



## Using questions to support learning

When a student doesn't answer a question correctly or doesn't answer at all, it is tempting to move onto another child immediately. There are several reasons why your students may not answer your question immediately. It does not always indicate they don't know the answer. Possible reasons include being distracted, not paying attention or listening, or not understanding the question itself. The student may need:

- more time to 'tune in' to your voice
- support to know you are directing the question to them
- the question to be asked in a different, easier way

The following tips are applicable for all students who require support – your skill as an inclusive teacher is to scaffold and ask the questions in such a way that sounds the same as when you speak to their peers.

Support students to pay attention to the important parts of your message by:

1. Always say their name first
2. Remind them to 'listen' – use a nonverbal cue
3. Pause so that the student can 'get ready' to listen
4. Avoid too much 'extra' language  
e.g., *'George, I want you to answer this question, now listen carefully'*
5. Speak slowly
6. Ask the question in a way that the student will understand. This may be different from their classmates



If a student answers the question incorrectly you can scaffold by repeating the question using simpler language. Adjust your tone as you ask the question to emphasise specific words.

Question: Who is the **main** character?

The student doesn't understand...

**main**

**who**

**character**

Introduce a word that the student can understand

Swap it with a 'what' question

Swap it with person/animal/thing

Who is the story about?

What person is the main character?

What person is the main person?

Who is the most important person/boy/girl?

What animal is the main character?

What animal is the main animal?

Who is the star of the story?

Tell me a person...

Who is the BIG person in the story?

T: *Who is in the story?*

S: No response

T: *A bee or a kookaburra?*

Alternatively, provide greater scaffolding by giving the student a **choice** or a **part word prompt** e.g., *"The main character is the koo-"*(pause)

