

# the Master Teacher Series

## Reading Comprehension

John Schacter, Ph.D.

### Contents

Prologue	Reading Comprehension Instruction	
Chapter 1:	<i>Questioning</i> .....	1
Chapter 2:	<i>Summarizing</i> .....	17
Chapter 3:	<i>Text Structure</i> .....	29
Chapter 4:	<i>Prior Knowledge</i> .....	39
Chapter 5:	<i>Comprehension Monitoring</i> .....	51
Chapter 6:	<i>Question Answering</i> .....	65
Chapter 7:	<i>Multi-Strategy Instruction</i> .....	75
Chapter 8:	<i>Teaching for Expert Comprehension</i> .....	93

**TO PURCHASE THE BOOK AND DVDS GO TO  
WWW.TEACHINGDOCTORS.COM OR CALL 650.323.1378**

# THE MASTER TEACHER SERIES: READING COMPREHENSION

Copyright John Schacter, Ph.D.

This book and DVD series weaves the best in educational research with practical examples that show the theory in action. In this volume, we present over 30 scientifically proven reading comprehension strategies that increase student achievement from 15 to 100 percent. Each strategy is explained step-by-step and through visual lesson storyboards. Half of the strategies are accompanied by videos of master teachers demonstrating them in their classrooms.

Writing this book and providing the video teaching examples would not have been possible without the master teachers who contributed their time and opened their classrooms. Thank you Toni Greene, Suzie Throop, Nikki Serafin, Karen Wild, Suzanna Llamas, Lynn Alloway, Debbie Gordon, Bonnie Price, Maricela Sandoval, Tess Weisbarth, Andy de Seriere, Beth Higgins, Charmon Evans, and Judy Crenshaw. Appreciation is also expressed to Tom Magallanes for his artistic graphic design and Katharine Fry for her editorial feedback and copyediting.

## Teachers Learning Together

We think this book and DVDs will work best when used by groups of teachers. Reading, discussing, viewing and revising these strategies will facilitate the incorporation of these practices into daily instruction.

## Book Overview

In the prologue, we describe United States elementary and middle school students' reading achievement. Chapters 1 through 7 introduce over 30 research-based reading comprehension strategies that significantly increase students' recall of ideas, ability to draw conclusions, make inferences, and solve problems. Chapter 8 discusses the research on expert readers and suggests how to use this research to improve comprehension instruction.

We have provided a wide variety of proven reading comprehension strategies to appeal to both new and veteran teachers. It is our hope that all teachers will try several of these approaches to expand their instructional repertoire and increase their students' understanding of what they read.

## Sample Strategies

This sample includes three strategies drawn from the chapters on:

- Prior Knowledge (*Anticipation Guides*),
- Question Answering (*QARs*), and
- Question Generation (*Cue Cards*).

To learn the remaining strategies and view videos of master teachers demonstrating them in their classrooms go to

**[www.teachingdoctors.com](http://www.teachingdoctors.com)**.

TO PURCHASE THE BOOK AND DVDS GO TO  
WWW.TEACHINGDOCTORS.COM OR CALL 650.323.1378

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

# Anticipation Guides

*Anticipation Guides* require students to answer and discuss controversial statements about a topic before they read a selection. Having students access their prior knowledge before they read, then update that knowledge after reading increases achievement by approximately 20 percent.

## Step-by-Step

1. Teacher selects and pre-reads text.
2. He writes several thought provoking and/or controversial statements about the topic. Beside each statement, he provides a place for students to indicate whether they agree or disagree.
3. Students individually read each statement and check whether they agree or disagree (see storyboard #1).
4. Teacher assigns students to groups to discuss their responses (see storyboard #2).
5. Students read in pairs and to revise their *Anticipation Guides* based on what they learned (see storyboards #3-4).

## 1

Before we start studying and reading about the legacy and cultures of American Indians, I want to see what you know. Take three minutes to individually complete the *Anticipation Guide* on your desk.

Agree	Disagree	Statement
		1. American Indians introduced horses to America.
		2. American Indians lost their land to European settlers because they did not unite as one tribe and fight together.
		3. Native Americans were hunters and gatherers.
		4. American Indians live in tepees.
		5. When American Indians got sick, they used herbal treatments, shamans, chants and dances to help cure disease.
		6. Native Americans have the same language, culture, beliefs and traditions.
		7. Today America Indians live on reservations.

## 2

In your table groups, discuss your answers for each statement. If you agree with the statement, give one reason why you think it's correct. If you disagree give one reason why you think it is incorrect.



# Prior Knowledge: Anticipation Guides

3

As I walked around, I heard some very interesting discussions about statements you agreed and disagreed with. It's time to read. With a partner, alternate reading each paragraph until you finish the chapter. As you read, fix your *Anticipation Guide* based on what you learn.

Agree Disagree Statement

Agree	Disagree	Statement
✓		1. American Indians introduced horses to America.
✓		2. American Indians lost their land to European settlers because they did not unite as one tribe and fight together.
✓		3. Native Americans were hunters and gatherers.
	✓	4. American Indians live in tepees.
	✓	5. When American Indians got sick, they used herbal treatments, shamans, chants and dances to help cure disease.
	✓	6. Native Americans have the same language, culture, beliefs and traditions.
✓		7. Today America Indians live on reservations.

4

At your table, talk about the answers you changed based on what you learned from the text. We'll have a short class discussion when you finish. (STUDENT DISCUSSION STATEMENTS ARE IN ALL CAPS TEXT).

Agree Disagree Statement

Agree	Disagree	Statement
	✓	1. THE SPANISH BROUGHT HORSES TO AMERICA.
✓		2. American Indians lost their land to European settlers because they did not unite as one tribe and fight together.
	✓	3. SEVERAL TRIBES GREW CROPS.
	✓	4. ONLY THE PLAINS INDIANS LIVED IN TEPEES.
✓		5. When American Indians got sick, they used herbal treatments, shamans, chants and dances to help cure disease.
	✓	6. Native Americans have the same language, culture, beliefs and traditions.
	✓	7. SOME INDIANS LIVE IN RESERVATIONS, SOME DON'T.

ANSWER CHANGE

ANSWER CHANGE

ANSWER CHANGE

ANSWER CHANGE

**TO PURCHASE THE BOOK AND DVDS GO TO  
WWW.TEACHINGDOCTORS.COM OR CALL 650.323.1378**

## Question Answering



# Question Answer Relationships (QARs)

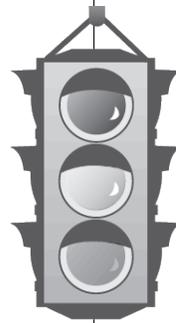
The big idea behind the Question Answer Relationships (QARs) strategy is that there are essentially three types of comprehension questions (i.e., fact, integrate, inference). If students can identify the question type, they will be more likely to produce an appropriate answer. Students taught QARs outperformed controls by more than 30 percent on standardized comprehension tests.

## Step-by-Step

1. Inform students that there are three different types of comprehension questions.
2. Create a QARs Chart and student Cue Cards (see storyboard #1).
3. Model how to use the QARs strategy (see storyboards #4-7) by:
  - a. Selecting a short passage and developing three QARs comprehension questions.
  - b. Placing the passage on an overhead projector and reading it aloud.
  - c. Classifying each QARs question as a Green Light, Yellow Light, or Red Light question.
  - d. Requiring students to answer each QAR.
  - e. Repeating this process with another short passage.
4. Assign students a passage to read either individually or in small groups. Make sure you have prepared QARs questions for students to identify and answer.
5. Instruct students to use their QAR Cue Cards to classify, then answer each question (see storyboard #8).

### 1

Have you ever had to answer a question after you read and had a hard time figuring out what to write? Today you are going to learn a strategy to help you identify different types of comprehension questions so that you can answer them correctly. The strategy is called *Question Answer Relationships* or QARs.



#### **RED LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Stop and think because the answer cannot be found only in the text.

#### **YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Slow down and search. You need to look in more than one place to put together your answer.

#### **GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Go and find the answer in one part of the text.

### 2

When you use the QARs strategy, the first thing you do is read. Then, you classify each question at the end of the selection. After you classify each question, you answer it. Let's look at our QARs Poster to help us classify questions.



#### **RED LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Stop and think because the answer cannot be found only in the text.

#### **YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Slow down and search. You need to look in more than one place to put together your answer.

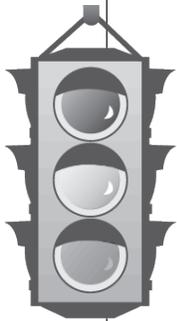
#### **GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Go and find the answer in one part of the text.

# Question Answer Relationships

3

Green Light means GO. *Green Light Questions* have answers you can go and find in the text. Yellow Light means SLOW DOWN. For *Yellow Light Questions* you need to look in more than one place for the answer. *Red Light* means STOP. These questions don't have answers you can find in the text; you have to stop, think, and use your knowledge.



**RED LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Stop and think because the answer cannot be found only in the text.

**YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Slow down and search. You need to look in more than one place in the text to put together your answer.

**GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS**

Go and find the answer in one part of the text.

4

On the overhead is a passage about an intelligent animal, Siti, an orangutan. I'm going to read the text.

## Siti the Orangutan

*Safe in a sanctuary after being rescued from people who kept her illegally as a pet, Siti the orangutan struggled to crack open a coconut. Unable to open it, Siti approached a sanctuary worker and handed it to him. The worker just handed it back because he was trying to let Siti learn how to survive in the forest. Siti poked at the coconut with a stick, then gave it back to him. Again, the worker played dumb and handed it back.*

*"Siti must have decided the man was stupid," says psychologist Anne Russon, who was watching. Siti picked up another stick and hacked at the coconut as one would with a long knife. She showed the worker what she wanted him to do—something she'd seen him do many times. "Siti herself had never opened a coconut," says Russon. "Yet she had learned how it was done, just by watching."*

**QARs Cue Card**

**RED LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Stop and think

**YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Slow down and search

**GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Go and find the answer



5

Here are some questions about this passage. Let's decide if they are *Green Light*, *Yellow Light* or *Red Light Questions* together.

**Questions**

**QARs Classification**

1. What was the sanctuary worker's reason for handing the coconut back to Siti? .....► *This is a Green Light Question. With a partner underline where in the text you can find the answer.*
2. Why did Siti think the sanctuary worker was stupid? .....► *Can the answer for this question be found in the text? Do you have to look in more than one place?*
3. Why do you think being able to imitate is a sign of intelligence? .....► *This is a Red Light Question. In your table groups, tell me why.*

**QARs Cue Card**

**RED LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Stop and think

**YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Slow down and search

**GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Go and find the answer



6

Let's do another example together. This selection is about elephant intelligence. Let's read it together. This time you're going to decide if the questions are Green, Yellow, or Red before you answer them.

## Elephant Intelligence

*A baby elephant stumbled into a dried-up mud hole in Amboseli National Park in Kenya, Africa. Luckily the calf didn't get hurt, but it was too little to scramble out. The elephant's mother ran into the hole after her baby. Then she bellowed.*

*Two relatives heard the commotion and rushed over to help. First, they sized up the situation. It wasn't a terribly deep hole, but the sides were steep. Then, they climbed into the pit. As the elephants dug out one side of the hole with their tusks and feet, a ramp was formed by the loosened dirt.*

*The minute they finished, the mother pushed her calf up the incline. The elephants seemed to plan ahead, imagining how a ramp would work to save the baby. Even Einstein would have been impressed.*

**QARs Cue Card**

**RED LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Stop and think

**YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Slow down and search

**GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS**  
Go and find the answer



## Question Answer Relationships

7

Here are the questions. Decide at your tables if they are *Green, Yellow, or Red Light Questions*, and then answer them.

### Questions

1. Give and defend two reasons why, "even Einstein would have been impressed" by these elephant problem solvers.
2. What did the mother elephant do after her baby fell into the hole?
3. What made these elephants' problem solving behaviors human-like?

### QARs Classification

- IF YOU SAID YELLOW LIGHT AND YOUR ANSWER WAS WORKED TOGETHER, DUG HOLE, OR MADE A RAMP, YOU ARE RIGHT.*
- Look at your QARs Cue Card. Can the answer be found in the text in one place? THIS IS A GREEN LIGHT QUESTION.*
- THIS IS A RED LIGHT QUESTION. YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT HUMAN PROBLEM SOLVING, AND HOW THE ELEPHANTS ACTED IN HUMAN WAYS.*

8

On your desk are passages about different intelligent animals. Each passage is followed by 2 to 4 questions. With a partner, read about the animal, then read the questions. Before you answer a question, classify it as Green, Yellow, or Red. After you classify each question, discuss the answer and write it in the space provided.

### QARs Poster



#### RED LIGHT QUESTIONS

Stop and think because the answer cannot be found only in the text.

#### YELLOW LIGHT QUESTIONS

Slow down and search. You need to look in more than one place to put together your answer.

#### GREEN LIGHT QUESTIONS

Go and find the answer in one part of the text.

**TO PURCHASE THE BOOK AND DVDS GO TO  
WWW.TEACHINGDOCTORS.COM OR CALL 650.323.1378**

# Question Cue Cards

## Questioning



## Question Cue Cards

*Question Cue Cards* provide students with a variety of prompts that help them generate questions before, during, and after they read. Recall of important ideas and the ability to make inferences improved close to 40 percent for students who used *Question Cue Cards* while they read.

## Step-by-Step

1. Teacher provides each student with a *Question Cue Card* (see storyboard #1).
2. Using an overhead projector, the teacher reads a short passage aloud (see storyboard #2).
  - a. Teacher stops after reading one paragraph.
  - b. She refers to her *Question Cue Card* and develops a question.
  - c. Teacher asks question, thinks of and verbalizes an answer, and continues reading repeating the process.
3. After modeling how to use the *Question Cue Card*, the teacher practices with students by requiring them to read paragraphs on the overhead and use their *Question Cue Cards* to generate questions (see storyboards #4 and #5).
4. When students can proficiently use the *Cue Card*, the teacher distributes index cards to pairs.
5. Pairs are assigned to read, stop after each paragraph or two, then write their question on the index card and answer on the back.
6. At the end of the passage, pairs have several questions and answers written on index cards.
7. The teacher assigns pairs to pass their stack of index card questions to another pair. Pairs answer two stacks of questions before the end of the lesson (see storyboards #6 and #7).

1

Today we are going to use a comprehension strategy called *Question Cue Cards* to help us better understand the circulatory system. Every pair of students will get a *Question Cue Card* along with a stack of index cards. As you read, you'll stop after each paragraph and use the *Question Cue Card* to generate a question. You'll then write that question on the front of an index card, and write the answer on the back.

### QUESTION CUE CARD

1. Describe \_\_\_\_\_ in your own words.
2. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
3. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ important?
4. How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Explain how \_\_\_\_\_.
6. How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
7. What's different between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What causes \_\_\_\_\_?
9. What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?

2

I'm going to read the first paragraph from our article. Watch how I stop at the end of the paragraph and use the *Question Cue Card* to help me generate questions.

### Circulatory System

*The circulatory system in humans is composed of the heart and blood vessels—arteries, veins, and capillaries. Its purpose is to provide nutrients and oxygen to the tissues, and to remove wastes from them. It is also where the body fights infections.*

### QUESTION CUE CARD

1. Describe \_\_\_\_\_ in your own words.
2. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
3. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ important?
4. How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Explain how \_\_\_\_\_.
6. How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
7. What's different between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What causes \_\_\_\_\_?
9. What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?

### Teacher Question

Describe the purpose of the circulatory system in your own words?

## TO PURCHASE THE BOOK AND DVDS GO TO WWW.TEACHINGDOCTORS.COM OR CALL 650.323.1378

**3**

Now I'll read the next paragraph and use my Cue Card to write two more questions.

### Circulatory System

*The circulatory system can be considered as composed of two parts: the systemic circulation, which serves the body as a whole except for the lungs, and the pulmonary circulation, which carries the blood to and from the lungs. The organs of the circulatory system consist of vessels that carry the blood and a muscular pump, the heart, that drives the blood.*

**QUESTION CUE CARD**

1. Describe \_\_\_\_\_ in your own words.
2. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
3. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ important?
4. How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Explain how \_\_\_\_\_.
6. How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
7. What's different between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What causes \_\_\_\_\_?
9. What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?

**Teacher Question**  
What's different between systemic circulation and pulmonary circulation?

**Teacher Question**  
What would happen if you didn't have organs?

**4**

Notice how I'm using the *Question Cue Card* to help me ask questions while I read? Let's have you practice this strategy with a partner. I'm putting the next paragraph about the circulatory system on the overhead. Read it and use the *Cue Card* to write a question.

### Circulatory System

*Of the vessels, the arteries carry blood away from the heart; the main arterial vessel, the aorta, branches into smaller arteries, which in turn branch into still smaller vessels and reach all parts of the body. Within the body tissues, the vessels are microscopic capillaries through which gas and nutrient exchange occurs. Blood leaving the tissue capillaries enters converging vessels, the veins, to return to the heart and lungs.*

**QUESTION CUE CARD**

1. Describe \_\_\_\_\_ in your own words.
2. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
3. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ important?
4. How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Explain how \_\_\_\_\_.
6. How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
7. What's different between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What causes \_\_\_\_\_?
9. What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?

**Student Question**  
Why is the aorta artery important?

**Student Question**  
How are arteries and veins similar?

**Student Question**  
What does capillaries mean?

**5**

Excellent questions. Let's practice with another two paragraphs.

### Circulatory System

*The right atrium of the heart is the larger of the two atriums because it needs to hold the larger amount of blood coming from the body (as opposed to the blood coming from the lungs). The deoxygenated blood leaves the heart by the pulmonary arteries and travels through the lungs (where it is oxygenated).*

*The oxygenated blood then enters the left atrium of the heart, where blood is pumped into the aorta artery and is carried throughout the body.*

**QUESTION CUE CARD**

1. Describe \_\_\_\_\_ in your own words.
2. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
3. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ important?
4. How is \_\_\_\_\_ related to \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Explain how \_\_\_\_\_.
6. How are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ similar?
7. What's different between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
8. What causes \_\_\_\_\_?
9. What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?

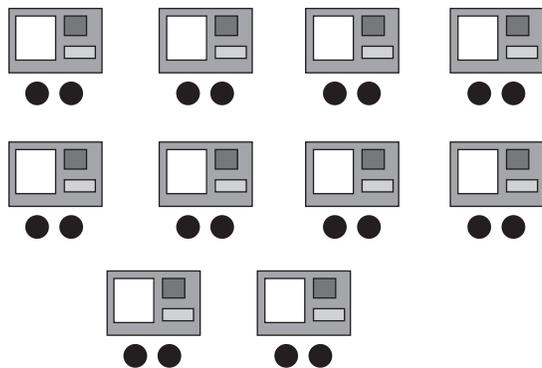
**Student Question**  
What's different between the right and left atrium?

**Student Question**  
Explain how deoxygenated blood travels through the body.

**6**

You generated some great questions. When you go back to your seats you'll have a stack of index cards (□), your *Question Cue Card* (■), and the article about the circulatory system (□). With a partner (●●), your job is to read the article and to write three questions and answers on your index cards after each page. When you finish writing your questions and answers pass your index cards to another pair of students and have them answer.

TEACHER  
DESK



---

## References

Duffelmeyer, F. (1994). Effective anticipation guide statements for learning from expository prose. *Journal of Reading, 37*, 452-455.

King, A. (1992). Comparison of self-questioning, summarizing, and notetaking review as strategies for learning from lectures. *American Educational Research Journal, 29*, 303-323.

King, A. (1994). Guiding knowledge construction in the classroom: Effects of teaching children how to question and how to explain. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*, 358-368.

Lawrence, K.M. (2002). Red light, green light, 1-2-3: Tasks to prepare for standardized tests. *The Reading Teacher, 55*, 525-528.

Raphael, T.E. & Wonnacott, C.A. (1985). Heightening fourth grade students' sensitivity to sources of information for answering comprehension questions. *Reading Research Quarterly, 20*, 282-296.

Rosenshine, B., Meister, C., & Chapman, S. (1996). Teaching students to generate questions: A review of the intervention studies. *Review of Educational Research, 66*, 181-221.

Wittrock, M. C. & Alesandrini, K. (1990). Generation of summaries and analogies and analytic and holistic abilities. *American Educational Research Journal, 27*, 489-502.