Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Determine the purpose of question marks in sentences.
• Identify question marks in sentences.
• Use question marks in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Question Marks (BLM 10)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts (without end punctuation) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Question Marks

Say: All sentences begin with capital letters and end with punctuation marks like periods, exclamation marks, and question marks. Each mark is used at the end of a different type of sentence. Periods end statements. Exclamation marks end sentences that are said with excitement. A question mark comes at the end of a question—a sentence that asks something. Today we’re going to learn about using question marks.

Model Using Question Marks

Display the modeling text (without end punctuation) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud the sentences as if in paragraph form without changing your voice inflection.

Modeling Text

What dessert could be more American than apple pie?
How about chocolate chip cookies?
The sweet, buttery rounds were invented in Massachusetts.

Say: To know what end punctuation these sentences need, I have to decide what kind of sentences they are. The first sentence seems like it needs an answer. Anytime I’m looking for an answer, I ask a question. I need a question mark at the end of this sentence. (Place a question mark at the end of the sentence.) The second sentence starts with the word how. It is asking something. I’ll put a question mark at the end. (Place a question mark at the end of the sentence.) The last sentence tells me a fact about chocolate chip cookies. It doesn’t need an answer, so it’s not a question. I’ll put a period at the end of this statement. Place a period at the end of the sentence.

Say: Now I’ll read the sentences again. I remember that my voice goes up at the end of questions, so the text will sound different this time. Read the sentences aloud with correct intonation.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Question Marks

Display the practice text (without end punctuation) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to work with a partner and read the sentences aloud. First, ask them to read each set without any change in voice. Then invite them to add punctuation marks—question marks or periods—at the end of each sentence.

1. The chocolate chip cookie is part of history.  
   Where does the cookie story begin?  
   For that answer, we need to look in a few places.

2. Why Persia (modern-day Iran)?  
   This was one of the first places where sugar was grown.  
   Persian sweet cakes make their way to Europe.

Practice Text

Share Sentences with Question Marks

Invite students to reread the sentences using appropriate voice inflection. Discuss pairs’ responses. Ask the following questions:

- What end punctuation marks did you use for each sentence?
- How did you decide whether to use a question mark or a period?
- How did you change your voice when you read the sentences with question marks?

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember to use punctuation marks at the end of your sentences. Reading your sentences out loud can help you decide if you’ve used the correct marks. Sentences that are statements end with a period. Sentences that ask a question need a question mark.

If you would like to give students additional practice recognizing and using question marks, have them complete BLM 10.

4. Share

Bring students together. Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 10. Ask students to share what they learned about using question marks.

Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Help beginning ELs understand when a question mark is used to end a sentence. Ask students simple questions and help them form simple statements to answer the questions. **Ask:** Is your shirt blue? Do you have a pencil? Write the questions and answers, showing students how you end each question with a question mark and each statement with a period. Invite students to read the sentences with you and to use appropriate voice inflection.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers for the practice activity. Make sure that students understand the sentences before they begin. Encourage them to use their voices to indicate which sentences are questions.