

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS

INSTITUTE



# Model Lesson

## Learning How to Generate Level 2 Questions



Middle School Matters Institute

An initiative of the George W. Bush Institute in partnership with  
The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk



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## Note

This work is based on the recommendations in Denton, C., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Bryan, D., & Reed, D. (2012). *Effective instruction for middle school students with reading difficulties: The reading teacher's sourcebook*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

# TEACHER MATERIALS

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# MODEL LESSON PLAN

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## Learning How to Generate Level 2 Questions

**Objective:** Students increase literal and inferential comprehension of text by generating Level 2, “putting it together,” questions.

**MSM Field Guide Alignment:**

Reading and Reading Interventions, Principle 4, Practice 1

**Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills:**

- Level 1, “right there,” questions
- Applicable content knowledge

**Materials:**

For teachers:

- Model lesson plan
- Level 2 Questions Planning Sheet

For students:

- Text or passage (“Paleontology: Digging Up Scientific Information” provided as an example)
  - Leveled question cue cards (each type of card copied two-sided, cut out, and hole-punched; one set per student placed on a metal ring):
    - Level 1—Right There cards (copied on red paper)
    - Level 2—Putting It Together cards (copied on white paper)
    - Level 3—Making Connections cards (copied on blue paper)
  - Student Log for Self-Generated Questions (one per student)
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## Preparation

1. Read the text you will use to model the strategy. Ask yourself, “What is the most important idea that I want students to understand and remember from this text?” Identify key vocabulary words. Record this information on the Level 2 Questions Planning Sheet.
2. Identify several Level 2, “putting it together,” questions. Record your questions on the Level 2 Questions Planning Sheet or directly on the text to use as you model.

### CRITERIA FOR LEVEL 2 QUESTIONS—PUTTING IT TOGETHER

- Questions can be answered by looking in the text.
- Answers require one or more sentences.
- Answers require looking in more than one place in the text and putting information together.

## Prior Skills Review and Purpose of the Lesson

1. Review the characteristics of a Level 1 question.
2. Tell students that they will learn how to ask themselves questions that can be answered by looking at more than one place in the text.

### EXAMPLE TEACHER TALK

“Think back to when we worked on generating Level 1 questions, which we also call ‘right there’ questions. Let’s review the steps of writing Level 1 questions after reading a section of text.

1. Find an important fact.
2. Write a question that uses *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *how*.
3. Answer the question by using the text word-for-word. You should be able to point to the answer with your finger.

“Today we will learn about Level 2 questions, which will help us comprehend what we read and remember the important information.”

## Modeling

1. Distribute the leveled question cue cards.
2. Introduce the Level 2, putting it together, question type.

### EXAMPLE TEACHER TALK

“You have done a great job generating Level 1 questions. Today we will learn how to write the next type of question—Level 2, or ‘putting it together,’ questions. Look at the Level 2 question card. Writing a Level 2 question is similar to writing a Level 1 question. After we read the text, we pause to identify important information, just like with Level 1. The only difference is that this time, the answers will require us to look in more than one place in the text. The answer to this type of question could be one sentence, but usually, it is two or more sentences.”

3. Introduce a short, easy-to-comprehend passage from your content area; preteach difficult vocabulary words; read the passage with students; and model generating Level 2 questions.

### **EXAMPLE TEACHER TALK**

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*This example uses the provided expository text: "Paleontology: Digging Up Scientific Information." Read the passage before beginning this example.*

"Now that we have read the passage, I need to write a Level 2 question. I know that the answers can be found by using information in more than one place in the text. I see that paragraph 2 discusses what fossils reveal, or show, and that paragraph 3 discusses what fossils cannot reveal.

"Important information is in these paragraphs, so I will write a question about it on my Student Log for Self-Generated Questions. My question is: 'What can humans learn—and not learn—from fossils?'

"Let's find the answer. I see two sentences that can answer the first part of this question. Follow along with your eyes as I read them aloud: 'This evidence helps scientists uncover information about what life was like long ago. Fossils also show how plants and animals have changed over time and how they are similar to each other.'

"I also see a sentence that can answer the second part of the question. Follow along as I read: 'Although fossils show what ancient living things looked like, scientists are still unable to determine the color, sounds, and behavior of these organisms.'

"To answer my question, I will combine the sentences and write my answer. Watch me."

*Write and display the following answer.*

"'From fossils, humans learn what our planet was like long ago, how animals changed over time, and how they are related to one another. But humans cannot use fossils to learn animals' color, sounds, or behavior.'

"I know this because I read it in paragraphs 2 and 3."

*Highlight or underline the sentences in the text.*

4. If students have difficulty writing Level 2 questions, have them first recognize Level 2 questions that you've written.

## Guided Practice

1. Practice creating and answering Level 2 questions. Remind students to look at their question cue cards to help them remember this question type. Stick with a short section or paragraph during the initial modeling and guided practice. Students may record their questions on the Student Log for Self-Generated Questions.
2. Provide more guided practice with the whole class or in small groups. Some students may need additional guided practice over several days to master the process of generating Level 2 questions.

## Sample Questions for “Paleontology: Digging Up Scientific Information”

Level 1:

- Question: What are some examples of fossils?
- Answer: Footprints, bones, teeth, and shells

Level 2:

- Question: What are some reasons why more fossils aren't available to be studied?
- Answer: Dead plants or animals may be eaten by scavengers or worn away by wind and water. Also, many fossils are buried too deep or in parts of the world where no one is digging.

## Independent Practice

1. Using a different brief selection, have students work in pairs to generate “putting it together” questions about the selection. Students may continue to use their cue cards and should record their questions on the Student Log for Self-Generated Questions. Students should also record their answers to the questions along with the evidence supporting each answer (e.g., page number).
2. Circulate through the room and provide feedback and scaffolding as needed. Be prepared to model again if necessary. Ask pairs to share their “putting it together” questions and to explain where in the text the answer to each question can be found.

## Ongoing Use of the Strategy

Each time students read an unfamiliar passage, preview the passage with them, preteaching important vocabulary. Then, have students generate both Level 1, “right there,” and Level 2, “putting it together,” questions in pairs or small groups. Circulate through the room to monitor responses and provide feedback.

Once students become skilled at generating Level 1 and Level 2 questions, turn the process over to them but continue to preteach important vocabulary and to remind students to preview text and generate questions. Occasionally, return to question generation in pairs so that you can monitor the process.

## Monitor Student Learning

Assess students frequently to ensure correct use of the strategy and use this information to inform your teaching.

- Ask students to share their Level 1 and Level 2 questions with the class. Provide feedback and scaffolding to improve students' question generation.
- Circulate throughout the classroom to monitor student work during guided and independent practice. Provide feedback and scaffolding as needed.
- Ask questions that require students to provide evidence from the text that supports answers to each generated question. (This information should also be recorded on the Student Log.)
- Review and/or grade completed Student Logs. Note common errors on question generation and answers to questions. Model and reteach the strategy with the entire class, small groups, or individual students as needed.

When students learn to ask questions about what they read, they understand and learn more from text. Ultimately, this strategy increases students' content area learning and may increase their performance on assessments of content area knowledge.

# LEVEL 2 QUESTION PLANNING SHEET

1. Identify appropriate text for modeling and guided practice of Level 2 questions.

The text should be at students’ independent reading level, which may require finding a passage below your grade level. You will use the text only to introduce the strategy to the students—text that is too difficult will distract students from the goal of understanding what a Level 2 question is, how to generate a Level 2 question, and how to locate the answer in the text.

Reading Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Preview the text and make note of the following information, which will help you introduce the text to students and guide students to generate Level 2 questions.

<b>Important ideas you want students to understand and remember</b>	
<b>Key concepts</b>	
<b>Vocabulary to preteach</b>	
<b>Connections to prior learning</b>	

3. Develop your model Level 2 questions.



## Ideas for Further Differentiation

- Have students highlight a sentence and then rewrite it in the form of a question.
- Provide students with an answer and ask them to write the question (like Jeopardy!).

# STUDENT MATERIALS

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# Paleontology: Digging Up Scientific Information

## Fossils

When you hear the word *paleontology*, you may think of scientists digging up dinosaur bones, but paleontology isn't just the study of dinosaurs. It's the study of all ancient life, including plants, animals, insects, and microbes. The word *paleontology* comes from the Greek word meaning "the study of ancient creatures." To learn about these ancient creatures, paleontologists search for and study fossils.

Fossils are the preserved remains of plants or animals that are usually buried in rocks. Some examples of fossils include footprints, bones, teeth, or shells. This evidence helps scientists uncover information about what life was like long ago. Fossils also show how plants and animals have changed over time and how they are similar to each other.

Although fossils show what ancient living things looked like, scientists are still unable to determine the color, sounds, and behavior of these organisms.

## Fossil Formation

Most ancient organisms never became fossils. When an animal or plant dies, the remains are often eaten by scavengers or worn away by water and wind.

If remains are not destroyed, they may fall into mud or soft sand and leave an impression in the dirt. Then a layer of mud or sand covers the remains. Over time, it falls apart and dissolves. The mud or sand can harden into a rock, preserving the impression of the remains and leaving an animal-shaped or plant-shaped hole in the rock. This is a fossil.

## Finding Fossils

Most fossils will remain unfound. They may be buried too deep or be in parts of the world where no one is digging. Many species may have not left any fossils at all. However, scientists have discovered many fossils from around the world and continue to find new ones today. Because of fossils, scientists can continue piecing together the information to learn about ancient organisms.

## Level 1—Right There

- Questions can be answered in one word or one sentence.
- Answers can be found word-for-word in the text.

➤ Who? ➤ Where?  
➤ What? ➤ Why?  
➤ When? ➤ How?

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- Who was Jane Long?
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## Level 2—Putting It Together

- Questions can be answered by looking in the text.
- Answers require one or more sentences.
- To answer the questions, you have to look in more than one place and put information together.

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## Level 3—Making Connections

- Questions cannot be answered by using text alone.
- Answers require you to think about what you just read, what you already know, and how they fit together.
- How is \_\_\_ like (similar to) \_\_\_ ?
- How is \_\_\_ different from \_\_\_ ?
- How is \_\_\_ related to \_\_\_ ?

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# STUDENT LOG FOR SELF-GENERATED QUESTIONS

LEVEL ____	QUESTION 1:		
	Answer:	Provide the evidence! How do you know that?	Page number(s)
LEVEL ____	QUESTION 2:		
	Answer:	Provide the evidence! How do you know that?	Page number(s)
LEVEL ____	QUESTION 3:		
	Answer:	Provide the evidence! How do you know that?	Page number(s)