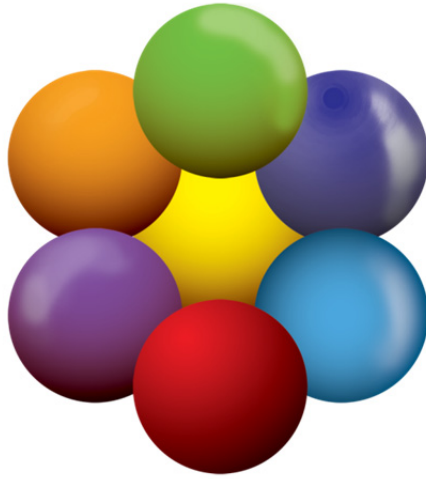


**Just ASK's**

**Question and Stem Guide  
for Teachers and Students**

**Heather Clayton**



## About Just ASK

### The Essential Question of Just ASK's Work

What do schools and classrooms look like when they are organized around a commitment to the achievement of high standards by all students?

Just ASK Publications & Professional Development (Just ASK) is based in Alexandria, Virginia, USA. Established in 1989, Just ASK provides products and services for educators in formats that facilitate a shared understanding and the use of best practice in teaching, learning, and leading in 21st century classrooms, schools, and districts.

Driven by the essential question displayed above, the publications and products developed and distributed by Just ASK are used by Just ASK consultants in their long-term multifaceted work with schools and districts, stand alone for use in professional development initiatives led by district personnel, and are often used as texts for college courses. These comprehensive resources use a common language and concept system that makes the **Common Core** come alive. Because they are cross-referenced, administrators, teacher leaders, veteran teachers, mentors, coaches, and new teachers can all be on the same page!

Call us at 800-940-5434 or go [www.justaskpublications.com](http://www.justaskpublications.com) to request a catalog or a consulting services brochure or to subscribe to our free e-newsletters.

# Question and Stem Guide for Teachers and Students

Heather Clayton, Just ASK Associate

## Teacher Planning Questions

### When Developing a Curriculum Based on Discovery of Content

- What authentic, performance-based assessments are driving the learning?
- Do the assessments emphasize critical thinking and the transfer of knowledge?
- Do the assessments emphasize meaning making and deep understanding?
- Is the curriculum written with a focus on larger, overarching concepts?
- Have you focused these concepts with essential questions?
- Does the curriculum align vertically? Is there a careful consideration of prerequisite skills and knowledge?
- Is student engagement central to the teaching and learning?
- Has there been an emphasis placed on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and research?

### Questions to Consider When Selecting Texts for Close Reading

- Will this text hold the reader's attention?
- Does the text contain enough support for the reader, or will it frustrate the reader?
- Is this text of interest to the reader?
- Has the reader had success with reading like this before (e.g. topic or genre)?
- Does the reader have the prior knowledge needed to understand new information in the text?
- Is this text more complex than previous texts read by the reader?
- What additional supports would be needed for students with limited English or learning difficulties?

### Reflecting on My Practice

- What structures exist in my classroom that supported my students as they took on a more rigorous curriculum?
- Are there new things I would like to put in place for the coming school year? What are they? Why?
- Where did my students show strengths? Where did my students struggle?
- How am I carefully monitoring the progress of each student?
- What supports have I put in place to catch them if they fall?



- In which areas do I need to spend more time learning the content?
- How do I ensure I am integrating the Standards for Mathematical Practice?
- How do I ensure I am integrating literacy across all areas?

### **Questions to Ask Myself When Reading Students' Responses**

- Were there misconceptions? If so, where?
- What patterns do I notice in the responses?
- In what ways did the responses vary?
- What were the key experiences and instruction that resulted in a change of thinking?
- After reading the responses, what would I preserve in the future? What would I change in the future?



# Teacher Questions and Stems for Use with Students

## Conversations Starters to Use When Modeling Reflections

- Yesterday, as I was reading over your work, I realized that...
- Before we began this unit/lesson, I thought that..., but now I know...
- When I read \_\_\_\_'s work, I thought about... (and show work with child's permission)
- In the past I always..., but now I've discovered...

## Clarifying Questions

- What information do we already know?
- What is a configuration?
- What are we trying to find out?
- Are there any special things to remember?
- What will be the best way to solve this problem?
- How will we get started?
- What will we need to know how to do in order to solve the problem?
- How should we show our work? What should our representation of the problem look like?

## Open-Ended Questions for Responding to Reading

- Why does...?
- What kind of person is (name of character)? What is the evidence from the text to support your thinking?
- What did the author mean when he/she said \_\_\_\_?
- What is the most important lesson the character learns in the story?
- What is the theme of this text?
- What is the main idea of the article?
- The purpose of this text is to...
- Why is \_\_\_\_ important to the story?
- How is the information organized on this website?
- How would the story be different if told from \_\_\_\_'s point of view?
- What background knowledge did the author need to have in order to write this text?

## Open-Ended Questions for Thinking Mathematically

- Can you explain how you found your answer?
- Do you agree with \_\_\_\_'s answer? Why or why not?
- What is a different way to explain the solution to this problem?
- How can you represent the math in this problem?



- Does this make sense?
- Will your theory always work?
- What if...?
- What patterns do you notice?
- When have you solved a problem like this before?
- What is known? What is unknown?
- How does this problem relate to the other math you've learned?



# Student Questions, Stems, Prompts, and Sentence Starters

## Stems that Promote Evidence-Based Thinking

- For example...
- For instance...
- Based on what I read...
- The author stated...
- According to the text...
- On page \_\_\_\_\_, it said...
- From the reading I know that...

## Question Stems

- I wonder...?
- What if...?
- Why...?
- I don't understand...
- It confused me...
- How can...?
- What did the author mean when he said \_\_\_\_\_?
- What do I know about this problem?
- What am I trying to find out?
- How will I solve it?
- Why will I choose to solve it this way?

## Prompts for Students Talking and Writing in Response to Their Reading

- I was surprised by...
- A thought provoking quote/section in the text was... It inspired my thinking because...
- It made sense that...
- The author's purpose was... I know this because...
- My thinking was shaped by...
- I agree with... I disagree with...
- The character \_\_\_\_\_ can best be described as \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- Powerful language used by the author was...



## **Reflective Questions and Sentence Starters for English Language Arts**

- In what ways does this text push me as a reader?  
This text requires me to...
- Where was I confused?  
I was confused when the author said \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- What unanswered questions do I have?  
I'm still wondering...
- What hunches or inclinations do you have as a result of your reading?  
I think... Maybe... Perhaps...
- How does this connect to other texts I have read? Experiences I have had?  
This reminds me of... I remember when... This connects to...
- What demands does the genre I'm reading place on me as a reader?  
When reading \_\_\_\_\_ I have to know how to...
- What claims can I make as a result of my reading?  
My big ideas include...
- What evidence substantiates my claims?  
I know this because... When the author said \_\_\_\_\_ she meant...
- What is the structure of the text I am writing? (i.e. narrative, argument, informative/explanatory)

### **Reflections on Nonfiction Reading**

- What do I already know about the topic?
- What am I wondering?
- What can I infer from the reading?
- What was the article mostly about?

### **Prompts to Boost Students' Metacognitive Skills**

- I'm noticing that...
- I'm wondering why...
- I didn't understand...
- The word that challenged me was...
- The reading confused me when...
- I'm thinking...
- I'm picturing...
- I'm remembering...
- I'm guessing that...
- My hunch is...
- This reminds me of...





## **Reflective Questions and Sentence Starters for Mathematics**

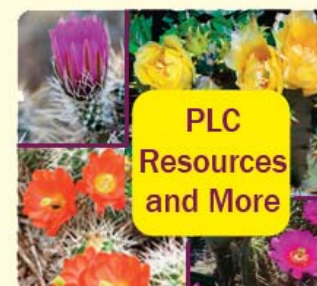
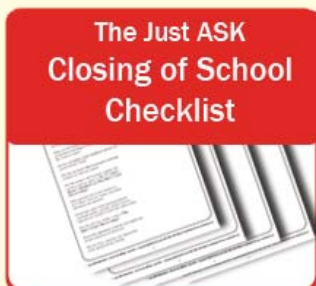
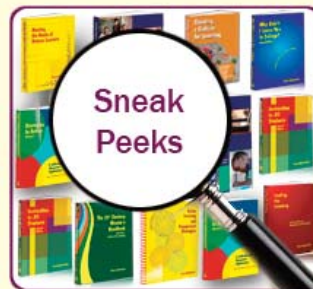
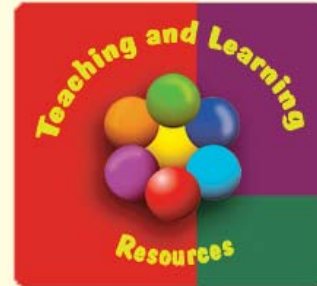
- Do I understand what is being asked of me?  
This question is asking me to...
- What is confusing?  
I am confused by...
- Have I considered different strategies and tools to solve the problem?  
Some ways to solve this problem are...
- What tools am I using most frequently? Very little? (i.e. diagrams, tables, graphs, formulas)  
When solving problems I use... When solving problems I rarely use...
- How would I justify my answer?  
My answer is justified because...
- Am I able to explain the reasoning of others from looking at their solutions?  
My classmate thinks... My classmate solved the problem by...
- What language have I included in my communication that demonstrates my mathematical understanding?  
Some math vocabulary I have used includes...
- What do I notice? What patterns do I see?  
I noticed... I see...
- Have I used the most efficient strategy to solve this problem? How do I know  
The most efficient strategy for me was...
- In what way does this problem connect to other problems you have solved before?  
This problem reminds me of...



# Just ASK's Online Resource Center

Free for you!

Copyright free!



[www.justaskpublications.com/resourcecenter](http://www.justaskpublications.com/resourcecenter)