**Black Like Me** by John Howard Griffin  
Signet, 1996  
QAR: Question Answer Response Strategy

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.

CONTEXT

This strategy is meant as a during reading strategy after having read the December 1st diary entry (pages 126-133). This entry alone presents three instances of prejudice, one even being against Griffin, when he is a white man.

DIRECTIONS

With this strategy, you want to particularly guide the students to think of the theme of oppression from racism and what it does to people who feel it. The questions the students will answer on their worksheet are ones that should get them thinking about how racism prevents understanding between the two races, white and black, despite having similar aspects of their lives. This strategy should take one or two days maximum (classes that last about 45-50 minutes). This strategy is used as a building block so that eventually students will be able to come up with their own questions to use as a class discussion about the entire book. This discussion will take place at the end of the unit.

STEP ONE

Introduce the strategy with the worksheet showing the relationship of the Questions to Answers. Post an enlarged chart of this somewhere in the classroom where students can refer to it.

STEP TWO

Create QAR questions from small sections of text (not longer than about five sentences) for each of the four levels. Using these questions, model how each level of the QAR questions can be identified and answered. Discuss the differences between the questions:

Found in the text:

**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.

Found in your head:
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 sated in the text, the student draws on prior knowledge (schema) and what the author has written to answer the question.

STEP 3
Give the students sample questions (such as the ones on the following handout), to answer in small groups, and identify which of the QAR levels they used.

STEP 4
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.

Students will be aware of where to go to find answers to questions. They will understand the type of question that is being asked. Further along during the unit, the students will be able to facilitate their own group discussions by creating their own questions.

SUMMARY AND SEGUE
From this strategy, the students will have learned the kinds of questions that readers ask. Not only will they be able to answer questions, but students will be able to develop their reading strategies throughout the remainder of the novel by knowing what kinds of questions to ask. These questions (as mentioned previously) will be a stepping stone towards a socratic seminar about the entirety of the novel. As you continue through the book with your students, these kinds of questions should continue to be developed and used.
QAR: Question Answer Response
Samples

Passage 1 (page 59):
“A large, pleasant Negro woman smiled at me across the aisle. ‘They’re awful touch on that here. You may not even know you’re looking in a white woman’s direction, but they’ll try to make something out of it,’ she said. ‘If you pass by a picture show, and they’ve got women on the posters outside, don’t look at them either.’

Question: What important advice does Griffin receive from the Negroes on the bus?
Rationale: This is a right there question. The answer is right in the text.

Passage 2 (page 53):
“The bus stopped at the outskirts of town to take on more passengers. Among them was a striking Negro man, tall, slender, elegantly dressed--the ‘Valentino’ type. He wore a mustache and a neatly trimmed Vandyke beard. He walked toward the rear, giving the whites a fawning, almost tender look. His expression twisted to a sneer when he reached the back and surveyed the Negroes.”

Question: What kind of man is this?
Rationale: This is a think and search question. The text does not directly state what social class this man comes from, but with the clues in the book the reader can make guesses as to what social class he comes from or wants people to think he comes from.

Passage 3 (page 56):
“My stomach contracted with uneasiness, certain there would be a fight. I was astonished to see Christophe cut his eyes around to me and wink, as though secretly he were amused. He glared his ‘enemy’ down for some time before turning back to me. ‘I came to sit by you because you’re the only one here that looks like he’s got enough sense to carry on an intelligent conversation.’"

Question: Have you ever been put in a situation like this where you were potentially next one to get in a fight? What did you or would you do?
Rationale: This is an on your own question. The student uses the text to think about an issue, but then respond about he or she would react.

Passage 4 (page 51)
“Once again a ‘hate stare’ drew my attention like a magnet. It came from a middle-aged, heavy set, well-dressed white man. He sat a few yards away, fixing his eyes on me. Nothing can describe the withering horror of this. You feel lost, sick at heart before such unmasked hatred, not so much because it threatens you as because it shows humans in such an inhuman light. You see a kind of insanity, something so obscene the very obscenity of it (rather than its threat) frightens you. . . . I felt like saying: ‘What in God’s name are you doing to yourself?’"
Question: How does “the hate stare” affect the way Griffin feels for the white man? Why?
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.
Answer: 

Type of question:

Passage 2 (page 129):
“Tasting great pity for him. He was obviously lonely and fearful of rejection from the very people he sought to help. But I wondered if he could know how offensive this overweening ‘brotherhood’ demonstration was. Others stood by and watched with frowns of disapproval.”

Question: Is it important to accept others, even those that do not normally accept us? Why or why not?

Answer:

Type of question:
Passage 3 (page 130):
“If I had dared, I would have gone after him and tried to bridge the terrible gap that had come between him and us.
Instead, I walked to the street lamp and wrote in my notebook.
‘We must return to them their lawful rights, assure equality of justice--and then everybody leave everybody else to hell alone. Paternalistic--we show our prejudice in our paternalism--we downgrade their dignity.’"

Question: Does Griffin think that equality of justice is more than just everyone having lawful rights? Why?

Answer:

Type of question:

Passage 4 (page 127):
“Without thinking, I allowed my face to spread to a grin as though overjoyed to serve her. I carried her bags to the bus and received three haughty dimes. I thanked her profusely. Her eyebrows knitted with irritation and she finally waved me away.”

Question: What is this woman's opinion of Griffin when he is a black man?

Answer:

Type of question:
Passage 1 (page 127):
“I took the early afternoon bus for Tuskegee, walked through a Southern town of great beauty and tranquility. The famed Tuskegee Institute was, I learned, out of the city limits. In fact the major portion of the Negro residential area is out of the city limits—put there when the city fathers decided it was the simples way to invalidate the Negro vote in local elections.”

Question: Where is the Tuskegee Institute located?

**Answer:** It is located outside of the city limits.
**Type of question:** right there question.

Passage 2 (page 129):
“I felt great pity for him. He was obviously lonely and fearful of rejection from the very people he sought to help. But I wondered if he could know how offensive this overweening ‘brotherhood’ demonstration was. Others stood by and watched with frowns of disapproval.”

Question: Is it important to accept others, even those that do not normally accept us? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Answers will vary, based on students’ opinions and experiences.
**Type of question:** on your own question.

Passage 3 (page 130):
“If I had dared, I would have gone after him and tried to bridge the terrible gap that had come between him and us.
Instead, I walked to the street lamp and wrote in my notebook.
‘We must return to them their lawful rights, assure equality of justice--and then everybody leave everybody else to hell alone. Paternalistic--we show our prejudice in our paternalism--we downgrade their dignity.’”

Question: Does Griffin think that equality of justice is more than just everyone having lawful rights? Why? (Give specific examples.)

**Answer:** Yes, Griffin thinks that equality is more than just everyone having lawful rights. It is about they way everyone is treated. It means that every one can have a right to sit where ever they want on a bus, and not be told to move because someone else is a more important passenger.
**Type of Question:** author and you question.

Passage 4 (page 127):
“Without thinking, I allowed my face to spread to a grin as though overjoyed to serve her. I carried her bags to the bus and received three haughty dimes. I thanked her profusely. Her eyebrows knitted with irritation and she finally waved me away.”

Question: What is this woman’s opinion of Griffin when he is a black man?

Answer: (Answers may vary.) She looks down on him. She thinks she is better than he is.
Type of Question: think and search question.