

Questioning - what is the best strategy? Tell me!

Children with learning difficulties (LD) and autism often have the information you are asking them for, but don't understand the question or how it is being asked. This article will go through some top tips for educators and parents. The list is not exhaustive and are *suggestions*, which have been tested and put together through practice.

- Ask a question, count to ten and wait for an answer - allowing processing time is key, by not allowing processing time it layers the question (language / voice) on top of one another. Imagine listening to a song and then every second the same song starts again, but is layered over the first, think about how hard this would be by the tenth layer, this is visually represented by this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHHwZjX67-M>
- Support the child with a questioning visual cue - expressive and receptive language can be challenging, but particularly the input part (receptive language). Having a visual based around questions or answering questions can be very beneficial. Remember that just because the child is in an older Key Stage does not mean they no longer need a visual to give them a clue. Below is an aided language board, which would enable a non verbal child to request something. They would point at each section, for example: the Question might be, what do you want to eat? And the answer would be pointed to by the pupil.



Give

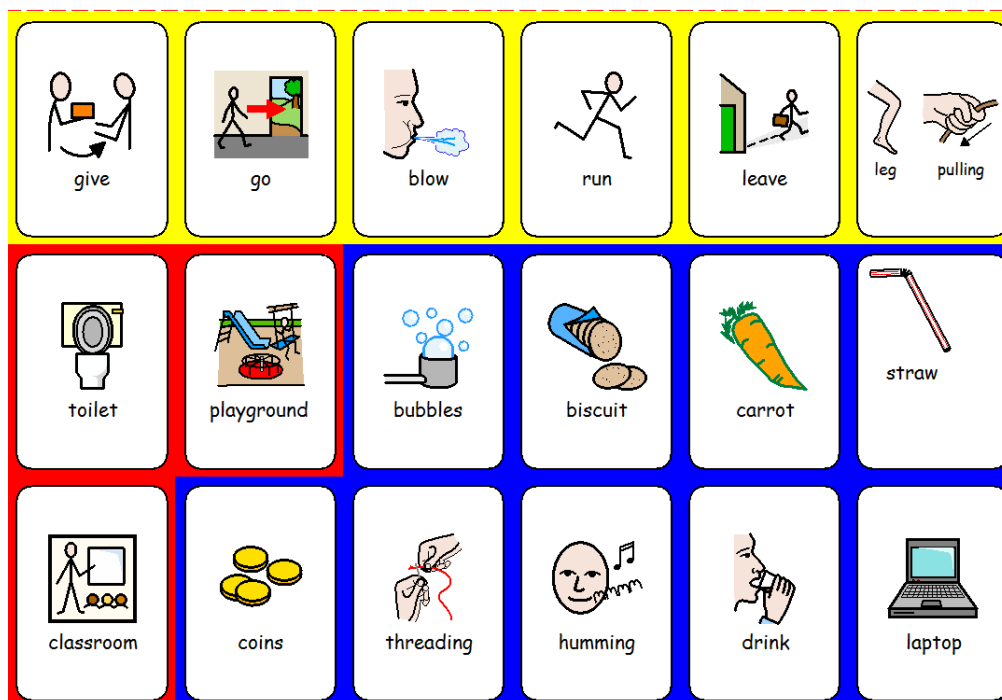
give



Biscuit

biscuit

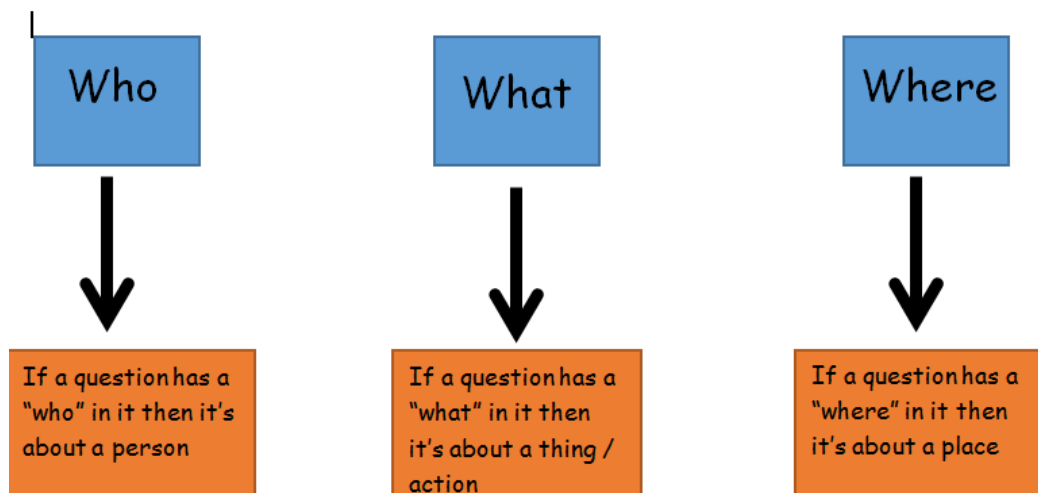
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Alternatively the second visual is for a child in Key Stage 3 or 4 that may be able to understand the question, but isn't sure how to start the answer. This is a specific visual used to demonstrate an example, you would need to personalise it to suit the child's needs.

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The teacher has asked me a question, how can I start to answer?



You can start your answer like this:



When using visuals to support children with LD and autism you must remember that the visuals should be giving clues and not the answer. They should be used to encourage independence. This visual could be a simple yes or no "button" or even just a list of ways to start sentences.



Questions that start with the four W's can be particularly challenging for children with LD and autism. If the child understands, the 4W's then use them to ask questions, if the child finds it difficult try using the TED model of questioning:

Tell me

Explain

Describe

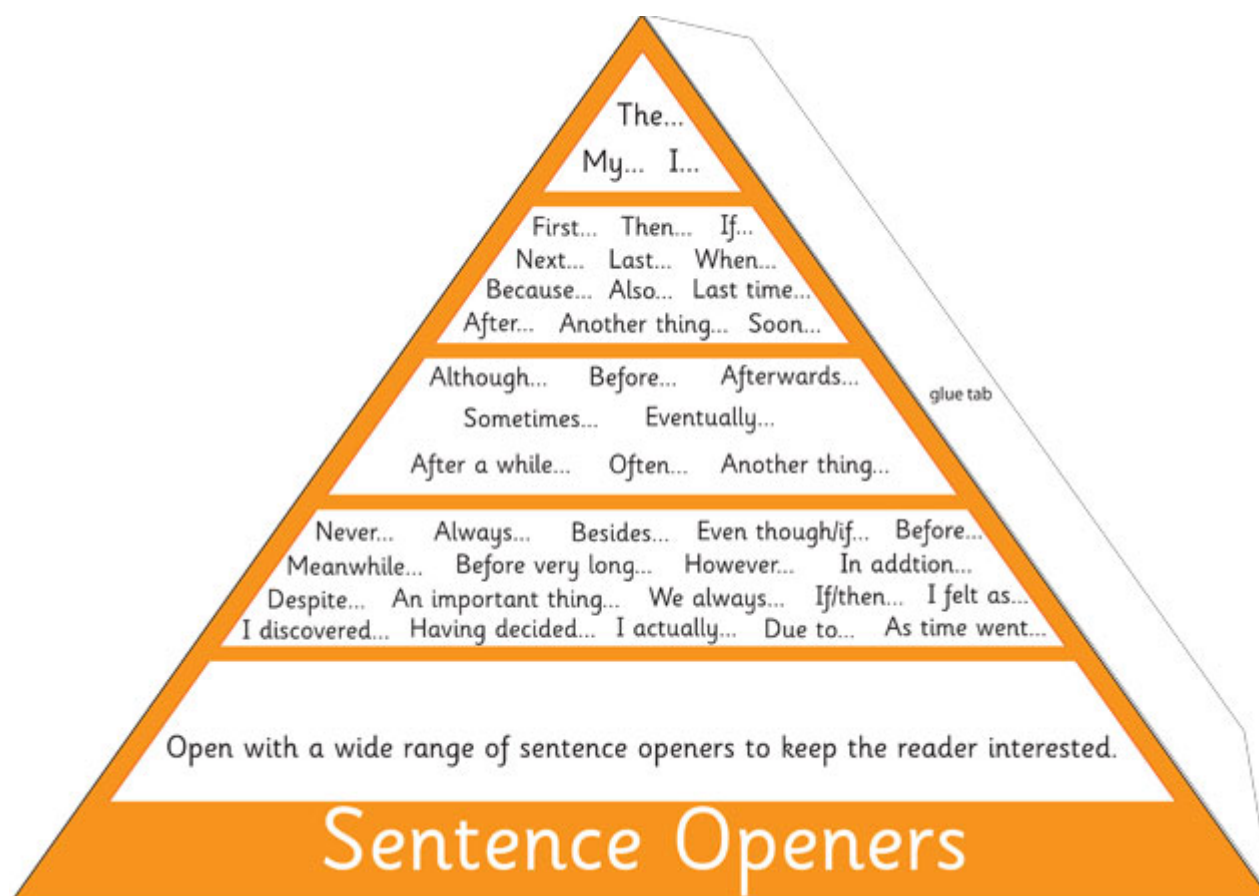
Using this model is a great way to buffer the 4 W's questions and I have found in the past that by using the TED model the child will answer quickly, for example:

(Non TED model)	What is the name of the Greek god of war?
(Ted model)	<i>Tell me</i> the name of the Greek god of war.
(Non TED model)	How did you get to this answer?
(TED model)	<i>Explain</i> to me how you got to this answer?
(Non TED model)	What is your hypothesis for this experiment?
(TED model)	<i>Describe</i> your hypothesis for the experiment.

- Avoid can you/ would you question - for example can you tell me the capital of Scotland may result in the answer, yes I can. This may seem like a brazen answer, but this is simply an answer to question you have asked. Try to refer to the TED model again, ***tell me*** the capital of Scotland.
- Avoid Idioms - by using idioms within a question can cause anxiety and you might find the

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child does not engage. Be very clear with your language and be concise with the question, think about what question you are asking and what response you are looking for.



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