

UNIT STRUCTURE

Teaching How to Respond to Questions in Writing

CLASS – VI

Unit Overview	Rationale	Unit Outcomes				Methodology Support					Additional Reading		
What this unit is about	Gunotsav / NAS performance	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	Teaching resources, links & ideas
<p>Overview of the language skill</p> <p>What the Gunotsav assessment shows us</p>		<p>LO 6.07 : Responds to a variety of questions on familiar and unfamiliar texts verbally and in writing.</p>	<p>Sub Area: i. Respond to Questions from familiar and unfamiliar texts in writing.</p> <p>Sub Area: ii. Respond to Questions dictated by the teacher in writing.</p>	<p>Unit 6 Who I am</p> <p>The wonderful words</p> <p>Unit 7 Fair play</p> <p>Unit 8 A game of chance</p>	<p>In this unit you will read ways of helping learners to:</p> <p>⇒ Respond to Questions from familiar and unfamiliar texts in writing.</p> <p>⇒ Respond to Questions dictated by the teacher in writing.</p>	<p>What this unit will teach you</p>	<p>Locate information from a passage and write answers</p>	<p>Writing answers to questions from unfamiliar text</p>	<p>Dictation to develop writing skills</p>	<p>Dictation exercise of rhyming words</p>	<p>What you learnt in this unit</p>	<p>Sample Question :</p> <p>1. Choose the sentence with correct punctuation marks.</p> <p>2. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.</p>	<p>⇒honesuckle - textbook in English Class-VI</p> <p>⇒Tess India resources</p>

Overview

This unit discusses strategies and activities that you can use in the classroom to help learners effectively answer, both orally and in writing, questions from class texts as well as other materials from the outside world. There are also two case studies of English teachers, teaching Class VI, who have faced problems of poor writing skills of children and have tried to find ways of encouraging the students to express in their own words what they have understood after reading a text. The case studies and activities will give you some ideas that you can use in that classroom with your students. They will try to address problems relating to writing answers in English grammatically and using a good range of vocabulary with correct spelling and punctuation. In short this unit will discuss the importance of communicating thoughts and ideas in English clearly through continuous practice, which the teacher can provide through classroom activities.

Rationale

As per the results of the recent assessments of Gunotsav 2017 and National Assessment Survey 2017, it is seen that even in Class VI, children struggle while using English to talk or write. They find it difficult to respond to different types of questions, especially in writing. This unit will help you remedy some of these gaps by showing you how to involve your children in writing activities, especially their ability to write answers to questions.

Introduction

My students like to sing English rhymes and read simple texts but they find it difficult to respond to questions in writing. They have problems in forming meaningful and correct sentences. They find it difficult to write appropriate answers to questions, from both their textbook and unfamiliar texts. What can I do to help them write answers and enjoy their lessons?



Writing is an important skill for our students. 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 through writing, both inside and outside the classroom.

One of the most common problems we face in our English classes today 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 of words. This unit discusses ways in which we can help students become confident to write on their own. We will also read about other teachers who have faced similar problems in their classroom and found useful ways to overcome them. Writing is meant to be read, so a focus on writing will always integrate a focus on reading. Spelling, punctuation and expression are also important. The process of learning to write is a process of thinking logically with a purpose.

In this unit you will learn about a few purposeful and enjoyable writing activities that you can use in your classroom to motivate your students to develop their writing skills.

Unit Objectives

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

- ★ respond to questions from familiar and unfamiliar texts, in writing
- ★ compose longer answers through paragraphs

Case study 1 : Meenakshi Thakur encourages students to learn the techniques of good paragraph writing

Ms Meenakshi Thakur joined a local high school in Titabor, as the new English teacher of Class VI. In her first class, she decided not to start a lesson formally. She felt she should start by engaging them in an informal language activity. So she asked the students to speak about the importance of water for all living things. She noticed that only a few of them managed to speak without hesitation. Some couldn't say a single sentence.

To make things easier, she asked them to write down what they wanted to say, so that they could organize their ideas. But she discovered that her students were not good at writing either.

She applied a simple technique to help her students respond better to questions in writing. She wrote a passage on saving water on the blackboard, but with the sentences jumbled up. She read the set of sentences aloud, asked the students to sit in groups of five or six and re-arrange the sentences so that they formed a logically connected paragraph.

When the students had done the work, she asked for their answers, and together, they put the sentences back in a logical order. Then she drew their attention to the words and phrases that helped them to see how each sentence was connected to the other. She also made them notice how the first sentence contained the main idea of the paragraph (i.e. why water is important to the planet) and that the other sentences added more information to the main idea (i.e. what

happens without water, how to save water, and so on). The last sentence, she pointed out, gave a clear ending to the main idea (i.e. why everyone should come together and teach people not to waste water).

To check how much the students had understood the techniques of logical writing, she made them practise writing a paragraph themselves. She made them sit in groups again and write a paragraph of five to six sentences on the advantages of planting trees. After they completed the work, Meenakshi asked each group to exchange their notebook with another group, and give the compositions one of the grades **Very Good, Good** and **Not Bad**. Each group also had to say what they liked most about the paragraph, and what could be improved. The students enjoyed the composition activity, and Meenakshi was surprised to get very intelligent responses about the content, grammar, vocabulary and style of the paragraphs. She quickly jotted down the main points of the discussion on the board, and made the students copy them down in their notebooks for future reference. Meenakshi and the students now look forward to reading both textbook lessons and outside material, and writing compositions on them.
this class.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Do you think discussing and practising paragraph composition can help students write better answers?
- ★ How important is it to teach students writing strategies?
- ★ Do you think reading and writing can develop together through textbook lessons?

Activity 1 : Writing answers to questions from unfamiliar texts

Our children have difficulty in writing answers to questions, particularly from unfamiliar texts. Here is an activity to help students respond to questions from a poem, in writing.

Select a poem, keeping in view the grade and ability of the students and write it on the board. Provide prompts such as pictures before they read the poem, and also have a general discussion on the theme, so that when they read the poem they are able to relate to it. Below is a sample poem on friendship. Before making students read it, you can show flash cards with images on friendship and some short quotations on the theme of 'being friends' and have a general discussion. Then make the students sit in pairs, read the poem together and discuss with their partner what they have understood. Encourage them to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words, and then consult a dictionary to confirm their understanding. After they have read the poem, ask them to look at the questions following the poem.

My Friend

Sometimes I feel all thin inside

Insufficient; small;

I feel when people look at me

They don't see me at all.

I feel that all my beauty's lost

On cold, indifferent eyes

And offering what I want to give

Would only be unwise.

But then a friend will greet me

and my inner life will bloom

It only takes but one kind word

To sweep away the gloom!

Make sure to design questions that help them practise different reading skills such as skimming, scanning, sequencing and reading for detail. Make some questions factual (i.e. relating

to information given in the poem), some inferential (i.e. relating to things that are suggested, but not openly stated) and some others evaluative (i.e. relating to the effect of the poem on the reader: did they like it, did they not, and why). Here are some sample questions:

1. What is this poem about?
2. What does "insufficient" mean?
3. What does "indifferent" mean?
4. Why does the poet feel small?
5. What happens when a friend greets the poet?
6. Do you sometimes feel sad and need a friend to cheer you up? What do you do then?

Remember the following points:

Make the students discuss the answers before they write.

- ★ Teach them to look for the important words in the question that will help them find the answer.
- ★ Encourage them to read their answers to check for correct spellings and punctuation.
- ★ Remind them that their answers should be to the point, and should show what they have understood about the poem.
- ★ You can also let them discuss the possible answers in their own language before they write them in English.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How do you think engaging students in pairs can help them read and understand poems better?
- ★ In what way do you think reading and answering comprehension exercises on poems can enhance students' imagination?
- ★ In what ways does practice in writing answers to comprehension questions develop students' writing skills?

Case Study 2 : Abdul Hussain teaches punctuation through dictation to develop writing skills

Mr Abdul Hussain teaches in a government school in Barpeta. He tries out different techniques to help the students with English. Here he describes what he did recently to make his students practice writing in English.

My students have been learning punctuation, hence as a post learning exercise I decided to give them a task of writing through dictation. I read out a summary of the lesson "A Game of Chance" and asked them to write it down. As I read it out, I did not mention the punctuation marks. When they started writing I noticed most of the students were not able to put correct punctuation marks and some were not able to write complete sentences.

My first reaction was to correct these mistakes. But I realised that the students needed more practise in punctuation and writing. I also realised they made such mistakes because they did not read English as much as needed. Also, they lacked exposure to English spoken with appropriate pauses and pace.

I wanted to do something to make them more familiar with punctuation marks. I wanted them to read and write English correctly. I decided to try out peer dictation, but only after some practice.

I put the students in pairs and told them they had to help each other read and write. I took out the lesson "A Game of Chance" and told the students to read after me. I read out the first paragraph slowly, making sure the students were reading after me. I told them to pay close attention to the punctuation marks as I read the paragraph aloud. Then I made them write down the second paragraph as I read it. I did not tell them the punctuation marks, but used intonation

to make them notice where I paused for a comma or a full stop, or used appropriate voice modulation for other punctuation. When I finished reading, I asked them to look at the paragraph in their textbook and check whether they had marked punctuation correctly.

After the dictation activity, I put up a chart on punctuation marks and made them compose a sentence using each punctuation mark for more practice. I made them read the sentences aloud with appropriate intonation to understand the function of punctuation marks better. I hoped this exercise would help the children to learn to punctuate their writing correctly.

Let's stop and think

- ★ How is dictation important for writing skills?
- ★ Do you think that basic understanding of mechanics of writing must be taught effectively from the very beginning? Why?
- ★ Do you think your students will be able to do this activity and learn to make a punctuation chart for themselves?

Activity 2 : Peer dictation for punctuation practice

Very often we find that our students struggle to read or write connected texts (paragraphs, poems, dialogues etc.) because they do not understand the function of punctuation marks.

Students do not understand the meanings of words or sentences, and even punctuation, when the teacher is always translating or paraphrasing texts to them. One activity that can help students learn to read and write better by themselves is peer dictation. Peer dictation is noisy and takes a bit of time to organize and does not run smoothly at first, but the result is always encouraging.

For this activity, choose a short section from one of the English lessons (one or two short paragraphs) that students can dictate to one another. You can use texts from real life too, but starting with passages from the textbook is a good strategy to help students comprehend the lesson by themselves. Put students in pairs, and make each partner dictate the selected paragraph(s) to each other. The first child will dictate the first paragraph (or half the paragraph if you are using just one paragraph), and the second child will write it down in his/her notebook. Then the second child will read out this part, and the first child will write.

This is not an easy thing for them, and they may make a lot of mistakes while reading and writing. But it is a useful exercise because it forces them to look at the punctuation marks more closely and understand their functions. Children are usually very excited to do things themselves, so even if they make some noise at first, you will be able to train them to speak at a lower volume in subsequent classes. With regular practice, your students will be able to read and write correctly and with speed.

Although it takes a lot of time to make students do peer correction, try doing it with the rest of the lesson. The extra time will actually help both the students and you, because they will get enough practice to read the other lessons faster and with better comprehension.

Let's stop and think

- ★ Do you think making students write sentences with difficult words makes them remember the words better?
- ★ Do you think it would help students if you read out the paragraphs yourself once before giving peer dictation? Would that give your students more confidence to read?

Unit summary

In this unit you have looked at a few ways of developing the writing skills of students through different case studies and activities. Keeping in view the learning outcomes, you can use

the activities to improve the students' ability to respond to different kinds of questions in writing and also their 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, modify them 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 get 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 (Also mentioned in the first phase of OER)

Reading 1 : Why teach writing?

Developing writing skills will enable students to compose and organize their thoughts and arguments in writing. Writing encourages a creative flow that can help students use their imagination, explore ideas and engage in storytelling. In addition to regular writing assignments, it is important to assign "free" or "creative" writing time, so that students can explore vocabulary, concepts, and writing styles.

Writing aims at clear and effective communication. In order to achieve this, the students should be able to employ various mechanics of writing. Students should be able to correctly spell and punctuate. They should understand word-order and sentence structures. They should be able to select topics, organize ideas into paragraphs and use different elements of grammar to form coherent sentences. Emphasis should also be put on developing good handwriting to develop distinctiveness, legibility, simplicity, uniformity, spacing, punctuation, speed and so on. Dictation exercises develop the skills of writing and also that of writing fast.

Writing does not simply involve the mechanical process of translating ideas into visual symbols. While writing the students should remember the purpose, think about the information that will support the purpose and arrange the ideas in a logical sequence, so that each idea/sentence connects tightly to the next. The teacher can use sample texts of various types, such as signboards, notices, advertisements, product labels, magazine and newspaper articles, internet articles and so on, to design activities to develop the students' skill of writing.

Reading 2: Tips on "Locating information"

Before writing the answers to questions for comprehension exercises, here are some tips on locating information that may be taught by the teacher:

- 1.** Skim the passage (read quickly once to get an idea of the general content and layout)
- 2.** Identify the type of question - is it a question that requires a simple Yes/No, or does it require facts? Or is it asking for reasons or personal opinion?
- 3.** Look for key words or information in the question to help you locate the answer in the passage.
- 5.** Scan the passage by reading the paragraphs/stanzas quickly and pausing only at points where key words or information from the question are located
- 7.** When you find the key words/phrases, read the sentences before and after them.
- 8.** Don't spend too long trying to find one answer - you can always come back to it later.

Reading 3: Understanding the relationship between question and answer

Often, when students have trouble answering questions about a text, it is assumed that they did not read the text or were not paying close enough attention while reading. For many students, however, this is not the case. They may have read or listened attentively, but they are just unsure of how to locate information within the text to help them answer the question. Students need to be explicitly taught how to locate information about answers to questions.

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 different types of questions and how to find the answers to those questions.

The Four Types of Questions in the QAR Strategy

- ★ **Right There:** A literal one-answer question with information clearly provided in the text. Readers are prompted to look within the text for key words or phrases used in the question to find the answers. The answers provided will be very similar as there is often one best answer.
- ★ **Think and Search:** This type of question can be answered using information from within the text, but it is not clearly located in one spot. Readers need to think and search several sections of the text to find pieces of information and then piece them together to come up with an answer.
- ★ **Author and Me:** Answers to these questions are not found solely in the text. Using information from the text and their own background and experiences, readers will make inferences to help answer the question. While the answer is not clearly in the text, the reader does need to read the text to fit it all together. The answers will be more varied, as readers are using their own experiences to build their ideas.
- ★ **On My Own :** The answer is not found in the text. This type of question requires readers to use their background or prior knowledge and own ideas to answer the question. The answers provided will be less dependent on the text and more dependent on the reader's experiences and knowledge. There will be a great deal of variance between answers.

How Do I Teach the QAR Strategy to My Students?

With minor adjustments, Question-Answer Relationship instruction can be implemented with all grade levels and across content areas. In early elementary classrooms, teachers may focus on questions provided by the text, the "Right There" and "Think and Search" questions. As students progress and learn to identify the "Right There" and "Think and Search" questions, teachers may introduce strategies to identify "Author and Me" and "On Your Own" questions during the intermediate grades. Students can be taught to identify how to determine if the answer is in the book, or if they need to draw on their own experiences and opinions to answer. Teachers can also spend some time teaching students key identifiers to determine the area in the text from where the answer will come, thus increasing students' understanding of how questions are written and where the answer can be located. (<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/>
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-dictation>
<http://www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/ask-the-experts/methodology-questions/methodology-using-dictation-in-english-language-teaching/146383.article>
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/003368827700800206?journalCode=rela>
<https://www.poliwogplace.com/2017/03/06/how-to-use-sentence-dictation-to-improve-writing/>

Suggested Questions

1. Read the following passage carefully and answer the question:

Plants need sunlight and water to make their own food. You can do an experiment to test if this is

true. Place a bucket over a patch of green grass. After a few days, lift the bucket. You will see that the grass is not as green anymore. If you leave the bucket in place for a week, the grass will become yellow. This happens because the grass cannot make food in the dark. Remove the bucket. In a few days, the grass will start turning green again.

- a) What do plants need to make their own food?
- b) What should you do to find out if this is true?
- c) What is the opposite of remove?
- d) According to the passage, how long does it take for the grass to become yellow?

2. Tick the sentence with correct punctuation marks:

- A) My favourite movie is The Jurassic Park
- B) My favourite movie is the 'Jurassic Park'.
- C) My Favourite Movie is the Jurassic park?
- D) My favourite movie is the Jurassic Park!

3. Choose the sentence with correct punctuation marks:

- A) Monali said, "I have come first in the Race.
- B) Monali said, "I have come First in the race."
- C) Monali said, "I have come first in the race."
- D) Monali said, "I have come first in the race?"

4. Write a paragraph of about eight lines about yourself, using the following points:

- ★ what you want to become
- ★ what you enjoy doing the most
- ★ your role model
- ★ what makes you happy
- ★ what makes you sad.

5. Look at the following phrases and their meanings. Use the phrases to fill in the blanks in the sentences given below-

Set up - put in place or start

Set aside - save or keep for a particular purpose

Set down - write or record

Set out- start on a journey

Set in - begin and seem likely to continue

- a. Why don't you.....your ideas on paper?
- b. A fund has beenfor the soldiers' families.
- c. We should.....a little money every month.
- d. You should buy some woollens before winter.....
- e. Theyon the last stage of their journey.

6. Look at the examples below: they are pairs of opposite words. Now write the word opposite in meaning to each word in the list below.

Example - Old - New; Heavy -Light

- a. Blunt -.....
- b. Forget-.....
- c. Clean -.....
- d. Shallow-.....
- e. Accept -.....

7. "Algu decided to refer the case to the panchayat. For a second time in a few months, preparations for holding the panchayat were made, and both the parties started meeting people seeking their support."

- a. Algu had a case against
 - i. Jumman ii. Jumman's aunt iii. Sahu iv. Jumman's wife
- b. The previous panchayat was held to decide the case between
 - ii. Jumman and his aunt ii. Jumman and Sahu iii. Algu and Jumman
 - iv. Algu and the old lady
- c. The verb form of 'preparation' is
 - i. prepared ii. prepare iii. pare iv. propose
- d. Why was Algu upset over Jumman's nominations as head panch?
- e. What was Jumman's verdict as head panch? How did Algu take it?

8. Notice the use of 'there' in the second sentences of each pair of sentences:
 A huge crowd is at the village fair. There is a huge crowd at the village fair.
 We had many guests at the event. There were many guests at the event.
 Now, rewrite the following sentences beginning each with 'there'.
- a. I can do nothing to help you.
 - b. A man at the door is asking to see you.
 - c. My village has three primary schools.
 - d. That problem has no solution.
 - e. Near my school is a big park.

9. Complete the paragraph by filling the blanks with words given below-

culture calm rows Gods uniform ritual information

Morning assembly is a very important..... It is also a part of the age old.....of our country. Every new work starts with prayers to our.....Students and teachers stand in rows. They sing prayers before starting the day's work. The scene is veryand peaceful. All the students stand in.....in the school assembly. In many schools, some physical training is also given in the morning assembly. Importantis also given to the students by the Principal.

10. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

When the gong sounds ten in the morning and
 I walk to school by our lane,
 Every day I meet the hawker crying, "Bangles,
 Crystal bangles!"
 There is nothing to hurry him on, there is no
 Road he must take, no place he must go to, no
 time when he must take, no place he must go to, no
 time when he must come home.

I wish I were a hawker, spending my day in
 the road, crying, "Bangles, crystal bangles"

- a. Who is the speaker in the poem?
 - b. Who are the people he/she meets?
 - c. What are they doing?
 - d. What are the wishes of the speaker?
11. Listen carefully to the following words that your teacher will read out. In the blank space next to each word, write another word that has the same pronunciation but a different spelling.
- a. Sum
 - b. Sea.....
 - c. Steal.....

- d. Here.....
- e. Which.....
- f. Berth.....
- g. Be.....
- h. Hare.....

12. Write a paragraph from the outline given below-

My Grandmother

Old- yet active -wakes up early-tea-cleans her room-bath-temple prayer-shopping-takes me to bus- helps in studies- loves birds and animals.

13. Makesentences withthe collective nouns given below-

- a. flock
- b. crowd
- c. team
- d. bundle
- e. school

14. Choose two friends in your class who are very different. Use the words given below to describe them in 50 words.

naughty mischievous talkative lazy loud co-operative hard-working shy helpful disciplined generous

15. Look at the pictures below. Write five sentences on any one of the different professions shown in the pictures.

