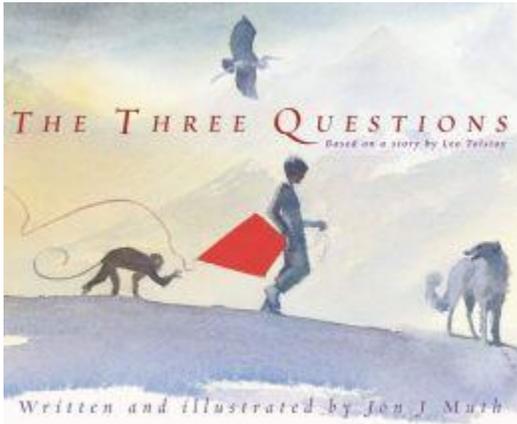


February 2015

Dear Colleagues,

“When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?” These are the three questions that the main character, Nikolai is searching for so that he can be a good person in life. As Nikolai searches for his answers with the help of his friends, he encounters a few situations where his help is needed. It is through his actions where he learns the answers to these three very important questions.



This book is perfect to support your students in understanding this month's Habit of Mind, **Questioning and Posing Problems**. Students can create their own questions to problems and search to find the answers or they can write a list of questions they have for Nikolai or Leo the turtle and then pretend they are the characters as they answer them.

This month the entire school community will focus on one **Common Core Instructional Shift in ELA, Shift 5: Writing from Sources**: Writing needs to **emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument** rather than the format for writing a personal narrative and other forms of decontextualized prompts. While the narrative still has an important role, students also need to develop skills through **written arguments** that **respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments** presented in the texts they read. We will also focus on one **Common Core Reading Standard in Literature, Standard 1**, which states the following:

Pre-K	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about detail(s) in a text.	With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	Ask and answer such questions as <i>who, what, where, when, why, and how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

We are continuing to push our students' thinking by asking higher level questions connected to Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge, using Thinking Maps to organize our thoughts, and increasing our academic vocabulary knowledge. The Teacher Leaders Team worked very hard to put together a list of examples of thinking map activities, higher order thinking questions, and vocabulary words to help support your work.

Thinking Maps	Possible Activities
Circle Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a circle map of all the questions you have about a particular topic. ➤ Create a circle map of ways to be a good person.
Bubble Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a bubble map to describe Nikolai. ➤ Create a bubble map to describe Leo the turtle.
Double Bubble Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a double bubble map to compare and contrast Nikolai and Leo the turtle. ➤ Create a double bubble map to compare and contrast yourself with the character Nikolai.
Tree Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a tree map of the answers to the three questions from the different animals. ➤ Create a tree map of the story elements. ➤ Create a tree map of the situations that needed Nikolai's help and the answers to the 3 questions based on the problem.
Brace Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a brace map to show parts of a turtle. ➤ Create a brace map of a sentence.
Flow Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a flow map of the sequence of events. ➤ Create a flow map of the steps you would take to solve a problem.
Multi-Flow Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a partial multi-flow map with the event, "Nikolai wants to be a good person." ➤ Create a multi-flow map with the event, "helping Leo the turtle dig his garden." ➤ Create a multi-flow map with the event "helping the hurt panda."
Bridge Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create a bridge map with the relating factor "learns". For example, Nikolai learns how to be a good person in <u>The Three Questions</u> as Duncan learns that all the crayons in a crayon box are important in <u>The Day the Crayons Quit</u>.

As we continue our school wide goal of growing our student's academic vocabulary, it is very important that our students gain a strong understanding of the meaning of the words below in different contexts, as well as be able to use them in speaking and in writing. Our hope is that throughout the month you reinforce the meaning of these words, as well as others in the book and have your students engaged in various activities around them.

The Three Questions Vocabulary Words/Phrases		
uncertain	splint	dozing off
cottage	healing	storm raged on
bamboo	deafening	mending
noggin	drenching	

We look forward to seeing the work you do with your students around this book that deepens their understanding of asking and answering questions!

Sincerely,
 Dr. Davidson, Ms. LaPorte, and the Teacher Leaders Team