Ask Questions

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A.1.3.1 A.1.3.2 A.2.3.1 A.2.3.2 B.1.2.1

Have you ever watched a young child? Young children are always asking questions. There is so much that they don't know about the world and how it works. Most of the time, each answer just leads to more questions. But that is how we all get started in understanding the world.

Active readers don't just *answer* questions about what they read. Like young children, they *ask* questions. By asking good questions as you read, you can find important answers in the text.

Ask Practice coming up with your own questions. Suppose you are reading a story about a character who does some really strange things. You might ask: *Why does she act this way? Did something in her past make her behave like this? How does her behavior affect the plot?* Ask questions to help you read between the lines and figure out what the story does not tell you.

Some questions connect what you read to your own experiences and knowledge. You know a lot about how the world works. You can use your knowledge to help you understand what you read. You might make connections to

- **Other selections:** *"I read in science class that astronomers will no longer count Pluto as a planet. Will that affect this writer's views on exploring the solar system?"*
- **Facts:** *The last passage talked about using chemicals to take pictures. But what about digital cameras that don't use film at all? How do they work?*
- **Feelings and motivations:** *The main character in this story is acting the way I do when I'm frightened. Is she frightened of something?*
- **Judgments and conclusions:** *Something about this author's argument just isn't right. What is he leaving out?*

On the next page, you'll see questions that one reader asked about "Inventing Photography." Think about the answers to her questions and imagine the questions you'd like to ask.

Connections When you write a research report, you often have to make connections between texts. Using the Internet or the library, choose two stories or articles on the same subject. Make a list of three questions that will help you compare and contrast these texts. For example, you could compare the authors' viewpoints or themes.

Example

Reread this section of "Inventing Photography." In the space provided, Mai asked questions about the passage.

Mai's Questions

Inventing Photography

Early Fleeting Images

Before there was photography, there was a form of camera called a ***camera obscura***. This device was basically a box with a single small lens to let in light. Inside, the light reproduced an image of whatever was in front of the box. An artist might trace the outlines to make a painting. But the image only lasted as long as everything stayed in place; there was nothing inside the *camera obscura* that could catch and hold that picture.

Ask Why wasn't this photography?

In the early 1800s, many inventors were searching for a material that could hold images like the ones made by the *camera obscura*. They turned to **photosensitive** chemicals that change when exposed to light. The idea was to cover a flat surface with photosensitive chemicals and put it in the back of a device like the *camera obscura*. The light would change the chemicals, and the image would be captured!

Ask What kinds of chemicals are photosensitive?

Ask How would changing chemicals take a picture?

DISCUSS

Mai asks three questions. They help her understand the passage as she reads, and they will help her answer questions about it later.

Mai's first question is why the *camera obscura's* work is not photography. After all, it uses a lens to reproduce images. Isn't that photography? By keeping this question in mind, Mai will be sure to find what quality is missing that makes an image into a photograph—a key detail in this article.

Mai's second question is what kinds of chemicals are photosensitive. Because the term "photosensitive" is in **bold**, we know it's important. If Mai reads further in the passage, she will find some examples of photosensitive chemicals.

Mai's last question is related to her first two. She wants to know how light on photosensitive chemicals actually captures an image. As an active reader, Mai will soon realize that the article does not provide an answer to her question. She will have to use other reference sources, such as an encyclopedia or a book on the science of photography.