

Ask Questions

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Active readers ask questions instead of only answering them. Good questions lead to important answers. Think about scientists. Scientists start to make a discovery by asking questions. They may start with the wrong questions. But by asking and answering many questions, the right questions finally give them the information they need to make a discovery.

Ask Practice asking questions. Decide which questions are most important. Asking why SuperTeen’s cape is blue may be interesting, but it is probably not important. A question about why Argonite is the only thing that can hurt SuperTeen would be important. It might help you understand a story about SuperTeen.

You know a lot about how the world works. Connecting what you read to your own experience helps you ask good questions. You might make connections to—

- **Facts:** “*This passage is about ice cream. I know that ice cream comes in many flavors. Which flavor is most popular?*”
- **Hints and feelings:** “*Kendra doesn’t seem to be having a good time at her party. What happened that made her upset?*”
- **Reasons:** “*The reasons the author gives for not liking the movie seem silly. What is the real reason she doesn’t like it?*”
- **What happens next:** “*Monica and Ling both like chocolate pudding. There’s only one left. I wonder whether they’ll find a way to share it?*”



Connections Think about a famous person. What question would you like to ask that might tell you something important about her? Write your answer on the lines below.

Example

Reread this part of "Riding Bikes." In the space provided, Marlon asked questions about the passage.

Marlon's Questions

Riding Bikes

Between 15 and 20 million new bicycles are sold in this country each year. Do you have a bicycle? Do you ride regularly? If you do, where do you go? Do you know how other people use their bikes?

Ask What is the point of all these questions?

Business or Pleasure?




The *National Bicycling and Walking Study*, done by the U.S. Department of Transportation, looked at how we use bicycles. About 2.8 million people aged 17 and over regularly go to work, or **commute**, by bike. Far more people, about 27.5 million adults, regularly ride just for fun. The commuters, though, travel a lot farther each year than the fun riders.


Ask Why do commuters go farther?

About 15 million regular bicyclists are aged 16 and under. They ride for fun, but also to get to places like school or a friend's house. Overall, young riders don't travel as far as the adults who ride for fun.

Ask What do these bicycle pictures mean?

Average Distance Ridden Per Year

Adults Who Commute	
Adults Who Ride for Fun	
Riders 16 and Under	

One  stands for about 200 miles.

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Marlon's questions help him understand what he reads. They may also help him after he is done.

Marlon's first question is why the author asks so many questions. This is an important question. It is related to the main idea of the passage. If he reads on, he will find the answer.

His second question is why commuters travel farther. The passage doesn't really explain this. Marlon might try to make a connection to what he already knows. Most people work five days a week. That's probably more often than most people ride for fun. So maybe this is why commuters bike farther.

Marlon's third question is about the chart. He wants to know what the bicycle pictures mean. If he reads the chart again, he will see that there is a key under the pictures. It explains that each bicycle stands for 200 miles of distance.