

# Open-Ended Response Questions

Question: Do you have any tips on answering open-ended questions?

Answer: I do. In a nutshell, here's what I do:

## Teaching them How To Answer a Question (not in writing, but out loud)

1. Have the students practice answering questions about themselves, NOT about stories or written text, using the pick-a-punk dialogue Q&A format. Do these out loud. Have fun with them. I do two a day (just you and a volunteer at the front of the class, in front of everyone, you using the script for "pick-a-punk" and the other person answering the questions) at the beginning of class, and don't tell students that it's even related to testi.

## Teaching Them To Answer A Question About a Story They Already Know (*they prepare it in writing so they can "perform" the dialogue out loud*)

2. Have students write questions about movies they've all seen, using the Generic Questions page for model question templates.

3. Have them write QA12345 scripts to answer their questions, using the pick-a-punk dialogue format, above, and then act out their questions and dialogues.

## Teaching Them How To Answer A Question From a Story They Just Read (*they prepare it in writing so they can "perform" the dialogue out loud*)

4. Have them write questions about stories they read, using the same Generic Questions page.

5. Have them write answers to these questions, and on #1 and #3, use ONLY quotations of text from the stories.

That's what I do. We don't even try to make them insightful or global, just shoot for a 2. The above will get them score points of 2 if they just do that with the questions from the test. In fact, for the first two questions, they can do QA125 and get 2s. I advise all of my students to do this, NOT to write tiny little essays, shooting for 3s. Go for a 2 and move on, saving all that energy for something else, like their composition or lunch.

## Teaching Them How To Craft Their Answer Better

6. Do sentence-combining exercises. Prepare for this by getting one of your own students' score-point-two answers (or the older one I'm sending) from any recent tests and breaking it down into sentence-combining exercises.

7. Hand them out and ask students to combine the sentences better than they are, individually.

8. Compare answers.

9. Look at the student's original answer on the overhead.

10. Repeat this process with another score-point-two question, readied for a sentence-combining exercise.

11. Repeat this process with a score-point-three question.