

Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About an Informational Text

Regional Educational Laboratories
West, Northwest,
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Families and caregivers, you play an important role in your child's language learning. Children can strengthen their language every day by asking and answering questions about a topic or an informational text. In this activity you will ask your child to talk about what they read, hear, or know about a topic or an informational text.

Keep in mind:

- You and your child can use your home language or English, whichever is strongest for you.
- Asking and answering questions in your home language will also help your child with English.
- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

Why ask and answer questions about a topic or informational text?

Asking and answering questions about a topic or informational text allows children to strengthen their language.

Let's get started!

Follow the steps below. *See the back for informational text ideas and additional language supports.*



- ▶ **Step 1: Share or read** an informational text with your child, such as animals, food, or something they're learning about or are interested in.



- ▶ **Step 2: Ask questions** before, during, and after reading the informational text.

- Help your child “stretch their language.” If your child answers your question with one word, ask them to add more to their answer. You can model this for them.
- Ask **surface- and deeper-level questions**. Surface-level questions help your child recall what they read in the text. Example: *What was the text about?* Deeper-level questions help your child to think more about the text and put ideas together. Example: *What is most interesting about this text? Why?*



- ▶ **Step 3: Encourage** your child to **draw or write** about the topic.

Learning Goal: Children will strengthen their oral language skills

Grades: Kindergarten–3rd grade

Materials: A topic or informational text that you would like to share with your child; paper and crayons, pencils, or markers

Family and Caregiver Activity: Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About an Informational Text

Types of Informational Texts to Read and Talk About With Your Child

- Books, videos, or websites that share facts about something (animals, fruit, weather, sports, etc.)
- Schoolwork
- Cereal boxes
- Newspaper articles
- Text from a magazine
- Instructions (how to play a game, operate a new toy, etc.)

Additional Language Supports

Your child can stretch or develop their language when asking and answering questions about a topic or an informational text. Consider using the questions and responses below as you discuss the informational text with your child.

Surface-Level Questions to Ask About a Topic or Informational Text	Possible Responses
What did this text tell us about ___?	This text was about ___.
What do you already know about ___?	I already know ___ about ___.
What do you wonder about ___?	I wonder about ___ and ___.
Why does ___ happen? How do we know?	I think this happens because ___.

Deeper-Level Questions to Ask About a Topic or Informational Text	Possible Responses
What if ___?	I think ___ because ___.
What is most interesting about this text? Why?	_____ is most interesting because _____.
What did you learn from the text?	From this part of the text, “_____,” I learned _____.

Language Challenge:

Children can strengthen their language every day by asking and answering questions about a topic or an informational text. Now that your child has **answered questions**, encourage them to **ask questions** for you to answer about a topic or an informational text. Children can create their own questions to ask you or they can use some of the questions in the table above. Asking questions allows children to stretch their language on a daily basis.

