

READING Strategy → Questioning the Author

Reading component	Comprehension
Related Standard(s) of Learning	3.5, 3.6, 4.4, 4.5, 5.5, 5.6

Overview of the strategy

Questioning the Author is a comprehension strategy that enables students to construct meaning from texts. It is grounded in the fact that many textbooks lack coherence and explanation and assume unrealistic levels of background knowledge. This strategy asks readers to engage with text in a meaningful way.

Strategy procedure

1. Begin by discussing with students the idea that textbooks are written by ordinary people and that authors have varying styles which may be unclear or even confusing to some readers. Alert students to the fact that they may have to work at figuring out what an author is trying to say.
3. Read passages from selected texts.
4. Prompt students by asking
 - “What is the author trying to tell you?”
 - “Why is the author trying to tell you that?”
 - “Is that expressed clearly?”
5. As students discover problems and confusions in the text, prompt them to revise those ideas in clearer language by asking questions, such as
 - “How could the author have expressed the ideas more clearly?”
 - “What would you want to say instead?”
6. By transforming an author’s ideas into their own, students successfully comprehend text.

Source

- M. G. McKeown, I. L. Beck, and M. J. Worthy, “Grappling with Text Ideas: Questioning the Author,” *The Reading Teacher* 46 (1993): 560–566.