

**The ASK Program (Authors Specialists and Knowledge)**  
**The Literature Based Interview Process**  
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1. Read the book. For elementary school age students it may be helpful if you read the book to the class while your students read along.
2. Keep a journal. When you have finished reading for the day, you and your students should individually write down your thoughts. It might be a scene that you can identify with, or an idea that you care about. It might be an event that upsets you or a passage that piques your curiosity. Respond to a part of the story that makes you laugh, makes you cry, makes you want to keep reading. Don't summarize a segment, but tell how it makes you feel. Enter the world of voice journaling. Teachers should model journal writing. Find a passage that makes you remember something in your personnel experience. Use the overhead to write your journal and share what in the book triggered that response.
3. Write questions. When you have finished reading the book and made your final journal entries, it will be time to start writing questions. Students should write the chapter and page number that corresponds with each question. By reviewing their journal entries, the students should be able to write questions about those parts of the story that most interested them. If you are working with younger students, we recommend that you have the students write questions every day. The purpose of this exercise is to better understand the story in terms of:
  - what the story is about
  - who the characters are, what they are like
  - where the story takes place
  - how the author sounds or uses words
  - what the broad issues within the book are
4. Show examples. As the teacher, you should also write some questions and show them to the students so that they can see how it should be done. Teachers need to model their thinking process. What prompted you to ask that question?
5. Place the students in pairs and encourage them to select their best four questions. Each pair should select only four questions that will be presented to the class.
6. Conduct a round robin elimination process. When your students have selected their best four questions, ask each group to read their questions to the class. Eliminate duplicate questions among the groups.
7. Revise the questions. When the elimination process is completed, each student should have at least one unique question to ask in the interview. It is okay if the question has been rewritten to include aspects of duplicates that were eliminated.

8. Place the questions in order. Based on the chapter and page number of each question, place the questions in order so that the interview is being conducted, the class and the author are essentially working through the book. You should have more questions than you think you will use.
9. Conduct a practice session. Have each student stand and read his or her question in a confident manner. This is very important. This practice session will prepare the students to interview the author or expert.
10. Conduct the Interview. One the day of the interview, introduce the author/expert to the class. Each student should stand and ask his or her question so that the guest can see and hear the student clearly. Before beginning the interview, ask the guest to repeat the question before answering.
11. Debrief after the interview. Take some time the day after the interview to review and debrief with the students. Ask them what they learned and what they liked about the interview. What were the best questions? Did any answer surprise you? Was your question really answered? Do you have new questions on the topic?
12. Write a letter of thanks to the author/expert. This can be a thank you note or card. The letter should reflect the students' "best" writing. They should be final drafts, not sloppy copies. The letters will reflect on your school, your students, and you.
13. Cross-curricular extensions. Teachers should of course relate the literature selection to other curricular areas they wish to include such as the arts, creative or expository writing, poetry, mathematics, science, sports, social studies, etc.