

Question-Answer Relationships

[Raphael, 1982, 1984]

What Is/Are Question-Answer Relationships?

Raphael created Question-Answer Relationships as a way to help students realize that the answers they seek are related to the type of question that is asked; it encourages them to be strategic about their search for answers based on an awareness of what different types of questions look for. Even more important is understanding where the answer will come from. Teaching QARs to students begins with helping them understand the core notion: that when confronted with a question, the answer will come either from the text or from what kids know. These are the Core Categories, which Raphael calls

1. In the Book (or video or WWW page...)
2. In My Head

Once students are comfortable with these simpler distinctions (and do note that this does not take very long!), it will please them to move to the next level of understanding question types. Raphael divides "In The Book" into two QAR types (Right There and Think and Search); and "In My Head" into two QAR types (Author & You and On My Own).

Explain Those Four QARs!

1. **Right There.** The answer is in the text, and if we pointed at it, we'd say it's "right there!" Often, the answer will be in a single sentence or place in the text, and the words used to create the question are often also in that same place.
2. **Think and Search.** The answer is in the text, but you might have to look in several different sentences to find it. It is broken up or scattered or requires a grasp of multiple ideas across paragraphs or pages.
3. **Author and You.** The answer is not in the text, but you still need information that the author has given you, combined with what you already know, in order to respond to this type of question.
4. **On My Own.** The answer is not in the text, and in fact you don't even have to have read the text to be able to answer it.

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- [QAR Chart](#)
- [QAR Concept Map](#)

What Does This Look Like in Practice?

Good question. Just for practice and as an example, let's apply it to the following passage of text. Following the passage are one example for each type of QAR.

The sun was setting, and as the senator gazed out his office window, he

could see the silhouettes of some of the unique buildings and monuments of Washington, D.C. Directly in front of him at the other end of the National Mall, the stark obelisk of the Washington Monument thrust dramatically skyward, its red warning lights blinking in the approaching dusk. Although he couldn't quite see it, he knew that beyond the Washington Monument and the reflecting pool just past it, a huge statue of Abraham Lincoln sat thoughtfully in the Lincoln Memorial.

The senator was worried. A bill was before the Congress, called Safe Surfing for Safer Schools, that would deny federal education dollars to states that didn't have laws against internet pornography on their books. He was concerned about kids having access to dirty pictures, and even more concerned about internet predators having access to kids. But he also believed strongly in the right of people to freely access information, even if it meant sometimes children might be exposed to adult materials. And it seemed dangerous to take money away from schools, where the need was desperate, if state legislatures balked at this federal pressure on them.

His constituents had let him know in no uncertain terms that they supported strict standards of decency on the internet. He knew if he didn't support the bill, his next election opponent would paint him as pro-pornography, and anti-child. But he didn't want anything to get in the way of providing monetary support to schools through federal grants.

The unique spires of the original Smithsonian Institution were getting harder

to see, but there was still a faint gleam on the green dome of the Museum of Natural History. What was the right thing to do?

Right There

What legislation is the senator worried about?

Think and Search

What arguments is he having to weigh in his mind?

Author and You

How would you advise the Senator, and why would you advise him so?

On My Own

What's a tough decision you've had to make?