

Introduction

Welcome to Module 6 of Working with English Language Learners: A handbook for learning assistants (WELLS).

In this module, you will learn about different types of questions to use with learners that require different levels of thinking.

It is essential to support Emergent Bilingual learners with questioning in these ways:

- **Provide wait time:** Provide plenty of wait time to help learners think about the question and prepare how they want to respond. It is important to also encourage other learners within the group or class setting to practise wait time. Emergent Bilingual learners require more time to process their thinking because they may be translating the question into their heritage language to make sense of it before responding in English.
- **Draw on prior knowledge:** Begin with questions that invite learners to draw on their prior knowledge and experiences. Drawing on prior knowledge supports oral language development and enables learners to make meaningful connections between what they already know and new content. Learners have more to say when they have prior knowledge about the topic.
- **Value learner responses:** Respond to learner contributions by doing more than repeating what they say. Respond to what they say by expanding in ways that demonstrate thoughtful listening, and genuine shared conversations.
- **Extend thinking:** Use follow-up questions to extend on learners' thinking, for example, "Why do you think...?" "What did you hear that made you think...?" "How might you feel...?" "Can you tell me more about that?"

- **Provide opportunities to practise:** Encourage learners to develop questioning skills across different learning situations in both English and their heritage language (i.e., 1-to-1, small group, whole class, homework and study support programmes).

Different types of questions

There are different types of questions including closed and open questions. Closed questions require a 'Yes' or 'No' response, or a factual recall response. Closed questions are useful for teachers and learning assistants to check learners' understanding of content or instructions. For example, "Do you like apples?"

Open questions help learners to develop their own opinions and to consider the opinions of others. There may be more than one answer to a question and learners can think through their ideas in relation to the topic. For example, "What is your favourite fruit and why?"

There are also different types of closed and open questions which can be described as 'Literal', 'Inferred', and 'Applied' level questions. This idea of three levels of questioning draws on Morris & Stewart-Dore's (1984) *Three Level Reading Guide*, which uses statements at three levels of thinking.

- **Literal** questions ask for information that is stated clearly in a text and are sometimes referred to as '**On the Lines**' questions.
- **Inferred** questions ask learners to think about the author's implied meaning within a text which might not be directly stated and are sometimes referred to as '**Between the Lines**' questions. Providing opportunities for learners to draw on their prior knowledge and to use surrounding information helps them to make inferences and predictions. Using modal verbs (verbs which show modality/degrees of obligation or certainty) can help teachers and learners to get to the inferential level. Modal verbs include: *may, might, could, should, would, can, must*.
- **Applied** questions support learners to go '**Beyond the Lines**' to think about applying the big ideas or 'moral of the story' to their own lives by using their own knowledge to generalise, give an opinion, make evaluations and judgements, and provide justification.

The table in Task 1 summarises and provides examples of closed questions, open questions, and literal, inferred and applied questions in relation to the text 'Matariki Breakfast.'

Module 6: Task 1: Creating Questions at Three Levels

Purpose: To become familiar with and use different types of questions across curriculum areas.

Task Instructions: Read 'Matariki Breakfast' and then discuss the different types of questions and the examples. Have a go at creating some of your own three-level questions. Next, read the graph and then discuss the different types of questions and examples. Have a go at creating some of your own three-level questions in a maths context.



Book: 'Matariki Breakfast', by André Ngāpō (2017)

Kara and her mum and dad walked up the path to Aunty's house, carrying kai for the breakfast. It was very early in the morning. The night stars still sparkled above them in the sky.

"Nau mai! Haere mai!" cried Aunty. "Come in, come in." Delicious smells filled the air. The family put their kai in the kitchen and went into the living room. "Happy Matariki!" the whānau called.

"Kia ora," said Koro. "Everyone is here. Time for a story. Wai, come and tell us a Matariki story." "Yes!" said Kara. "Tell us the story of why we have a Matariki breakfast."

"Well," said Wai, "come and sit down, and I will tell you. The Matariki stars will be returning home this morning. And they will be hungry after their long journey. Some people in our iwi tell the story of how Māui and his brothers slowed Tama-nui-te-rā, the sun. Tama-nui-te-rā was so hurt by this that he hid away from everyone. Without Tama-nui-te-rā in the sky, the land grew colder and colder. Winter was born, and the people grew sadder and sadder. They missed the sun. Matariki, the star, was a cousin of Tama-nui-te-rā. Matariki and her six daughters decided to go and find Tama-nui-te-rā and try to bring him back. The seven stars sang to Tama-nui-te-rā and sparkled their light onto him. Tama-nui-te-rā felt the warmth of the music and light. Slowly, he started to heal. Slowly, he came out of hiding."

“The seven stars went away and brought back the sun,” said Kara. “Yes,” said Wai. “Every year, the Matariki stars disappear – and then they come back. When they return, they show us that a new year is starting. The sun will return, and the days will grow longer. The plants will have sunshine to grow, and we will have food to eat. And that is why we have this breakfast together – to celebrate and remember.”

“And to show our aroha to each other,” said Koro. “That’s right,” said Aunty. “And to show our aroha to Matariki and her

daughters, we will go to the lookout and eat our breakfast with them. Come and put on your warm clothes. It’s time to go.”

Up at the lookout on the hill, the Matariki stars were shining. The air was very cold, but the Matariki breakfast was warm and delicious.

Kara looked up at the starry sky. “Happy Matariki,” she whispered.

Creating Questions at Three Levels

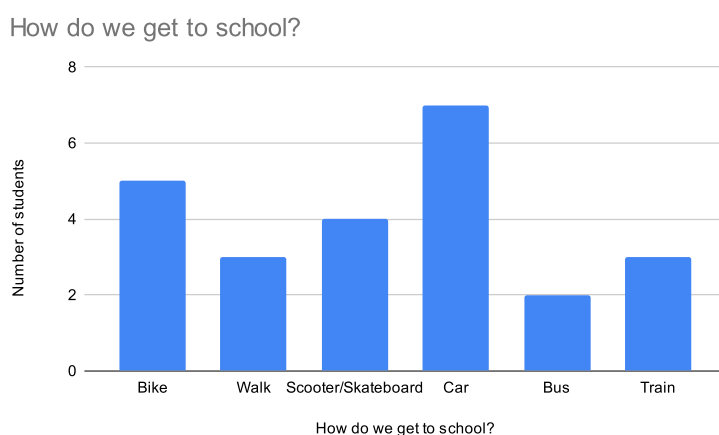
Closed questions	Open questions	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		Literal	Inferred	Applied
Yes or no or factual recall	Questions that have more than one answer	Questions that ask for information clearly stated in the text and are sometimes referred to as ‘On the Lines’ questions	Questions that require learners to ‘read between the lines’ by using surrounding information and their prior knowledge to make inferences or predictions	Questions that invite learners to think ‘beyond the lines’ by using their own knowledge to generalise, give an opinion, make evaluations and judgements, and provide justification
What time of the day did the whānau celebrate Matariki? Did the seven stars bring back Tama-nui-te-rā?	What happens each year when the Matariki stars return? Why did the whānau celebrate Matariki by coming together?	What were some of the ways Matariki and her daughters helped to heal Tama-nui-te-rā? Who was included at the whānau breakfast?	How did the whānau show aroha to one another at the Matariki breakfast? Why might Tama-nui-te-rā have felt brave enough to return?	Do you think Matariki should be a public holiday? Why? Why not? What celebrations or traditions do you observe in your family? Why are they important?
Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?	Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?	Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?	Who... What... Where... When... Why... How... ...might/could/would/ will/should/ can/must?	Do you think...? Is it a good idea...? Can you think of another situation...?

Adapted from Dolton & Smith (1986) and from Morris & Stewart-Dore (1984)

Using literal, inferred, and applied questions in Maths

In a mathematical context, learners can be given opportunities to ask literal, inferred, and applied questions. For example, when conducting surveys, learners may ask literal questions to obtain information and when analysing this information, may have further opportunities to ask inferred and applied questions about the data they have collected.

Example: Surveying class members about 'How we get to school.'



Literal	Inferred	Applied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many people bike to school? • Do more people bike to school or walk to school? • What is the most popular way to get to school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why might going to school in a car be more common? • What might people who catch the bus or train need to do to arrive on time? • How could we encourage more people to walk, bike, scooter, or skateboard to school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a good idea for most people to travel to school by car? Why or why not? • Should there be more public transport options available to people if they don't have cars? • Imagine our neighbourhood in 20 years time, how might the ways we travel change?

Have a go at writing your own literal, inferred and applied questions based on either 'Matariki Breakfast' or the survey results:

Literal:	
Inferred:	
Applied:	

Module 6: Task 2: Categorising Three Levels of Questions

Purpose: To explore examples of questions at three levels (literal, inferred, and applied).

Task Instructions: Read the following text, 'Family Photographs' by Alison Wong, School Journal Level 4, October 2015, then decide which of the following questions are literal/level 1, inferred/level 2, or applied/level 3.

Family Photographs

There are two photographs of my father and his family when he was young. You can tell these photographs are old: they are black and white – and it's not just the style of their clothing but the way they hold themselves, unsmiling, captured in that one long moment when children are not allowed to be children but forever still and emptied of play.

Aotearoa New Zealand, 1929

My father is four years old. He cannot speak English. He has two older brothers and two sisters. The boys wear woollen jackets with short pants; the girls short short-sleeved dresses with fitted bodices. They all wear long socks that wrinkle at the ankles. The older boys wear a tie and a handkerchief folded in their jacket pocket. My father is too young for lace-ups, so he wears shoes with a strap like his sisters.

They are about to return to China. I say *return* even though my father and his siblings were all born in New Zealand. Their grandfather arrived in 1896. He never *returned*.



Canton, China, 1932

My father is seven years old. He has three brothers and two sisters. The brothers wear light cotton jackets with Mandarin collars. They wear loose cotton trousers. Their sisters wear loose cotton dresses that come down well below the knees. None have buttons – their world is held together with loops, with complex Chinese knots.

They are about to return to New Zealand. This is why the photograph has been taken. Who knows what might happen on such a long sea journey?

The family must pay £100 to the New Zealand government. This is the poll tax. This is because the youngest was not born in New Zealand. Because they are Chinese.

A child of two or three is too young to be left behind. Not a child of six or seven. The family will have to work hard. They will have to save. When there is enough money, they will send for my father, for his two elder brothers.

How long will it take?

Alison Wong



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Categorising Three Levels of Questions

Question	Level 1/ Literal	Level 2/ Inferred	Level 3/ Applied
Are sacrifices always worth it if our lives improve? Why/why not?			
How can you tell the photographs are old?			
What might have happened on the journey back to New Zealand?			
Should families always stay together? Why/why not?			
Why might the family be returning to China?			
Why would their clothes in China be different to their clothes in New Zealand?			
How many brothers and how many sisters does the father have?			
How might the family have felt, leaving the father and his two elder brothers in China?			
Why might people move to new countries?			
Why doesn't the father wear lace up shoes?			
How many photographs does the author have of his father and family?			
What might be some reasons people would leave/or return to their home countries?			

Place a tick (✓) to indicate whether each question is literal, inferred, or applied.

Answers:

Level 1 - Literal/On the Lines

1. How many photographs does the author have of his father and family?
2. How can you tell the photographs are old?
3. Why doesn't the father wear lace up shoes?
4. How many brothers and how many sisters does the father have?

Level 2 - Inferred/Between the Lines

1. Why might the family be returning to China?
2. Why would their clothes in China be different to their clothes in New Zealand?
3. What might have happened on the journey back to New Zealand?
4. How might the family have felt, leaving the father and his two elder brothers in China?

Level 3 - Applied/Beyond the Lines

1. Are sacrifices always worth it if our lives improve? Why/why not?
2. Should families always stay together? Why/why not?
3. Why might people move to new countries?
4. What might be some reasons people would leave/or return to their home countries?

Module 6: Task 3: Questioning Dice

Purpose: To recognise and use different levels of questions (literal, inferred, or applied).

Note: You can use the dice net available to create question dice from paper, or, you can purchase dice and stick question starters over the blank or numbered sides.

For this task you will need to prepare two dice:

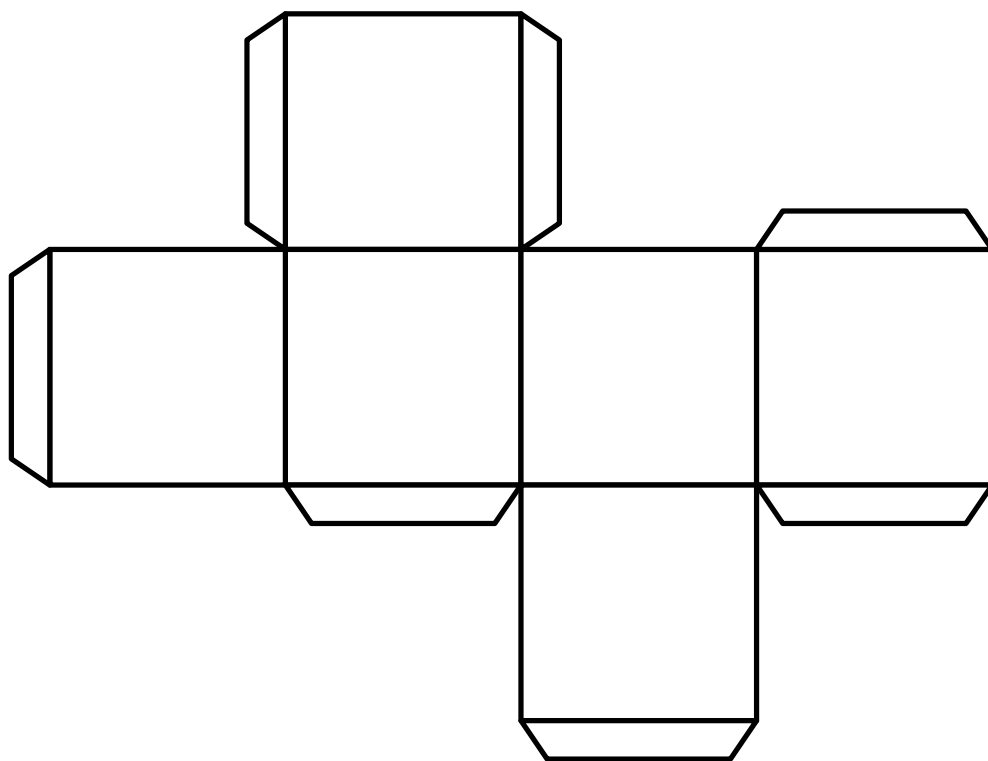
- one with literal level question starters: what, when, who, why, where, how (5W's and an H)
- one with modal verbs to support inferred level question starters (choose from the following): *might, could, would, will, should, can, must.*

Task Instructions:

Think about the text 'Family Photographs' by Alison Wong, School Journal Level 4, October 2015 or use your own text. Take turns to throw the **literal level dice only**, and ask questions beginning with the sentence starter shown on the dice when it lands, for example: what, when, who, why, where, how.

Take turns to throw **both dice** and ask questions using **both question starters**: for example: 'Who should...?', 'Where might...?', 'What can...?' etc.

Try making up applied level questions using the two question dice again, but this time, focus on asking questions that are 'beyond the lines' and which apply the knowledge of the text to a new or different situation.



Recapping Key Vocabulary: Module 6

Term	Definition
Literal questions	Questions that ask for information clearly stated in the text and are sometimes referred to as 'On the Lines' questions
Inferred questions	Questions that require learners to read 'Between the Lines' by using surrounding information and their prior knowledge to make inferences or predictions
Applied questions	Questions that invite learners to think 'Beyond the Lines' by using their own knowledge to generalise, give an opinion, make evaluations and judgements, and provide justification
Wait time	Time when teachers/peers are intentionally silent to give learners time to think about or process information or to respond to a question

Coming Up: Module 7

Module 7 is about supporting learners with reading.

Preparation: Think about what works well when you are supporting learners to read. What do learners need to learn to become good readers?

Resources

Dalton, J., & Smith, D. (1986). *Extending children's special abilities - Strategies for primary classrooms* (pp. 36-37). Ministry of Education.

Ngāpō, A. (2017). *Matariki Breakfast*. Ministry of Education.

Morris, A. & Stewart-Dore, N. (1984). *Learning to learn from text: Effective reading in the content areas*. Addison-Wesley.

Wong, A. (2015). Family Photographs. *School Journal Level 4, October 2015*. Ministry of Education.