QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Reconstructive questions

Ask the reader to restate information in the text in his own words.

Examples: What does the monster do after Victor rejects him? Can you tell me what this word means? Can you tell me in your own words what this story/chapter/poem is about?

These questions help the student reconstruct the story in his own words.

Interpretative questions

Help the reader discover the significance of a reading selection.

Examples: What does this statement imply? How does this idea relate to the author’s main idea? What unstated assumptions is the idea based on? What does this idea reveal about the author’s values, attitudes or biases? Is this statement objective or subjective? How can you tell? How does the author’s choice of words affect you as a reader? What words in the text seem to show contrasting ideas?

These questions help the reader move into interpreting the text and the author's ideas.

Applicative questions

Ask the reader to go beyond the text and apply its content to a new context.

Examples How does this Rose’s idea about education apply to Rodriguez book? How does Rodriguez’ description of his childhood relate to your own experience? In what ways does this book/poem/essay/ reflect your own feelings about death?

Note: These are only suggestions. The types of questions can be intermingled or even eliminated depending on the needs of a particular reader. The point is to encourage the reader to engage with the text.

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