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Please enjoy these guiding questions from *Text-Dependent Questions, Grades K-5*, by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Heather Anderson, and Marisol Thayre. These text-dependent questions will help you get your students started on a deeper reading of Allen Say's *The Sign Painter*.

LEARN MORE about this title, including Features, Table of Contents and Reviews.

THE SIGN PAINTER BY ALLEN SAY

(FICTIONAL NARRATIVE)

Questions for *The Sign Painter* by Allen Say

LEVEL 1

General Understanding

- Why does the young boy pass through the town?
- Do the sign painter and the young boy get along? Describe their relationship.
- Who is the man in the white suit?

Key Details

- Where does this story take place? (Use the pictures and the car to help you.)
- Why do the sign painter and the young boy start working together?
- Does the young boy consider himself to be an artist? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Do you think that the young boy and the sign painter would make a good team, as he says on page 14? Why or why not?
- Is the man in the white suit a dreamer? Why or why not?
- On page 30, the man asks the young boy if the man in the white suit will succeed, and the young boy says that he hopes so. What are they talking about?

LEVEL 2

Vocabulary

- What is a billboard? Where do you see them?
- What is a canvas? What types of surfaces can be used as a canvas?
- Why is the sign painter flushed after receiving the job for 12 billboards?
- What does being a “wage earner” mean?
- What is the mesa that the author refers to on page 24?
- What is the curtain that the author refers to on page 26?

Structure

- Why is the young boy described the way he is at the beginning of the story? What does this tell the reader?
- Explain why the author uses an ellipsis on page 28. What does the ellipsis tell the reader?
- How does the author use punctuation to create mood and/or tone within the text?

Author's Craft

- How does the author describe the envelope being handed to the sign painter? How does this make you feel? Why?
- The author leaves out many details, such as who certain characters are and what things mean, and he provides only portions of conversations. Why does he do this?
- What do the billboards represent?
- Are dreams like clouds? (refer to page 30)

LEVEL 3**Author's Purpose**

- What is the author's message?
- Do the characters follow their dreams? Who does and who doesn't?
- Why is the young boy alone?
- What is the role of the sign painter? Why doesn't he question the job that has been given to him? What does this say about him as a person?
- Does the sign painter follow his dream? Why or why not?
- The houses are empty. What does this mean?
- What is the meaning behind the word *Arrowstar*?

Intertextual Connections

- Talk to a partner about your dreams. Have you ever attempted to achieve one of your dreams? What did you do to achieve your dream? Are you still trying to achieve your dream? What obstacles have you encountered along the way? Who has supported you? Share what your partner said with your table or class.

LEVEL 4**Opinion With Evidence or Argument**

- On page 14, the man asks the boy, "How does it feel to be a wage earner?" The boy replies with, "I am a painter." In turn the man says, "We all have dreams." Throughout the book, what is the significance of dreams and following one's dreams? Who follows their dreams? Who doesn't? What symbolizes a dream in the story?
- Research some people in your family, school, or community. Write a one-page paper about whether or not they have followed their dream(s). What made them successful? What challenges did they encounter? Do they continue to dream and strive to achieve their dreams?

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