask the students to read the selection noticing the words typed in bold print. While they are waiting for their classmates they should determine which words are unfamiliar enough to them that they would bring the word to discussion group.

Model how to get help with an unfamiliar word from your reading group. (Copies for students on page 15.) (Poster on page 14.)

1. Tell the people in your discussion group either, "I have a word I can't pronounce and I need your help with it" or "I found a word I can pronounce but I don't know what it means."

2. Tell the group what page you are on, then count the lines from the "top down" or the "bottom up" to the word to help your group locate the word. For example, *"I need help pronouncing a word on the 2nd line from the top of page 22."* Or, *"On page 22, I need help knowing what side-slipped means in the 5th line from the bottom."*

How to Get Help From Your Group With an Unfamiliar Word

1. Tell your group you NEED HELP!
   - with pronouncing a word
   - with the meaning of a word
2. What PAGE is the word is on and what LINE? (from the top, from the bottom)
3. READ THE SENTENCE where the word can be found – loudly!
4. Who KNOWS the word and can share?
5. Figure out the word. **OR** LOOK UP the word if necessary.

3. When most of the students in your group have found the word, read the sentence or phrase where the word can be found. For example, *"He knew how to BLANK on the gusts of the wind. Does anyone know how to say that word?"* Or, *"He side-slipped and circled, and made figure eights… Does anyone know what side-slipped means?"*

4. Tell students that it is very important that they do not guess at this point!!!! Find out if someone REALLY knows what the word means. If someone knows what the word means, then that person should explain his/her understanding.

5. If no one knows, then the leader should say, "Can we figure this word out by using context clues?"

OR

5. If not, then the group should decide whether it is a word that needs to be looked up. The leader should ask, "Is this a word we need to look up?"

   The purpose is to keep the discussion going quickly and NOT getting bogged down in looking up word after word. For example, look at the sentence, *"He climbed down the mountain easily."* Easily is probably not a word the group needs to discuss because it only adds a little bit of information to the discussion. The gist of comprehension can be gained by reading, *"He climbed down the mountain."* However, look at the sentence, *"The gorilla is becoming extinct." Extinct* is a word the group needs to understand to get comprehension from the rest of the text.

   The group needs to make decisions quickly and move on to discussion. If a disagreement occurs, defer to the judgment of the leader. As the group matures, one student can look up the word while the group goes on to discuss another question and then the group can come back to the word question.

Tell the students that sometimes we come across a word that is confusing. We need to bring word questions to our discussion groups to clear up any confusion we might have. This would be a good time to relate a story you remember about not understanding a word and having to ask someone about it. Assure the students that no matter how old they get, they will always have questions about vocabulary.

Ask your students to model using the 5 steps for asking for help with an unfamiliar word. Stress the importance of not spending all discussion time on discussing words. However, it is important to determine which words are important to spend time on.

Ask students to generalize the rule for how to understand the reading better: *Ask for help about unfamiliar words.* Students should begin to recognize when text does not make sense. They need to stop and think about what words mean and mark those places to discuss.

Ask students to record the rule in their response journals.

READING TIME
Assign students reading in their own texts – social studies, science, or literature.

Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)

Bring the sticky notes to discussion and discuss the questions in small groups.
Record questions about words on the reflection sheet on page 24.

CLOSURE
Ask students to share questions they asked about words – that they truly did not know. Ask about problems with remembering the steps, "How to Get Help From Your Group With an Unfamiliar Word." Assure them that over time, these steps will become routine.

How to Get Help From Your Group With an Unfamiliar Word

1. Tell your group you **NEED HELP!**
   - with pronouncing a word
   - with the meaning of a word
2. What **PAGE** is the word is on and what **LINE?** (from the top, from the bottom)
3. **READ THE SENTENCE** where the word can be found – loudly!
4. Who **KNOWS** the word and can share?
5. Figure out the word quickly **FROM CONTEXT.** OR **LOOK UP** the word if necessary.

How to Get Help From Your Group With an Unfamiliar Word

1. Tell your group you NEED HELP!
   - with pronouncing a word
   - with the meaning of a word
2. What PAGE is the word is on and what LINE? (from the top, from the bottom)
3. READ THE SENTENCE where the word can be found – loudly!
4. Who KNOWS the word and can share?
5. Figure out the word. **OR** LOOK UP the word if necessary.

How to Get Help From Your Group With an Unfamiliar Word

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   - with pronouncing a word
   - with the meaning of a word
2. What PAGE is the word is on and what LINE? (from the top, from the bottom)
3. READ THE SENTENCE where the word can be found – loudly!
4. Who KNOWS the word and can share?
5. Figure out the word. **OR** LOOK UP the word if necessary.

Copies for students' response journals

How to Get Help From Your Group With an Unfamiliar Word

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   - with the meaning of a word
2. What PAGE is the word is on and what LINE? (from the top, from the bottom)
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3. READ THE SENTENCE where the word can be found – loudly!
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5. Figure out the word. **OR** LOOK UP the word if necessary.

***Flat Stanley*, by Jeff Brown, p. 22**

Up, up, up… UP! went Stanley, being a kite.

He knew just how to **manage** on the gusts of wind. He faced full into the wind if he wanted to rise, and let it take him from behind when he wanted speed. He had only to turn his **thin edge** to the wind, carefully, a little at a time, so that it did not hold him, and then he would slip gracefully down toward the earth again.

Arthur let out all the string, and Stanley soared high above the trees, a beautiful sight in his red shirt and blue **trousers**, against the pale-blue sky.

Everyone in the park stood still to watch.

Stanley swooped right then left in **long, matched swoops**. He held his arms by his sides and zoomed at the ground like a rocket and curved up again toward the sun. He **side-slipped** and circled, and made figure eights and crosses and a star.

Nobody has every flown the way Stanley Lambchop flew that day. Probably no one ever will again.

Question of the Day 6: Questions about author's purpose or style or format.

And there was, he thought, absolutely nothing to eat.

Nothing.

What did they do in the movies when they got stranded like this? Oh, yes, the hero usually found some kind of plant that he knew was good to eat and that took care of it. Just ate the plant until he was full or used some kind of cute trap to catch an animal and cook it over a slick little fire and pretty soon he had a full eight-course meal.

The trouble, Brian thought, looking around, was that all he could see was grass and brush. There was nothing obvious to eat and aside from about a million birds and beaver he hadn't seen animals to rap and cook, and even if he got one somehow he didn't have any matches so he couldn't have a fire…

Nothing.

It kept coming back to that. He had nothing.

Well, almost nothing. As a matter of fact, he thought, I don't know what I've got or haven't got. Maybe I should try and figure out just how I stand. It will give me something to do – keep me from thinking of food. Until they come to find me.

p. 49 *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

Why does Paulsen keep repeating the word, "nothing?"
Why does Paulsen use incomplete sentences like the last sentence in the selection?
Does Paulsen use this same style in other books he has written or just Hatchet?

MINILESSON

Response Journal
What kinds of questions make good discussion questions? (Skip every other line.)
1. Questions that can be answered by referencing the text.
2. Questions that can be answered by personal experience.
3. Questions to clarify meaning.
4. Questions about what's coming up next.
5. Questions about unfamiliar words or phrases.
6.
7.

Post the overhead for lesson 6 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead. Cover up the questions.

Ask the students to read the selection and think about a question they may bring to their discussion group based on what they have learned so far. They might ask any question from their recording sheet. (See box, left.)

Tell them there's another kind of question you might ask if you were reading this text. You might ask questions about the author's choice of words, length of sentence, or any choices he/she has made. This is called talking about the author's style. (This would be a good time to talk about clothing styles to relate style to something your students understand.)

Uncover the questions to show the kinds of questions you might ask if you were going to your book club. Discuss possible answers.

(Note: Teachers may want to spread author's style, purpose, main idea and format over several days. Read on ☺ and decide!)

Good readers try to understand the author's purpose, also. (Why did the author write this anyway?) *Writers write for many reasons. Among them are . . .*

1. To inform – articles about extinct animals
2. To persuade – editorial page
3. To explain – how to build a back porch book
4. To entertain - *Shrek*

Take time to talk through each reason. The examples might help. Also, make sure they understand that sometimes the purpose is a combination of reasons.

Good readers try to understand the main idea the author is trying to convey. Book club members may spend several hours discussing main idea. For example,

1. Article about extinct animals – Gorillas are in danger of extinction.
2. Editorial – We need money to pay for sidewalks.
3. To explain – A porch can be made in 20 easy steps!
4. Entertain – It doesn't matter what you look like on the outside. It's the inside that counts! (*Shrek*)

Good readers try to understand the format the author uses. Thinking readers may raise these kinds of questions:

- Is this a fairy tale? (Structure of the writing)
- Why doesn't the author use paragraphs – just ragged edged writing? It looks like a poem, not a story. (Trying to understand the structure the author is using)
- Why did the author use this word? (Word choice)

Ask students to generalize the rule for how to understand the reading better: *Thinking readers ask questions about author's purpose or style or format.* As they become better readers, students should seek to understand that the author has made choices when putting this "writing puzzle" together. They need to stop and think about the style, format and purpose of the author. Furthermore, they need to ask one another. Questions about author's purpose and main idea are asked repeatedly on the End of Grade tests. Plus, good readers just like to know.

Ask students to record the rule in their response journals.

READING TIME

Assign students reading in their own texts –literature books or a good nonfiction book.

Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)

Bring the sticky notes to discussion and discuss the questions in small groups.

Record questions about author's purpose, format or style on the reflection sheet on page 24.

CLOSURE

Ask students to share questions they asked – that they truly did not know the answer to – where the noticed the author's style, format or purpose and asked about it.

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen, p. 49

And there was, he thought, absolutely nothing to eat.

Nothing.

What did they do in the movies when they got stranded like this? Oh, yes, the hero usually found some kind of plant that he knew was good to eat and that took care of it. Just ate the plant until he was full or used some kind of cute trap to catch an animal and cook it over a slick little fire and pretty soon he had a full eight-course meal.

The trouble, Brian thought, looking around, was that all he could see was grass and brush. There was nothing obvious to eat and aside from about a million birds and beaver he hadn't seen animals to rap and cook, and even if he got one somehow he didn't have any matches so he couldn't have a fire…

Nothing.

It kept coming back to that. He had nothing.

Well, almost nothing. As a matter of fact, he thought, I don't know what I've got or haven't got. Maybe I should try and figure out just how I stand. It will give me something to do – keep me from thinking of food. Until they come to find me.

Why does Paulsen keep repeating the word, "nothing?"
Why does Paulsen use incomplete sentences like the last sentence in the selection? Does Paulsen use this same style in other books he has written or just Hatchet?

Question of the Day 7: Questions that can't be answered.

If the plane had come down a little to the left it would have hit the rocks and never made the lake. He would have been smashed.

Destroyed.

The word came. I would have been destroyed and torn and smashed. Driven into the rocks and destroyed.

Luck, he thought. I have luck. I had good luck there. But he knew he was wrong. If he had good luck his parents wouldn't have gotten a divorce and he wouldn't have been flying with a pilot who had a heart attack and he wouldn't be here where he had to have good luck from being destroyed.

If you keep walking back from good luck, he thought, you'll come to bad luck.

He shook his head – wincing. Another thing to think about.

p. 40 *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

Paulsen says, *"If you keep walking backwards from good luck, you'll have bad luck."* What does that mean? Do you agree?

MINILESSON

Response Journal
What kinds of questions make good discussion questions? (Skip every other line.)
1. Questions that can be answered by referencing the text.
2. Questions that can be answered by personal experience.
3. Questions to clarify meaning.
4. Questions about what's coming next.
5. Questions about unfamiliar words or phrases.
6. Questions about author's purpose or style or format.
7.

Post the overhead for lesson 7 or make a copy for students who have a hard time reading the overhead. Cover up the questions.

Ask the students to read the selection and think about a question they may bring to their discussion group based on what they have learned so far. They might ask any question from their recording sheet. (See box, left. Students should refer to journals.)

Tell them there's another kind of question you might ask if you were reading this text. You might ask a wondering kind of question.

Uncover the questions to show the kind of questions you might ask if you were going to your book club. Discuss possible answers.

Tell students that sometimes authors say things that you think about for days – even years!

Point out that if the class talked about this for several hours, they probably would not agree. Sometimes there are questions without answers. But those questions are fun! It's fun to try to convince your book club members of what you believe. It's fun to get their help in trying to understand just what the author means. There are no accidents. The author placed every word there on purpose. Thinking readers notice!

Ask students to generalize the rule for how to understand the reading better: *Thinking readers sometimes discover that they asked a question without an answer.*

As they become better readers, students should seek to understand that the author has made choices when putting this "writing puzzle" together. They need to stop and think about the statements authors make. Furthermore, they need to ask one another.

When reading nonfiction, readers may wonder about things like, "What is at the center of the earth?" Scientists can theorize but they don't know. These questions become wonderful I-Search questions – topics for further research.

Tell your students: A question about anything the reader does not understand makes a good question. In time, they will come to trust the members of their book club and feel confident asking more and more questions. In addition, it will be interesting to see what their peers ask. If they talk about these questions with one another and try to put their beliefs into words and search the text for evidence, their comprehension will deepen.

Ask students to record the rule in their response journals.

READING TIME
Assign students reading in their own texts –literature or nonfiction books.

Ask them to mark the places they have questions with a sticky note. (Give them one sticky note. They need to move the note around and bring their most nagging or most important question to group because they probably will only have time to discuss one question per person.)

Bring the sticky notes to discussion and discuss the questions in small groups.

Record questions that couldn't be answered on the reflection sheet on page 24.

CLOSURE
Ask students to share questions they asked – that they truly did not know the answer to – and neither did anyone in their group!

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen, p. 40

If the plane had come down a little to the left it would have hit the rocks and never made the lake. He would have been smashed.

Destroyed.

The word came. I would have been destroyed and torn and smashed. Driven into the rocks and destroyed.

Luck, he thought. I have luck. I had good luck there. But he knew he was wrong. If he had good luck his parents wouldn't have gotten a divorce and he wouldn't have been flying with a pilot who had a heart attack and he wouldn't be here where he had to have good luck from being destroyed.

If you keep walking back from good luck, he thought, you'll come to bad luck.

He shook his head – wincing. Another thing to think about.

Paulsen says, *"If you keep walking backwards from good luck, you'll have bad luck."* ?????

Group Reflection Sheet Date_____
Leader today _____
Record Keeper _____

Names of students in the group:

(Type of) Question of the Day introduced in Minilesson:

Questions our group discussed today:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Which question shared today matches the question of the day you studied in Minilesson Time?

I ask the students what will make this reading class work? What rules do we need to establish? I ask them if they mind if I take all their ideas and write them into a commitment contract – do they trust me to get their ideas down correctly? I type up what they say and bring the *draft* back the next day. We revise it as needed. Then we pledge to uphold the contract. If a student should forget to follow a procedure, I walk to his/her desk and write no in the appropriate box. I ask him/her to improve the behavior or we will be headed toward an individualized contract.

At the end of the period, each person writes yes in each box – unless I have written no or they think they need to improve. Then they record something they learned that day about reading. The contract serves as a great diary of what we did every day. I don't have to write a daily note. Parents like the record. It reinforces the learning and social expectations. I start by using this every day – one copy per student – and I collect them daily. Then I move towards every other day. Then towards when we need a reminder. Here is a sample:

Commitment Contract for in Reading Workshop

Date	?		Date	?
Have journal and reading ready.			Have journal and reading ready.	
Listen with my whole body.			Listen with my whole body.	
Encourage others to talk.			Encourage others to talk.	
Talk so everyone can hear.			Talk so everyone can hear.	
Talk one at a time.			Talk one at a time.	
Marked what I want to talk about.			Marked what I want to talk about.	
In reading time, I learned . . .			In reading time, I learned . . .	
Date	?		Date	?
Have journal and reading ready.			Have journal and reading ready.	
Listen with my whole body.			Listen with my whole body.	
Encourage others to talk.			Encourage others to talk.	
Talk so everyone can hear.			Talk so everyone can hear.	
Talk one at a time.			Talk one at a time.	
Marked what I want to talk about.			Marked what I want to talk about.	
In reading time, I learned . . .			In reading time, I learned . . .	