

Tips for Success with Informational Text...

From Linda Hoyt

Beat the Teacher

Students are often placed in situations where they must answer questions, yet research suggests that learners actually remember more when they *ask questions* about their reading. To facilitate authentic contexts for questions, I often engage the students in a game called, “Beat the Teacher.”

The Steps

1. Set the Stage:

Explain that good readers ask questions all the time. They wonder before reading about the content. During reading they ask internal questions to clarify information, seek additional information, or to simply go, “Wow! How can that be?” After reading, it is also important to ask questions of yourself, of the author, or of others around you.

2. Demonstrate:

Read an article to the students, then begin thinking aloud about questions you could ask about the material. Show the students stem words you can use to start questions such as who, what, when, where and how you select questions that can actually be answered within the text. (Ask for a team of four volunteers to go to the hall for a minute.) Work with the rest of the students to create two questions about the article, then invite the volunteers back into the room to see if they can answer the questions.

3. Provide Guided Practice:

Have students work independently or with partners to review the article and come up with questions about it. Have them be very careful to ensure that the answers are actually in the text. Explain that their task is to write terrific questions because you, their teacher, are going to try to answer them.

4. Share and Reflect:

Have partners present their questions while you sit on the “hot seat” and answer them either from memory by reviewing the text until you locate the answer in print.

5. Sum It Up:

Guide the students in talking about Beat the Teacher questions and how they helped them remember the content.