



# Understanding Question Stems

Engaging in deeper comprehension through structured questioning

*Suggested Time 20 Minutes*

## Student Tasks:

- Reflect on their reading using question stems.
- Choose a question stem and craft a detailed response.
- Exchange and discuss their answers with a partner.
- Engage in a class discussion to expand their understanding of the text through varied perspectives.

## Online ThinkCERCA Modules:

- Complex texts
- Tools for scaffolding reading (focus mode, translation, picture dictionary, online glossary, audio support, syllabication, part of speech, etc.)

## Strategy

The Understanding Question Stems strategy encourages students to engage with texts at a deeper level by using the initial part of a question, known as the "stem," as a guide for thoughtful responses. This structured framework promotes critical analysis and discussion beyond simple recall of facts, aligning with different levels of cognitive complexity.

## Optimal Application Notes:

This strategy can be utilized across various texts to foster active learning. Teachers should model the process several times, demonstrating how to craft and respond to question stems effectively.

## Before:

- Select a text that allows for rich discussion and analysis.
- Prepare a list of question stems that align with the text's content and complexity, use the "Check" or "Pause and Reflect" questions.
- Ensure students have access to the text for reference during the activity.

## During:

- Distribute the list of question stems to students after they finish reading.
- Instruct students to choose a question stem and formulate a thoughtful response based on the text.
- Encourage them to analyze, explain, evaluate, or justify their answers, using evidence from the text to support their responses.
- Pair students to discuss their responses with a partner, prompting them to ask follow-up questions and explore different perspectives.
- Facilitate a whole-class discussion where students share insights and further refine their understanding through collaborative dialogue.

## After:

- Have students reflect on their responses and consider how different question stems influenced their thinking.
- Reinforce the importance of question stems in guiding deeper analysis and comprehension of various texts.

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**Instructions:** Reflect on what the questions are asking you. Rephrase the questions in your own words so that you understand them. When you are confused by questions on future assessments, try rephrasing them as if you are explaining them to someone else. Determine what the question type is asking you to do.

Item	Question on ThinkCERCA	What is the question asking you to do?
2	<i>Example: Which of the following phrases most closely matches the meaning of the word pilot as it is used in the following sentence?</i>	<i>Example: The question is asking me to find the <u>best</u> phrase that matches the meaning of the word pilot. That means that there may be answers that are close. I need to pay attention to how the word is used in the sentence, too.</i>