

MYSTERY ENVELOPES

Hand each group a “mystery envelope.” Inside is an index card with a question for the group to answer. Here are some examples of mystery questions.

Sample Literature Questions

- ☐ What is the single most important word in this chapter? Why?
- ☐ Which character has changed the most so far? Is the change good or bad? What caused this change?
- ☐ What lessons have we learned from a specific character?
- ☐ Which minor character played the most important role in this book? Why?
- ☐ Why did we read this book? Why spend three weeks reading it? What value does it hold for the modern reader?
- ☐ What techniques did the author use in this chapter to hold the readers’ interest?
- ☐ What is the theme of this passage/chapter/book?
- ☐ Why did the author write this passage/chapter/book?
- ☐ Which character is the most (least) believable? Why?
- ☐ Revisit the chapter and search for foreshadowing. Was the foreshadowing obvious or was it well hidden?
- ☐ How does the author use setting to advance the story?

Sample Nonfiction Questions

- ☐ Does the author try to persuade you in any way? How?
- ☐ Can you identify the facts? The opinions?
- ☐ How do statistics and data support the author's perspective?
- ☐ Do you find the author's evidence convincing? Explain.
- ☐ What new information did you learn? How can you apply this information to an issue or problem in today's world?
- ☐ How did this new information change your way of thinking about this subject?
- ☐ What words, phrases, and statements does the author use that caught your attention? Why? How did they make you feel? What did they make you think?
- ☐ Did the author weave opinion and fact statements into the piece? Find examples of each.
- ☐ Were there any photographs, illustrations, charts, graphs, or diagrams that were important? Select two or three and show what you learned from them and explain why you believe each one was important.
- ☐ Did the reading leave you with unanswered questions? What are these?
- ☐ How did you connect to the piece? Was it personal? Was it an issue that affects your community and the world? Explain.

[Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science, and Math: Practical Ways to Weave Comprehension Strategies into Your Content Area Teaching.](#)