QAR (Question Answer Response) Strategy:
*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
Pocket Books (New York: 2007)

**PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY**
Raphael (1984, 1986) studied the question-answer relationship, a taxonomy broken into four levels: Right There, Think and Search, the Author and You, and On My Own. This strategy promotes active comprehension of the message of the author and provides students with a way to think about questions and answers. If students are asked to create their own questions, QAR also extends their writing ability. This strategy works well for *A Christmas Carol* in particular because the text can be difficult for students to simply read once and understand what is going on. This strategy helps them to question and examine the text for greater understanding.

**CONTEXT**
This strategy can be used as a during or after reading strategy. In this example, the strategy is used after reading the third stave of the novel. If the students do this during reading, they can come up with questions that are applicable only to certain chapters. At the end of the novel, students will able to create more comprehensive questions by pulling from the entire text.

**DIRECTIONS**
**Step One:**
Introduce the QAR strategy by discussing the different kinds of questions. Discuss the differences between the questions. Post an enlarged chart somewhere around the room so students can refer to it frequently.

- **Right There:** The answer is textually explicit (can be found in the text), usually as a phrase contained within one sentence.

- **Think and Search:** While the answer is in the text, the answer is implicit and the student is required to combine separate sections or chunks of text to answer the question.

- **On Your Own:** Requires students to think about what is already known from their reading and experience (schema and prior knowledge) to formulate an answer.

- **Author and You:** As the answer is not directly stated in the text, the student draws on prior knowledge (schema) and what the author has written to answer the question.
Step Two:
Give the students sample questions to answer in small groups and identify which of the QAR levels they used.

Step Three:
Have students work individually on questions from longer passages.

ASSESSMENT
Growing awareness of how we read specific texts increases comprehension. As students study different sources of information they learn that there are relationships between questions that readers ask and the types of responses that can be given. To continue the assignment, have the students come up with their own sets of questions to turn in and be used at a later date (either as a review or for a formal assessment) or have students complete this as homework.
Passage 1 (p. 71)
“I was only going to say,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can’t help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you? If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that’s something; and I think I shook him yesterday.”

Question: What happens to Scrooge because he chooses to be alone instead of dining with Fred and his wife?
Rationale: This is a right there question. The answer is found directly in the passage.

Passage 2 (pp. 56-57)
But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers’ shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker’s doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

...  
“Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?” asked Scrooge.
“There is. My own.”

Question: The spirit says that the flavor of the torch he carries is his own. Think about the reaction of the people affected by the torch. What does the torch or the flavor of the torch symbolize?
Rationale: This is a think and search question. The passage never states what the torch symbolizes, but the clues in the text help the reader figure out that it is the spirit of Christmas (can expound on that).

Robertson, BYU, 2009
Passage 3 (p. 65)
There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker’s. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit’s torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

Question: Does how much money people have affect how happy they are? Why or why not?
You might think of examples from your life to answer this question.
Rationale: This is an on your own question. The students must use the text to start thinking about this issue, but the answer is their own reaction.

Passage 4 (p. 72)
After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or Catch, I can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge’s niece played well upon the harp; and played among other tunes a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes), which had been familiar to the child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him, came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton’s spade that buried Jacob Marley.

Question: Do you think that music would have been enough to change Scrooge’s character? Why or why not?
Rationale: This is an author and you question. The answer is not explicitly stated in the text, but the reader can use his/her opinion as well as sense the author’s opinion to come up with an answer.
Instructions: In your small groups, answer the questions below.

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