

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching How to Respond to Questions in Writing

CLASS – VI

Unit Over-view	Rationale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Additional Reading		
		Learning Outcomes	Learning Gaps to be addressed	Related Lessons	Unit Objectives	Introduction	Case Study 1	Activity 1	Case Study 2	Activity 2		Summary	Suggested Questions
<p>Overview of the language skill</p> <p>What the Gunotsav assessment shows us</p>		<p>LO 6.07 : The learner responds to a variety of questions on familiar and unfamiliar texts verbally and in writing.</p>	<p>Sub Area: i. respond to question on familiar texts, in writing. Sub Area: ii. respond to questions on unfamiliar texts, in writing.</p>	<p>Units 3 -Taro's Reward -The Quarrel Unit 4 -An Indian -- American Woman in Space -Beauty Unit 5 -A Different Kind of School -Where Do All the Teachers Go?</p>	<p>In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:</p> <p>⇒ write answers to question from the textbook</p> <p>⇒ take down in writing questions dictated by the teacher</p> <p>⇒ write short texts on their own</p>	<p>What this unit will teach you</p>	<p>Responding to questions in writing</p>	<p>Practising writing skills</p>	<p>Dictation to develop writing skills</p>	<p>Writing sentences from jumbled up words</p>	<p>What you learnt in this unit</p>	<p>Sample Question : Q. The poet says, "Beauty is heard in..." Can you hear beauty? Add a sound that you think is beautiful to the sounds the poet thinks are beautiful. Compare the ideas on beauty of other poets to the notion of beauty portrayed by E-Yeh-Shure in the poem Beauty.</p>	<p>Teaching resources, links & ideas</p> <p>⇒ https://iowareadingresearch.org/ ⇒ http://www.studyit.org.nz/</p>

Overview

In Class VI, students are expected to have learnt how to read and understand short English texts and respond to them in writing. Learning Outcome 6.07, as you know, relates to writing answers to a variety of questions. This means that students should be able to express, in their own words, what they have understood after reading a text. For example, they should be able to write what the main idea of the text is and also how the ideas/points in a text is sequenced (i.e., what comes first, what next, and so on). Students are also expected to write their ideas in correct English, using a good range of vocabulary (words, phrases etc.) and correct punctuation. They should be able to communicate their thoughts and ideas in English clearly.

For this, students need continuous practice in writing, which the teacher can provide through classroom activities that make the children read texts, discuss them and write answers regularly.

Rationale

As per the data related to the recent assessments of Gunotsav 2017 and NAS 2017, it is seen that children are struggling to write. There are problems in their ability to respond to a variety of questions in writing and in sentence formations. To help our learners to attain the expected learning outcomes, we need to analyze their problems and accordingly plan activities to help them practice and improve their English language skills.

Introduction :

My students like to sing English rhymes, read simple texts but they find it difficult to respond to questions in writing. They have problems in forming meaningful and correct sentences. They cannot write correct answers to questions, from both familiar and unfamiliar texts. What can I do to help them write and enjoy their lessons?



One of the most common problems we face in our English classes is making students confident about writing. Sometimes they do not like to write because the words are long, or because they do not understand the meanings. Do your students enjoy writing?

Writing is an important skill for our students. Language learning is incomplete without acquiring writing skills, as writing is an important form of communication. Our students will need to learn to write in English as they grow up, especially for their future academic and professional purposes. As teachers, we need to prepare them to express themselves in English by writing, both inside and outside the classroom.

Writing is meant to be read, so a focus on writing will always integrate a focus on reading. Spelling, handwriting and punctuation are also important. The process of learning to write is a process of thinking accurately with a purpose.

In this unit you will learn about a few purposeful and enjoyable writing activities that you can use in your classroom, so that you can motivate your students to develop the important skill of writing. We will discuss some ways in which we can help students become confident to write by themselves. We will also read about other teachers who have faced similar situations and found solutions to them.

Unit Objectives

In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:

- ★ Write answers to question from the textbook
- ★ take down in writing questions dictated by the teacher
- ★ Write short texts on their own

Let us read about a teacher who tried to encourage his students to respond to questions in writing.

Case Study 1 : Deep Ranjan encourages responses to questions in writing

Deep Ranjan teaches English to Class VI students at a school in Dergaon, Assam. His students were interested in learning English, but they were very reluctant to write, as they were not confident of their writing abilities. Here he describes a class he taught recently:

I kept thinking about ways of motivating my students to read and discuss their lessons so that they develop confidence to write. So I thought of a plan, which was to discuss a lesson in interesting ways before reading, so that they became motivated to read, and would be able to read with more understanding. I hoped this would help them prepare to write answers on questions from the lesson.

I chose the lesson A Day in My School and wrote a short and simple paragraph on the main character. I drew an outline of a man on the blackboard and asked a few questions to get the students thinking, such as 'Who is he?', 'From which chapter is this character?', 'Where does he live?', 'What does he do for a living?' etc. I prompted the students to ask more questions about the man. Then I made them read the short paragraph I had written on the character from the lesson, and make up more questions about the man. They came up with their own ideas such as 'What work does he do?' and 'What does he like?'. They decided that the man was the school cook, Romen, from the story A Day in My School. I urged them to write down their thoughts on the man/character, based on the questions they had come up with.

Some of the sentences that the students wrote were as follows:

"Romen, belonged to a village named Nauboisia."

"Romen worked as a cooked at a school"

"Romen's favourite hobby was to sleep"

"The children in the school loved Romen very much"

The students enjoyed the activity very much and did not even look up when the bell rang! After that, making them read the lesson and write answers to the questions was not very difficult.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Look carefully at the sentences the students wrote about Ramesh. Will your students be able to write such sentences, with your help? What do you think about the clues provided by the teacher, in order to help the students to prepare to write?
- ★ Research shows that children should not be discouraged from writing just because they make mistakes, because only by constant practice they will overcome their mistakes. Do you think Deep Ranjan only got correct English sentences from students? How do you treat your students' mistakes?

Activity 1 : Practising writing skills

As we know, our children have difficulty in responding to questions in writing on familiar text as well. Here is an activity to help students practise their writing skills. The activity is based on Lesson 3.1: Taro's Reward from the NCERT Class VI textbook **Honeysuckle**, but you can choose any lesson.

Choose a portion of a lesson from which you would like the students to discuss questions and answers.

Write down a few questions from that section on the blackboard. Ask your students to note down the questions. Now divide the class into 10 groups. Ask them to read the section of the lesson and discuss the answers to the questions in their groups. Tell them to write down the answers after discussing them in the group.

Some of the kinds of questions you can ask are-

- Q1. Find out the qualities of Taro from the lesson. Do you like these qualities? Why or why not?
- Q2. What do you think of Taro's neighbours from the story?
- Q3. Why did the Emperor reward Taro?
- Q4. Taro is helped by magic. What is the magical thing that happen? Do you believe in magic?

You can write one or two questions which have direct answers in the lesson. Writing these will give the students confidence, because they will only have to copy down exact words from the lesson. Encourage them to write correct spellings and use punctuation marks as they write. Gradually, you can give questions that make the students think.

After they finish writing, encourage the groups to read out their answers to each question, and have a discussion on the answers. Let the students themselves decide which group's answer is best. They can also be asked to help each other make their answers better. Working in groups makes children share responsibility, and makes them less afraid to make mistakes. Helping each other also develops their confidence to write.

As students work through this activity, you can move around the class and help them if they get stuck at a difficult word or sentence.

You can use this group-writing technique for the rest of the lesson. For the next lesson, you can make students read sections and form questions themselves. Groups can then exchange questions and write answers after discussion. This will get students used to reading and writing by themselves. After they have finished, you should discuss the answers, and help them correct their mistakes.

Do remember these points when you give students the activity:

- (i) encourage all the students to read the text and participate in the activity.

- (ii) encourage them to write, even if they make mistakes. You can always correct their mistakes when they submit their answers.

Start by practising the activity with the whole class first, then move them into groups and pairs, and finally, individual work

Case study 2 : Divya Bora uses dictation to develop writing skills

Divya Bora teaches English in a government school where all the students are first-generation school goers. Their English is minimal, and they have no support at home; the parents know little English, and there are no books, magazines or other material in English in their locality.

Divya has to struggle a lot to teach her students basic English words and sentences, so that they can read their English lessons and write answers from them. She tries out different techniques to help the students with English. Here she describes what she did recently to make her students practice writing in English

I read out some words from the lesson and asked them to write them down. When the students handed me their work, I saw that most of them had spelled words like 'rough', 'laughter' and 'matches' as 'raf', 'lafter' 'mases' etc.

My first reaction was to correct these mistakes. But I realised that the students were using their oral knowledge of English to make an attempt to write. I also realised they made such mistakes because they did not read English as much as necessary. They were not able to remember words as 'pictures' as most good readers do.

I wanted to do something to make them more familiar with the shape and spelling of words. I wanted them to read and write English more fluently. So I decided to try out peer dictation.

I put the students in pairs and told them they had to help each other read and write. I took out the lesson The Quarrel and told the students to read after me. I read out the first paragraph slowly, making the students read after me. I told them to underline the difficult words as they read. Once we finished reading, I asked for the difficult words. Some children tried to say the word and others just read out the spelling. Most did not know how to pronounce the words.

I put up all the difficult words on the blackboard and made the children practise saying them. I also showed them how we break up words into syllables when we read, like 'qua-rrel'. I hoped this would help them remember both the pronunciation and spelling of the words.

Then I made each pair dictate half the paragraphs to each other. The first child would have to read her part, and the second child would write it down in his notebook. Then the second child would read out his part of the paragraph, and the first child would write. This was not an easy thing for them, and they made a lot of mistakes while reading and writing. But it was forcing them to look at words and sentences more closely. I knew that with constant practice, the children would be able to recognise the shapes and spellings of words. This would help them to read and write correctly and with speed.

Although it took a lot of time to make students do this activity with the rest of the lesson, I decided the extra time would actually help both the students and me. Soon, the students were becoming better at reading and writing, and slowly they began to write answers themselves.

After the first quarter, I found that my students had greatly developed, and they were now also more eager to learn their English lessons.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How are dictation exercises important for writing skills?
- ★ Do you agree that reading and writing go together? Do you think your students will be able to do this activity like Divya's students did?

Activity 2 : Writing sentences from jumbled up words

Here is an activity to improve your Class VI students' writing skills. You can try it with other classes too. You will need to spend a little time and energy to prepare for this, but it will make students enjoy the activity.

Take a paragraph from a lesson. On small chits of paper, rewrite each sentence from the paragraph, but jumble up the words in each sentence. If the sentence is very long, break it up into sections and then jumble up the words. For example, here is the first paragraph of the lesson "An Indian-American Woman in Space: Kalpana Chawla."

Kalpana Chawla said that she never dreamed, as a child in Karnal, that she would cross the frontiers of space. It was enough that her parents allowed her to attend engineering college after she graduated from Tagore School.

Since the first sentence is long, you can break it up into two parts:

Kalpana Chawla said that she never dreamed, as a child in Karnal that she would cross the frontiers of space.

Jumble up the words in each part and write them down in two chits of paper, like this:
said Kalpana never Chawla that she, as in dreamed a child Karnal
frontiers that space would cross she the of.

Read out the correct paragraph once. Then tell the students they will have to write the sentences in their notebooks by rearranging the words given in the chits. Make the students do it in pairs, as it may not be easy for them.

After they finish writing, get a few students to read out their sentences. With the help of the whole class, discuss the correct sentences. This activity will help the practice their grammar, which will help improve their writing. It will also make them practice spellings, because they will have to write down each sentence correctly.

When the activity is over, get students to read the paragraph from the lesson, and ask comprehension questions on it. Make them write down the answers in their notebooks. They will be able to do it, because they have already practised the sentences from the lesson in the jumbled activity.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Do you think making students rewrite sentences from the lesson will help them improve their grammar, in addition to improving their spelling and handwriting?
- ★ How much time will your students require to do this? Do you think they will enjoy it?
- ★ Why do you think it is more important to make students 'do' activities on the lessons rather than 'telling' them about it? Do you think it helps them remember everything better?

Unit Summary

In this unit you have looked at a few ways to develop the writing skills of students through different case studies and activities. The activities have been designed to improve the students' familiarity with English words and sentences. This is likely to make them more confident to write. You can use the activities as they are given, or design your own. If you have a mobile phone with internet, you can make your students take dictation from an audio recording too. The more practice children have in reading and writing English, the better will be their skills. All this will help them write answers to

questions in the lesson, and also give them confidence in writing applications, paragraphs and other texts.

Additional Reading

Reading 1: Why teach writing?

Language learning is incomplete without writing skills. Developing writing skills enables students to learn how to compose ideas, organize their thoughts and arguments, support key points and share information. Writing encourages students to use their imagination and express their thoughts and feelings. In addition to writing for classroom assignments, students need practice in free or creative writing, so that they can use the new vocabulary and concepts they have learnt, to express their own thoughts and ideas with confidence.

To help children develop their writing skills, they need exercises that give them practice in the mechanics of writing, as well as grammar, vocabulary and function/purpose. The mechanics of writing include the ability to form words, and use space and punctuation correctly. Grammar refers to the ability to correctly use categories like word classes, tense, clause structure etc. while writing. Vocabulary refers to the stock of words and phrases students need to write, so that they can confidently write more than just one or two sentences. Good writing also includes the knowledge of function and purpose. Students need to differentiate between formal (e.g. leave applications) and informal writing (a paragraph on how they spend their holidays), and what words and sentence structures are used in both. Gradually, they should be able to organize their ideas clearly while writing, with a clear beginning, middle and end. Dictation exercises develop the skills of writing and also writing fast. The teacher can give a variety of other activities to improve students' writing skills.

Reading 2 : Tips on "Locating information"

To help students write answers to question for comprehension exercises, here are some tips. Many writers have written about 'strategic reading', and the most important points they say include the following characteristics of strategic readers: (a) They have a purpose or goal for reading, which defines the reading task; (b) They are able to focus on the information required to answer comprehension questions (c) They use their own knowledge to understand the new information they are reading. (d) They consciously check and monitor their comprehension, thinking, and learning Strategic reading is important as it leads to clear and logical writing. If children can be taught strategic reading techniques, their writing skills will improve, because they will become more familiar with words and sentences.

Reading 3 : Understanding the relationship 'question-answer'

Often, when students have trouble answering questions about a text, we assume that they did not read the text or were not paying close attention while reading. This is not true all the time. Students may read or listen with attention, but they may not be sure how to locate information within the text which will help them answer questions. Students need to be taught how to recognize the questions being asked and how to locate the information in the text.

One approach that can help students do this is the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy (Raphael, 1982, 1984). This strategy teaches students how to distinguish the types of questions they are being asked and how to find the answers to those questions.

The Four Types of Questions in the QAR Strategy

- ★ Right There: This is a one-answer question with information clearly given in the text. Students can be taught to look for important words or phrases used in the question to find the answers. Think and Search: This type of question has to be answered using information from within the text, but the information is not clearly located in one spot. The student needs to think and search several sections of the text to find the information and then put them together for the answer.
- ★ Author and Me: Answers to these questions are not found only in the text. Using

information from the text and their own background and experiences, the student has to answer the question.

On My Own : The answer is not found in the text. This type of question requires students to use their background or prior knowledge and own ideas to answer the question. These questions usually make the student think about the lesson - whether they liked it, what did they like about it etc. (<https://iowareadingresearch.org/>)

Additional Reading

Honeysuckle - Textbook in English for class VI (NCERT)

Methods of Teaching English. G. Rama, B.B. Sarojini, Ed. K Venugopal. (Neelkamal Publications)

Tess India Resources

Teaching English: Approaches, Methods and Techniques. N. Krishnaswamy, Lalitha Krishnaswamy. (Macmillan)

Technical Report No. 557 Locating Information in Text: A Focus on Children in the Elementary Grades. Bonnie B. Armbruster, James O. Armstrong. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

Writing Games for School Success. Brent R. Evans.

<https://iowareadingresearch.org/>

<http://www.studyit.org.nz/>

Suggested Questions

Question no.1

Put these sentences from the story "A Different Kind of School", in the right order and write them out in a paragraph. You may refer to the text.

I shall be so glad when today is over.

Having a leg tied up and hopping about on a crutch is almost fun, I guess.

I don't think I'll mind being deaf for a day-at least not much.

But being blind is so frightening.

Only you must tell me about things.

Let's go for a little walk.

The other bad days can't be half as bad as this.

Question no.2

Match the following:

Broke apart	Continued
Streaked over	Rise
Spread across	Broke into pieces
Lifted off	To leave a mark
Blast off	Encouraged
Cheered along	In ship/spacecraft
On board	Continue
Went on	Spread far and wide
Carry on	Be launched by firing of a rocket

Question no.3

In her message to the students of her college, Kalpana Chawla said, " May you have the vision to find the path from dreams to success...Wishing you a great journey". Form pairs, use "May you..." and "I wish you/ Wishing you" to wish your partner good luck and success in (i) a sports event (ii) a quiz or a competition (iii) a test or examination. Write the exchanges in the form of a conversation.

Question no.4

The poet says, "Beauty is heard in..."

Can you hear beauty? Add a sound that you think is beautiful to the sounds the poet thinks are beautiful. Compare the ideas on beauty of other poets to the notion of beauty portrayed by E-Yeh-Shure in the poem Beauty.

Question no.5

Read the poem and answer the following questions:

Where do all the teachers go
When it's four o'clock?
Do they live in houses
And do they wash their socks?

Do they wear pyjamas
And do they watch TV?
And do they pick their noses
The same as you and me?

1. What is the name of the poem and the poet?
2. What is the significance of four o' clock?
3. What is the child curious about?
4. For the child, his teacher is
 - (a) a special person
 - (b) very cruel
 - (c) very kind
 - (d) very talented.
5. What does the phrase pick their noses' mean?
 - (a) Clean their noses with handkerchief
 - (b) Clean their noses with water
 - (c) Hurt their noses with sharp nails
 - (d) Clean their noses with the little finger.
6. What does the word 'watch' mean here?

Question no.6

Read the lines and answer the following questions-

"We hated one another
The afternoon turned black.
Then suddenly my brother
Thumped me on the back,
And said, "Oh, come along!
We can't go on all night-
I was in the wrong."
So he was in the right."

1. The above lines are taken from which poem? Name the poet.
2. What does 'We' here refer to?
3. Explain The afternoon turned black.
4. The quarrel finally ended when
 - (a) the brother went up to his sister, apologized and offered to compromise
 - (b) their parents came from the market
 - (c) the sister offered to compromise
 - (d) their grandparents taught them a lesson.

5. What lesson did they possibly learn?
6. What does the phrase in the extract 'turned black' mean here?

Question no.7

Why- did the magic waterfall disappoint other villagers? What reward did Taro get and from whom?

Question no. 8

Fill in the blanks with words given below-

lonely, little, hard, young thoughtful, delicious, beautiful

A ---- woodcutter lived on a ---- hillside. He was a ----- son who worked ---- but earned ---- money. One day he saw a ---- waterfall hidden behind a rock. He tasted the water and found it ----.

Question no.9

Read the poem and answer the following questions.

The Oak

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Live thy Life
 Young and old,
 Like yon oak,
 Bright in spring,
 Living gold;
 Summer?rich
 And then
 Autumn?changed
 Soberer?hued
 Gold again.
 All his leaves
 Fall'n at length
 Look, he stands,
 Trunk and bough
 Naked strength.

1. What is the main idea of the poem?
2. Which lines of the poem are representative of human youth?
3. Which lines of the poem convey that the oak is steadfast and strong despite the changes that life brings?

Question no.10

1. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow Scientists know many things about the Sun. They know how old it is. The Sun is more than 4½ billion years old. They also know the Sun's size. The Sun may seem small, but that is because it is so far away. It is about 93 million miles (150 million kilometers) away from the Earth. The Sun is so large that the diameter of the Sun is 109 times the Earth's diameter. The Sun also weighs as much as 333,000 Earths. The Sun is the center of our Solar System. Besides the Sun, the Solar System is made up of the planets, moons, asteroid belt, comets, meteors, and other objects.
 - (a) How old is the sun ?
 - (b) Why does the sun seem small ?
 - (c) What is the distance of the sun from the Earth ?

- (d) What is there at the center of the Solar System?
- (e) What is the solar system made up of ?
- (f) Complete the sentence The Sun is so large that the diameter of the Sun is _____.
- (g) What is the opposite of many- _____
- (h) Write one describing words from the passage : _____
- (i) Find out a naming word from the passage - _____
- (j) Give a title to the passage _____

Question no.11

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow

Many years ago, at the foothills of the Kaatskill (Kat-skill) mountains, was a little village. In the village lived a simple, good-natured fellow named Rip Van Winkle. He was a kind neighbour, ready to help anyone. Everyone in the village liked him. The children of the village shouted with joy whenever they saw him because he played with them, he taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories. The only problem with Rip was that he was very lazy. He did no work on his own farm and just idled away his time. His fences were falling to pieces.

- (a) Where was the little village situated?
- (b) What kind of a man was Rip?
- (c) Why did everyone in the village like him?
- (d) Why did the children of the village like him ?
- (e) What was the problem with Rip ?
- (f) What did he do all day long?
- (g) Write the past tense of :- teach - _____ play - _____
- (h) Find out a word from the passage which means - Wasting time away

- (i) Complete the sentence He did no work on his own farm

Question no.12

Use the joining words given below and join the sentences in Column A and B and write complete sentences.

or and so but because

- | A | B |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (i) I can sing well | It was raining |
| (ii) She wore a raincoat | I can't dance at all |
| (iii) We may go to Shimla | He wanted a football for his birthday |
| (iv) He wanted a book for | We may go to Darjeeling |

Question no.13

The word happiness ends in -ness and comes from the word happy. Write three words that end in the same way. Which words do they come from? _____happi ness;

_____happy_____ (i) _____ness;

_____ (ii) _____ness;

Question no.14

Write about the people you like, a game you play, a hobby, a habit you have. You may use the following clues.

I love.....

I like.....

I don't mind.....

I don'tlike.....

I hate.....

Question no.15

Choose two friends in your class who are very different from each other. Use the clues given below to describe their nature. You may also add your own words to describe them.

naughty	lively	studious	friendly	cheerful
sharing	careless	quiet	helpful	regular

Question no.16

- a). Circle the correct spelling
1. blaze / blaise / blasé
 2. turndling / trundling / trungling
 3. strawberry / starberry / strawbarr
 4. closter / clastar / cluster
 5. muhrajā / Maharaja / mahrajā
 6. scraps / sacrap / skrap

- b) Fill in the blanks and complete the words.

1. tem_ ting
2. Ke_ ala 3. team_ ork
4. sha_ ow
5. fun_ iest
6. g_ izzled

- c) Rearrange the jumbled letters to get words.

1. aedzm
2. ayzl
3. gryicn
4. hswero
5. arrbel
6. dhasce

