

# Unit 7 • Module 1:

## Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 1

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### Section 1

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#### Slide 1—Title Slide

Welcome to the first module in the Inferential Comprehension Instructional Routines unit, Generating Questions to Monitor Comprehension, Level 1.

#### Slide 2—Comprehension Strategies Across Content Areas

This module begins the unit on inferential comprehension instructional routines. The first part of generating questions will address literal comprehension and be used as the basis for moving into inferential comprehension. We'll learn how to help students generate questions about the literal information stated in a passage. The next modules will concentrate on generating questions that make connections among information in different parts in the passage and between the information in the text and what students already know.

Please look over **Handout 1: TEKS/ELPS/CCRS Connections**, which explains how this routine will assist students in meeting specific subject area expectations of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).

You may notice that the TEKS connections are from the reading comprehension skills found in Figure 19 of the English Language Arts and Reading TEKS and the elective reading course for middle school.

#### Slide 3—Objectives

The objectives of this module are: to understand how generating questions improves students' comprehension of text; to generate "right there" questions; and to apply the three-step process for explicit instruction to help students generate "right there" questions.

Throughout this module, it's important to keep in mind that the goal is to have students create the questions, not simply identify the level of existing questions. While identifying question types is critical to building students' skills, research supports moving students to the

more complex and beneficial activity of generating their own questions.

As we begin the module, you may hear or see some unfamiliar terms. These will be explained as we work through the slides.

### Slide 4—Teaching Students to Monitor Their Comprehension

The slide lists two links research has found between generating questions and comprehension. Take a moment to review this information.

*The speaker pauses for 5 seconds.*

Question generation was one of the strategies the National Reading Panel recommended in its synthesis of the research on reading comprehension.

### Slide 5—Teaching Students to Monitor Their Comprehension (cont.)

English language learners taught to self-generate questions in their native language were able to transfer the strategy to reading in English and demonstrate improvements on standardized measure of comprehension administered in both languages.

Once students understand how to use question generation to monitor their comprehension during reading, they can apply the strategy in other situations and across languages.

The power of question generation is in teaching students to use it as an independent learning strategy, not as a teacher-directed activity.

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## Section 2

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### Slide 6—Asking/Answering Different Types of Questions

Please turn to **Handout 2**, which outlines the steps for generating “right there” questions.

In this module, we will address Level 1, or “right there,” questions, which have answers explicitly stated, word for word, in one place in the text. The next modules will address Levels 2 and 3 questions. It is important that you introduce only one question type at a time to students. Once they have demonstrated a clear understanding of one type of question and are able to self-generate questions of that type, you can move on to another level.

### Slide 7—Generating “Right There” Questions: Modeling Phase: / Do

Prior to beginning the generating questions activity, it’s necessary to do a shortened version of

the vocabulary instructional routine.

Students will need to know important academic and content-specific vocabulary words that will be a basis for many of the questions, including proper nouns that appear in the text. It is particularly essential that English language learners have explicit instruction in the vocabulary used in the lesson, including instructional words you will use to teach the routine, such as the term *word-for-word* or even *fact*. For a detailed discussion of the vocabulary instructional routine, see Unit 2.

Clearly state the most important thing you want students to understand and remember from the reading. The “primary focus” refers to what students should know and be able to accomplish after the lesson. This focus guides students in generating a significant question that will support their comprehension.

### **Slide 8—Generating “Right There” Questions: Modeling Phase: / Do (cont.)**

Next, explain to students the purpose for generating questions. You could say, “It will help you understand what you read or help you remember important information from the text.” Explaining the purpose for generating questions helps students understand how applying this routine will help them monitor their comprehension and support their learning.

Eventually, you want students to be able to ask and answer increasingly sophisticated types of questions, but introduce only one question type at a time. Students need time to learn each type and how to apply it.

You will need to provide explicit modeling, even though “right there” questions seem simplistic. Students who are not accustomed to monitoring their comprehension in this way may find it difficult, at first, to write a question, even when the information is stated explicitly.

The following demonstration video shows a teacher working with a Tier II intervention class of students in grades 6 through 8. Here, she is preparing the students to work on generating questions for a passage they are reading. As you watch the video, consider how the teacher prepares her students to write Level 1 questions.

**Video: Preparing to Generate Level 1 Questions (3:15)**

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## **Section 3**

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### **Slide 9—Generating “Right There” Questions: Modeling Phase: / Do (cont.)**

In Step 5 of the routine, you should use a short passage from your text to model how to cre-

ate a “right there” question. Read the passage aloud. Locate a fact that is a “who,” “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” or “how.” Turn the fact into a question. Check the answer to make sure it’s found in one place, word for word, in the reading.

The last part of step 5 is related to showing text support. Students should always be able to refer back to the passage to show the basis for their questions and the answers.

This routine should be explicitly stated so students can apply it independently. In addition, it is helpful to post the steps in your classroom until students have made them a habit and to model locating facts by using a display of the passage.

### Slide 10—Generating “Right There” Questions: Modeling Phase: / Do (cont.)

I’m going to model this routine using **Handout 3: “Poisons on our Planet.”** Please follow along with me.

Let’s look at the section entitled “Natural Toxins.” It reads: “Although nature provides us with everything we need to be healthy, there are many things in nature that aren’t healthy for us and can actually be poisonous or toxic. These poisons are called *toxins*. Toxins can be found in a variety of things like the venom from a rattlesnake, the leaves of an oleander bush, and the poison from a deadly mushroom....”

Reread the sentence from the second paragraph and acknowledge it as a fact: “Toxins can be found in a variety of things like the venom from a rattlesnake, the leaves of an oleander bush, and the poison from a deadly mushroom.”

Identify the type of fact: “*Toxins* is a ‘what.’”

Turn the fact into a question: “What are found in the venom of a rattlesnake?”

Check your answer: “Toxins.”

Modeling only once will not be enough for students to understand the process. You will want to continue making more “right there” questions and having students check your answers.

### Slide 11—Generating “Right There” Questions: Modeling Phase: / Do (cont.)

This slide shows additional “right there” questions generated from the practice passage “Poisons on Our Planet.”

The correct examples can all be answered in one word or one sentence by looking in only one place in the text. When modeling how to write “right there” questions, display the passage to show students exactly where you found the information in the text and how you used the stems of the question to compose your question.

The incorrect examples of “right there” questions can be answered in one word or one sentence, but cannot be found by looking in one place in the text. The first question requires information from several places in the text. That makes it an example of a “putting it together” question. The second question is not answered in the text at all. The last question requires the student to use background knowledge. It is a “making connections” question. These other question types are the Level 2 and Level 3 questions that will be addressed in the next modules.

### Slide 12—Generating “Right There” Questions: Teacher-assisted Phase: *WE Do*

Here are the first four steps of the routine. Take a moment to review them now.

*The speaker pauses for 5 seconds.*

### Slide 13—Generating “Right There” Questions: Teacher-assisted Phase: *WE Do* (cont.)

Step 5 should be practiced orally, at first, before having students record their questions in writing. It may be necessary to assist students with the appropriate language or structure of “right there” questions.

Ask students to share their questions so they can see other models and help each other refine their skill. Provide corrective feedback or additional modeling as necessary. Remind students that the goal is to generate questions independently to monitor their comprehension.

Please turn to **Handout 4: “Right There” Question Cards**. This card is for students to use while generating questions.

One side of the card provides a definition of “right there” questions. In addition, it prompts students with question words: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. On the other side of the card, you will find sample questions appropriate for an English language arts, science, or social studies passage. After all three modules on question generation are presented, the students will have a set of cards they can use to help generate questions while reading.

The following classroom video returns to our Tier II intervention class and shows the teacher working with her students to generate a Level 1 question. Pay attention to how the teacher is reinforcing the use of the text as they follow the steps in generating their question.

### Video: Generating Level 1 Questions: Teacher-assisted Practice (2:33)

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## Section 4

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### Slide 14—Creating Ownership of the Routine

The goal of generating questions is to empower students to monitor their own comprehension during reading. The steps we discussed in Unit 1, Module 2 for helping to convert instructional routines into learning strategies that students can apply independently as needed are listed on the slide.

We have already discussed steps 1 and 2. For step 3, have students share their questions at the conclusion of the lesson; this type of sharing helps students to process the content and information repeatedly and more deeply. Students can work with partners or as a larger group to discuss the questions and how they can be answered with text evidence. With practice, students can use their new knowledge and share in the control over what they are learning and how they are being held accountable for it. Sharing also empowers students to provide helpful, corrective feedback to each other.

As you revisit this routine and students gain proficiency in applying it, guide them in evaluating how well they are using questioning to monitor their comprehension. Invite students to brainstorm ways that they have or could use this routine to monitor comprehension in other classes and outside of school.

### Slide 15—Generating “Right There” Questions: Independent Practice: *YOU Do*

This slide reviews the complete routine.

Students may need to practice with partners for several lessons and with different types of text before they are ready to go on to the *YOU Do* phase. It is important that students also practice the skill independently, without support from a partner. However, you should be sure to monitor their work carefully and provide prompt feedback and/or scaffolding as needed.

It is suggested that students be taught to note their questions in the margins of the text or use sticky notes. If this practice becomes a habit for students, they are more likely to apply the routine in other contexts. Noting questions may also help students in assessment situations. When students achieve independent use of question generation, they will not be writing down or sharing their questions. It will simply be a strategy they use to monitor their comprehension. While they are still learning to generate questions, however, they should be provided multiple opportunities to practice and receive immediate feedback.



## Slide 16—Scaffolding for Generating Questions

Please turn to **Handout 5: Scaffolding Level 1 Questions**, which lists the scaffolding steps presented on this and the following slide. Also locate **Handout 6: Student Log for Self-generated Questions**.

The difficulty of the text may determine how much scaffolding is necessary. Some scaffolding suggestions include: Break the text into smaller sections at first, but gradually increase the length. Provide passages with some facts already underlined. Provide a suggested number of questions to generate for each section. Regularly share students' questions and provide positive or corrective feedback.

Having good models helps students refine their question-generation skills. Helping improve peers' questions can also structure opportunities to discuss what constitutes a quality question.

If students continue to have difficulty with generating “right there” questions, it may be necessary to have them practice *recognizing* these types of questions before *generating* them. You can provide a list of appropriately worded questions at each of the three levels and have students pick out the “right there” questions.

Once the students better understand the characteristics of a correctly worded “right there” question, they can return to generating their own.

## Slide 17—Scaffolding for Generating Questions (cont.)

You can also return to modeling the routine with the whole class, pairs, small groups, or individual students, as needed. Remind students to use their question cards and make questions that start with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*.

Remember that scaffolding is a continuum of support that is added and slowly removed as necessary. The ultimate goal is for students to generate questions to monitor and support their learning independently.

For students who are really struggling, it may be necessary to begin instruction with easier question types, like *where*, *when*, and *who*, or to provide partially written questions that the students can complete. This strategy helps to build confidence.

## Slide 18—Summary

The objectives of this module were: to understand how generating questions improves students' comprehension of text; to generate “right there” questions; and to apply the three-step process for explicit instruction to help students generate “right there” questions.