

Just Ask Questions!

Reading Informational Text Grades 3-5

Rationale:

- Many times, when asked a question about an informational text, students want to answer the question based on their own thoughts, beliefs, or other knowledge they already possess. While this information is beneficial and should be used to activate prior knowledge, it is critical that the student learn to use the text to answer basic comprehension questions.

Goal:

- To distinguish types of questions can be found directly in the text from “wondering” questions that require further research.

Standards:

- **RI.3.1.** Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **RI.4.1.** Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.5.1.** Quote accurately from a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the types of questions that require direct usage of the text (as opposed to questions that require outside knowledge such as author’s purpose, drawing conclusions, and other comprehension strategies).
- Students will create a variety of questions from a given text.

Materials:

- Any informational text that is grade level and length appropriate (one copy for each student) – see Teacher Tips for suggestions.
- Highlighters, one per student
- Question/Answer Handout, one copy per student
- Paper/Pencils
- Whiteboard/Markers for teacher use

Procedures:

- Begin class with a very thoughtful question about a text you recently read together. For example, if you read an article about water conservation, you could begin like this, *“When we read that article yesterday, something bothered me when we finished. I had lots of questions about how we could save water, and*

the article only mentioned ways that we could save water at home. I am wondering about ways we could save water at school. I'm going to list some of the questions I have and see if I can find ways to make a difference here."

- Begin a list on the board that includes questions that cannot and that can be answered by the text. Allow students to contribute questions as well.
 - For example:
 - How can we save water at school?
 - Can we reuse the water here?
 - Where do we use a lot of water at school?
 - What can we do to change the bathrooms and conserve water?
- When you have a good list, look it over and start to label your questions. *"You know, some of these questions can really be answered in the text. Let's look back at that article and see which we can find answers for. If we find the answer, we'll write T next to the question, meaning that we can find the answer. If not, we'll write W for Wondering. Then we can research those answers later."*
- Once you've sorted all the questions, ask students how this could help them understand the information in a text better. Accept all answers and discuss.
- Pass out a highlighter and the sample text to each student.
- Tell students that today they will read a text and come up with questions. Then they will decide whether the text actually answers the question or if it is a question for further research.
 - Model the first paragraph for them, creating a wide variety of questions from the information. Make sure to verbalize your thought process.
 - Work with students on paragraph 2.
 - Allow students to complete paragraph 3 on their own.
- When students finish, have all students share at least one of their questions.
 - If the question can be answered in the text, have students use the highlighter to show where the answer is.
 - If the question is a wondering question, write it down on chart paper at the front of class for future research.
- Reflection Discussion: Ask the students the following:
 - *What kind of questions did we create today? Where did we get the information to make these questions?*
 - *Were you surprised at how many questions you came up with? Do you think next time you could come up with even more*

Teacher Tips:

- Try not to think of questions simply as an assessment tool. Questions can be good for assessment, but they also lead to actual student engagement.
- Wondering can support text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. If you use this categorization for making connections, use questions instead for a short time to give students practice with questioning. Examples of this are:
 - What do I have in common with this information?
 - What relationship does this information have with the world?
 - What other texts provide similar information or a different perspective?
 -

- For this activity, you can use any grade-level text. Good examples of grades 3-5 text are:
 - A page or section from a textbook
 - An article from a kids' science magazine
 - An article from the newspaper
 - A page from a website (be careful of overexposure to advertising)

Extension Activities

- Actually perform the research with students to find the answers to their wondering questions. You can do this in a number of ways:
 - Use a search engine to find answers to questions.
 - Invite an expert to answer questions about the topic (you could invite him or her or do a Skype session).
 - Do an experiment or investigation.
 - Ask a librarian to help students research their questions in a school or community library.
 - Give each student one question to find out the answer to. When they return, compare methods of discovering the answer.
- For younger students, practice forming questions (adding a question mark, and reversing the subject and verb).
- Challenge students to develop open-ended questions (questions that do not require a yes/no answer).
- Ask students to think of “wondering questions” in math and social studies.
 - In math, students will make greater connections between the mathematical concepts they are learning.
 - In science, inquiry is the basis for all investigation. Tie questions to the scientific method, research, and experimentation.
 - Have students develop questions that they want to answer when performing investigations
 - Have students develop and list questions as you study a new concept they want to learn more about
 - Have students use questions when talking with scientists in the field
 - In social studies, have students use questions in the following ways:
 - Interviewing family members or community members
 - Asking questions about other cultures or traditions
 - Asking questions about history or the origins of artifacts
 - Developing questions they would ask political candidates
 - Asking questions about problems at school and proposing solutions based in research

Sample Text

“Why Does The Sun Burn Us?”

The text and images are from NASA Space Place.

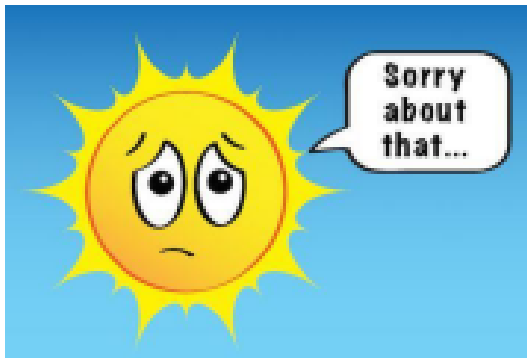


The sun keeps our planet warm enough for living things to thrive. It gives us light so we can see. But it can also burn us. What causes these burns?

All About Energy

The sun sends lots of energy toward us all the time. There are a few different kinds of energy.

There is infrared radiation, which is heat. There is visible light, which is what our eyes can see. There is also ultraviolet light. We can't see ultraviolet with our eyes, but it's there. And it can burn our skin.

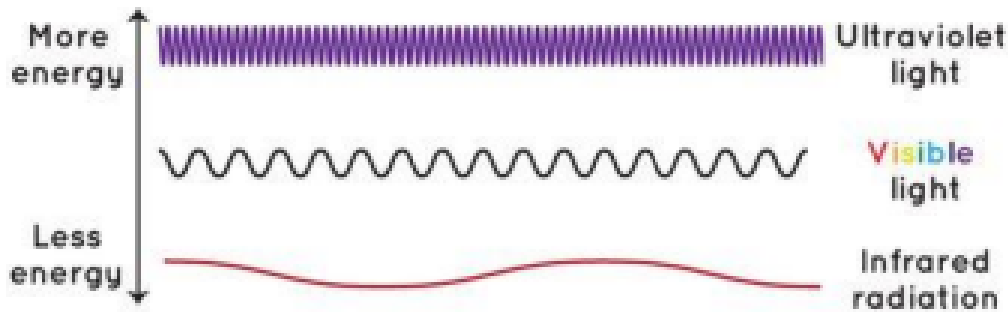


Waves, Waves, Waves

Infrared radiation, visible light, and ultraviolet light are all types of waves in the electromagnetic spectrum. They're all energy. But these energy waves aren't all the same. Some have more energy than others.



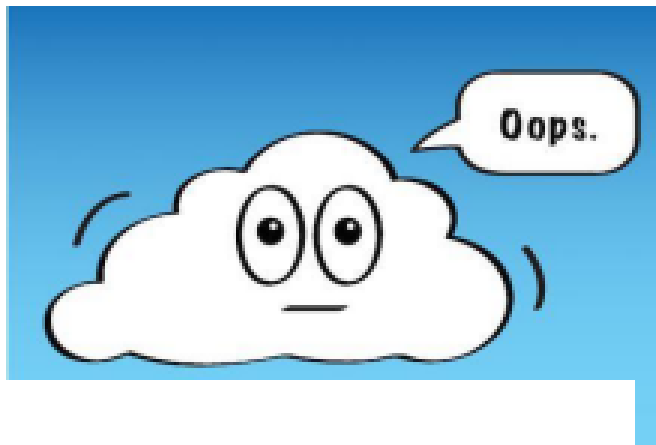
Infrared waves have less energy than visible light waves. Infrared waves are longer with more space between each high and low. Ultraviolet waves have more energy than visible light does. It's this energy that can hurt us.



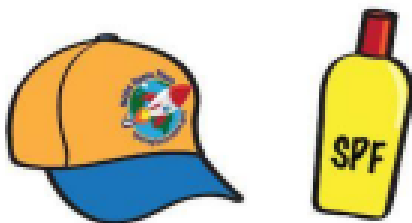
Feel the Burn

If too much ultraviolet light hits our skin, over time it can hurt our skin cells. The cells can die, and our bodies react. The skin gets red, and it can hurt a lot.

Ultraviolet light comes from the sun, but it can also bounce off of other surfaces like water, snow, and concrete. That means that even if you're under an umbrella, you can still get a sunburn. Ultraviolet light can also go through clouds, so you can get burned on an overcast day. No fair!



You can protect your skin by doing things that keep ultraviolet waves from reaching you. Clothing and hats are a great way to keep away those waves. Sunblock contains chemicals that can reflect or absorb the ultraviolet light, leaving your skin sunburn free.



That way you can enjoy the *other* energy from the sun, visible light and infrared warmth.

Question Tracking Sheet

Informational Text: "Why Does the Sun Burn Us?"	My Questions	My Answers
<p>The sun sends lots of energy toward us all the time. There are a few different kinds of energy. There is infrared radiation, which is heat. There is visible light, which is what our eyes can see. There is also ultraviolet light. We can't see ultraviolet with our eyes, but it's there. And it can burn our skin.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What else gives off infrared radiation? 2. What are some examples of ultraviolet light? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thermal imaging cameras 2. Sterilizing lights, flashlights
<p>Infrared radiation, visible light, and ultraviolet light are all types of waves in the electromagnetic spectrum. They're all energy. But these energy waves aren't all the same. Some have more energy than others.</p>		
<p>Infrared waves have less energy than visible light waves. Infrared waves are longer with more space between each high and low. Ultraviolet waves have more energy than visible light does. It's this energy that can hurt us.</p>		

<p>If too much ultraviolet light hits our skin, over time it can hurt our skin cells. The cells can die, and our bodies react. The skin gets red, and it can hurt a lot.</p> <p>Ultraviolet light comes from the sun, but it can also bounce off of other surfaces like water, snow, and concrete. That means that even if you're under an umbrella, you can still get a sunburn. Ultraviolet light can also go through clouds, so you can get burned on an overcast day. No fair!</p>		
<p>You can protect your skin by doing things that keep ultraviolet waves from reaching you. Clothing and hats are a great way to keep away those waves. Sunblock contains chemicals that can reflect or absorb the ultraviolet light, leaving your skin sunburn free.</p>		