**DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF TEXT‐DEPENDENT QUESTIONS**

An effective set of text dependent questions delves systematically into a text to guide students in extracting the key meanings or ideas found there. TDQs begin by exploring specific words, details and arguments and then moves on to examine the impact of those specifics on the text as a whole. Along the way they target academic vocabulary and specific sentence structures as critical focus points for gaining comprehension.

**Typical Text Dependent Questions ask students to perform one or more of the following tasks:**

* Analyze paragraphs on a sentence by sentence basis and sentences on a word by word basis to determine the role played by individual paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words
* Investigate how meaning can be altered by changing key words and why an author may have chosen one word over another
* **Probe** each **argument in persuasive text,** each **idea in informational text,** each **key detail in literary text,** and observe how these build to a whole
* Examine how shifts in the direction of an argument or explanation are achieved & the impact of those shifts
* Question why authors choose to begin and end when they do
* Note and assess patterns of writing and what they achieve
* Consider what the text leaves uncertain or unstated

**TYPES OF TEXT‐DEPENDENT QUESTIONS**

**General Understanding**‐ This type of question asks students to look for the gist of the text they have read.

* *These questions ensure that students grasp the overall view of the text.*

**Key Details**‐ Asking students who, what, where, when, why, or how, including nuanced details. These questions should focus on important information in the text, not trivia.

* *These text-dependent questions require that readers pay attention to the details.*

**Vocabulary** **and Text Structure**-Focusing on word definitions, using context or structure to figure out unfamiliar words, ideas or feelings evoked by key words, shades of meaning, word choice, figurative language, idioms, and confusing words or phrases.

* *These text-dependent questions focus on the specific words and phrases the author uses as well as the structure of the text. …asking students to think about how the text is organized‐ for example, the use of character dialogue to propel action or the problem‐and‐solution structure.*

**Author's Purpose**‐ Asking whether the text intends to inform, entertain, persuade, or explain something, and whether the author has a particular bias and leaves out certain information.

* *Although often not specifically stated, there is a purpose for each text.*

**Inferences**‐ Asking students how the parts of a text build to the overall point or effect. "This means that they must **probe** each **argument in persuasive text**, each **idea in informational text**, or each **key detail in literary text**," say Fisher and Frey. "Importantly, inference questions require students to read the entire selection so that they know where the text is going and how they can reconsider key points in the text as contributing elements of the whole."

* *Inferences are more than guesses or simply telling students to “read between the lines.” Text-dependent questions should allow students to consider the information that is provided and then make informed extrapolations from the information provided.*

**Opinions, Arguments, Inter‐Textual Connections**‐ These questions should come after students have read and reread the text and developed their understanding through other types of questions.

* *The final category of text-dependent questions are often the questions that teachers like to ask because these questions tend to generate a lot of discussion and personal connections. When they follow a discussion built on text-dependent questions, they work well for this purpose. If they are used in place of text-dependent questions, the risk is that students will answer and not need to read the text.*

*"Text‐Dependent Questions" by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey in Principal Leadership, September 2012 (Vol. 13, #1, p. 70‐73), www.nassp.org/pl0912fisher; the authors can be reached at dfisher@mail.sdsu.edu and nfrey@mail.sdsu.edu.*