

Request Strategy for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963*

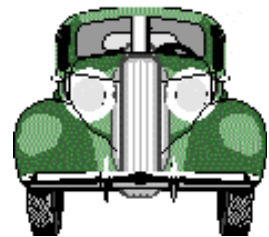
Purpose of the Strategy: This strategy helps students to learn how to create effective questions. This strategy models a questioning technique. Both the teacher and the students silently read a passage in the text, and then alternate taking turns asking and answering questions about the passage. The teacher directs her questions to the students, and the students direct their questions to the teacher. Ultimately, this strategy is designed to help students develop their own questions about a text, acquire a purpose for learning, develop an inquiring attitude toward reading, and develop independent comprehension techniques.

Directions:

1. The teacher and students read the passage from *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963* found on page 204 starting with the fifth paragraph down and ends on page 206.
2. Students begin by reading the first paragraph of the passage.
3. Now the teacher closes her book. The students now have the opportunity to ask the teacher as many questions as they would like about the passage. Their goal is to “stump” the teacher.
4. Next, the students close their books and the teacher asks questions of the students. While students will usually ask more simplistic questions, the teacher models other types of questions that require more thought.

Throughout the student-teacher and teacher-student questioning processes, correct answers are tallied on the chalkboard. Teachers should accept all plausible answers. The process is then continued with subsequent paragraphs as the teacher and the students work their way through the passage. As students improve their abilities in and understanding of the game, they can be divided into teams of three or four students and play the game with each other. With practice and time, students’ questions will improve.

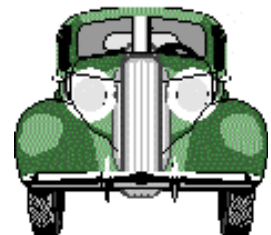
Assessment: The request strategy is a way for students to learn to independently question texts and each other as they read. Discussion of questions allows students to develop a purpose for reading and help them expand their knowledge of concepts. The teacher can also use the request strategy as a way to preview students’ beliefs and knowledge about a subject.



Williams, 2002

Questions for Request Strategy for *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963*

1. If Byron says the Wool Pooh is not real, why does Kenny continue to think it is real (p. 204)?
2. While it has nothing to do with water, what is the Wool Pooh Kenny is referring to (p. 204)?
3. How does Kenny explain that magic exists in the real world (p. 204-205)?
4. How does Kenny describe magic in reference to his brother, Byron (205)?
5. How does Kenny describe magic in reference to his sister, Joey (p. 205)?
6. How does Kenny describe magic in reference to his mother (p. 205)?
7. How does Kenny describe magic in reference to his father (p. 204)?
8. Where has Kenny been spending his time prior to his discussion with Byron (p. 205)?
9. What helps Kenny to decide that things will be all right (p. 205)?
10. What does Kenny think about the world and about life when he decides things can get better (p. 206)?
11. Why does the novel end with its final line (p. 206)?
12. What does the reader think after finishing the novel?
13. Will everything be okay?



Williams, 2002