

Scaffolding through questioning

As explored in module 3, questioning is a powerful teacher tool. It can be used to both assess and extend pupil understanding. Very skilled teachers will develop pupil understanding by adapting questions to suit learners' needs, either by providing further prompts to help break problems down or further stretch by asking follow-up questions. In order to do this successfully, teachers will use a variety of open and closed questions to guide pupils' thinking.

Module 3 covers a variety of questions styles that extend pupils understanding but how can you adapt your questioning to support pupils who don't give the correct answer?

If a pupil provides an incorrect answer, there are a number of things you can do to support their understanding:

- Reframe the question to simplify it, possibly changing it from an open to a closed question.
- Break the answer or process down into smaller steps by asking more questions.
- Ensure you provide enough wait time between your question and a pupil's response to allow them to process your question and think of their answer.



Over to you!

In this [activity](#), you will be asked to compare and contrast how a teacher responds to a correct and incorrect answer to the same question. You will then be asked to identify how the teacher has reframed and adapted their questioning to stretch pupil understanding or provide greater scaffold. Your answer will not be graded so you will not receive a score, but you can still review feedback.

Hear from a teacher

Scaffolding questioning is a very challenging skill to get right and comes with lots of practise. In a moment, you will be asked to listen to Joseph Craven, Senior Director of English at the Northern Education Trust, talk through how he used scaffolded questioning to support pupils' understanding during a lesson on Macbeth. Before you listen, read [this script](#) which he will refer to throughout.

When you listen to Joseph talk through this example, consider the following questions. You can record your notes in the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook).

- Why does he begin with a closed question?
- How does he support pupils when they don't understand or don't give a full answer?
- How does he increase the challenge to extend pupils' thinking?



Direct link to: [Scaffolding questioning - Joseph Craven, Northern Education Trust](#)

Transcript: [Scaffolding questioning - Joseph Craven, Northern Education Trust](#)

Scaffolding through questioning in action

Choose one video below to watch teachers as they scaffold learning through questioning.

Early years



Direct link: [Scaffolding questioning - Early Years](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Scaffolding Questioning - Early Years](#)

Primary



Direct link to: [Scaffolding questioning - Primary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Scaffolding questioning - Primary](#)

Secondary



Direct link to: [Scaffolding questioning - Primary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Scaffolding questioning - Primary](#)

Specialist



Direct Link: [Scaffolding questioning - Specialist setting](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Scaffolding Questioning - Specialist Setting](#)

[\(this link opens in a new window/tab\)](#)

In the next lesson you teach, consider how you can reframe questions to scaffold and extend pupil understanding.