Resource Guide: Text Dependent Questions with Complex Texts

The purpose of this Resource Guide is to define what text dependent questions are for all teachers, and in order for teachers to plan and execute lessons with them in place. This Resource Guide will provide a framework for teachers to use when creating text-dependent questions (TDQs) in lessons.

What are Text Dependent Questions (TDQs)?

TDQs are questions that cannot be answered without referring back to the text. To answer a TDQ, students must read closely to determine what the text says and draw logical conclusions from the text. It is important to employ TDQs, because questions that are not text-dependent result in less learning.

Moreover, departing from the text privileges only those students who already have experience with the topic. Answering a TDQ is a much more rigorous process than merely answering questions that revolve around experiences outside of the text. TDQs can point toward the text most salient features and help students build capacity to tackle increasingly complex tests.

How do TDQs align with the standards?

One of the demands of the literacy standards is a shift to ensure that reading, writing, and speaking are grounded in textual evidence, in both literary and informational texts. One way to engage students in this process is through the use of text-dependent questions (TDQs).
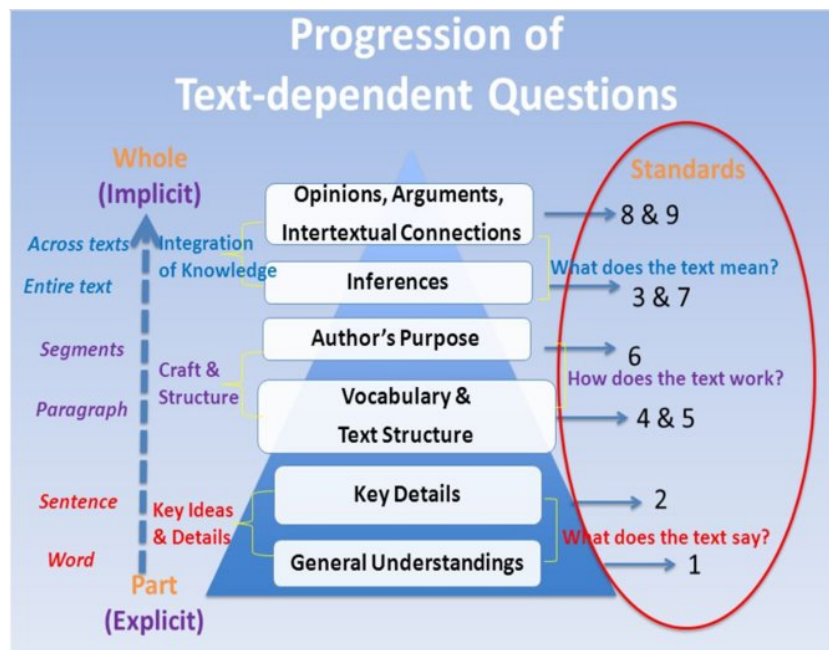
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This graphic shows how different TDQs can be aligned with different CCSS standards. This shows a quick understanding of how increasingly complex TDQs within a text can lead to rigorous instruction.

When you're writing or reviewing a set of questions, consider the following three categories:

- Questions that assess themes and central ideas
- Questions that assess knowledge of vocabulary
- Questions that assess syntax and structure

Below is an example of how teachers can construct TDQs to assess syntax and structure, knowledge of vocabulary, and theme and central ideas. The example below is from "The Day the Mona Lisa was Stolen" by Craig Roland		
Excerpt from text	**Example TDQ(s)**	**What TDQ assesses?**
"Perugia claimed he stole the work out of patriotism. He didn't think such a work by a famous Italian should be kept in France…"	How does Perugia stealing the Mona Lisa show that he is a patriot?	<u>Theme and Central Ideas</u> *As the text ends, the reader learns how and why the Mona Lisa was stolen. There is an opportunity to have students discuss/debate the real motive of the thief: patriotism or greed. Understanding how the text supports both arguments will set the stage for the best in-class discussion.*
"The museum was searched from top to bottom. This took a week because of the size of the Louvre: it's a 49-acre building that runs along the Seine river for 2,200 feet."	What is the Louvre? Why is it important we know how large it is?	<u>Knowledge of Vocabulary</u> *The information needed about the Louvre is found within the text. Teachers do not need to preteach this word for students to understand the text. Teachers can ask questions to push students' thinking without defining this word for them.*
"By Tuesday morning, when the painting hadn't been returned and it was not in the photographer's studio, museum officials were notified."	What happened on Tuesday? If the Mona Lisa is so important, why did the museum employees wait to tell their bosses?	<u>Syntax and Structure</u> *The information needed to understand the sequence of events is found in the middle of this complex sentence. Teachers need to create questions to help students understand what happened and when. This will help students not lose or miss the important information.*
The full text is a 3ʳᵈ grade Lexile level. To access the full text, click here: https://learnzillion.com/resources/83381/		

How can I create TDQs for my lessons?

1. Read the entire text the students will read in the lesson. Identify the most important learning, meaning, and/or knowledge you want students to gain from the text.
2. Identify the parts of the text that help the reader get to the most important learning, meaning, and knowledge of the text. At these stopping points, you should stop and ask a planned TDQ.
3. At each individual stopping point, create a question structured to push the reader to go back into the text to gain the understanding in that portion. You should also craft follow-up questions in case students struggle to answer the deeper question.
4. Ensure the questions you craft at the stopping points work to scaffold the thinking of the reader to get to the most important learning, meaning, and/or knowledge of the text.
5. Locate the words in the text that the reader needs to know in order to understand the main learning/meaning/knowledge of the text. If the word is defined within the text, write a TDQ that pushes students to use the text to determine the meaning of the word.
6. Find the sections of the text that will present the greatest difficulty and create questions that support students in mastering these sections. These could be sections with difficult syntax, particularly dense information, tricky transitions, or places that offer a variety of possible inferences.

For more information about TDQs, please visit this Achieve the Core resource:
https://achievethecore.org/category/1158/ela-literacy-text-dependent-questions