**Pose Research Questions and Take Notes**

### Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Learn what kinds of questions make good research questions.
- Practice taking brief notes based on a research question.
- Discuss the importance of taking notes that answer the research question.

### Preparation

#### Materials Needed

- Chart paper and markers
- Informational Report Research Chart (BLM 3)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

#### Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the model questions and the modeling and practice texts on chart paper.

Make copies of BLM 3 for your class.

If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.

### 1. Focus

**Explain What Research Questions Are**

*Say:* Before I write a report, I do research. I pose questions, and then I take notes to answer my questions. Today we’ll learn to formulate, or decide upon, good research questions and take notes based on those questions.

### Model Posing Good Research Questions and Taking Notes

Display the model research questions. *Say:* Some research questions are better than others. Let’s look at three questions we could ask about whales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Research Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are whales mammals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What are whales like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do orca whales look like?</td>
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</tbody>
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#### Read question 1. *Say:* This is a narrow research question. If I used this question to guide my research, I wouldn’t get very much information to write about. When you pose questions, do not use narrow questions that lead to one answer.

#### Read question 2. *Say:* Wow, this question is very broad. It could take me a long time to find out everything about whales. My report would be very long.

#### Read question 3. *Say:* This question is useful. I know what information I’m looking for. This is a good research question.

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Model recording notes on BLM 3. Note: Save the filled-in chart to use in the lesson “Organize Information Using Cluster Notes.”

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**Orca Whales**

By Lily Marvin

Page 2. The orca, also called a killer whale, is the largest member of the dolphin family. Orcas live in groups, called pods, of four to thirty members. Their striking black coloring with white patches makes them stand out.

**Research Question:** What do orcas look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title: Orca Whales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Lily Marvin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2 Notes: black with white patches striking coloring</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Informational Report Research Chart (BLM 3)**

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Sample think-aloud. Say: My topic is orcas. My first question is, “What do orcas look like?” I will skim this page to see if I can answer my question.

Read page 2. Say: The first two sentences tell me that orcas are members of the dolphin family and they live in pods. But they don’t tell me what orcas look like. The third sentence, however, tells me that orcas have “striking black coloring with white patches.” That is a good description. I’m going to write this down.

2. Rehearse

Practice Taking Notes Based on a Research Question

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Orcas hunt in packs—they have been called the “wolves of the sea” for their hunting methods. They have up to fifty teeth that are 3–4 inches long. The teeth curve inward and back. This helps orcas catch their prey and then hold the prey in their mouths so the prey cannot escape. Orcas hunt seals, sea lions, fish, and birds.

Practice Text

Invite students to work with a partner to read the practice text and take notes on information that answers the research question: “What do orcas look like?” Remind students to only include the important details.

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

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share their notes. Ask students to discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent research.

Strategies to Support ELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning</strong></td>
<td>Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Intermediate** | Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Provide sentence frames to support their participation; for example:  
* An orca is _____.  
* An orca has _______. |
| **Advanced** | Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. |