



Wonder Walls, Wonder Books, and Wonder Boxes

Create structures to hold thinking, make wonder visible, and encourage collaboration with others.

WHY

We build in time to capture and hold kids' wonderings because, again, curiosity is contagious! When we make kids' questions audible and/or visible for all, curiosity spreads unfettered. Kids ask questions and research is not far behind.

WHEN

We launch Wonder Walls with the whole class early in the year, perhaps even on the first day of school. We build in time every week, perhaps 20 minutes a day, for kids to discuss their questions and research them. Maybe it's the last hour of the day on Friday. Some teachers build in an hour a day for this research. In addition, kids also investigate their questions during free time any day of the week. A bit later in September, we bring in our own Wonder Boxes (for younger kids) and our own Wonder Books (for older kids) and model how to use them to hold our thinking, share our questions, and do research. We build in time daily for kids to write in their boxes and books. Teachers often use Wonder Walls in conjunction with Wonder Boxes or Wonder Books for more extended writing and investigation.

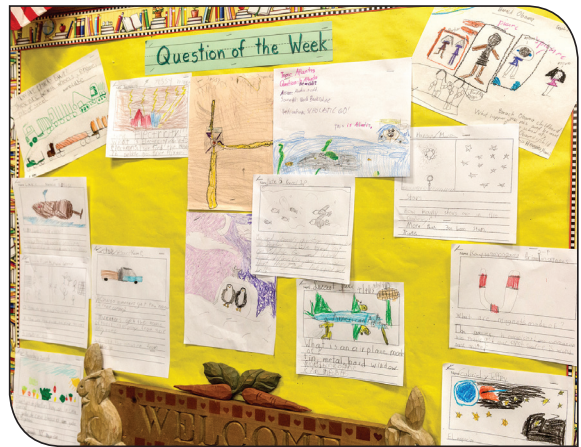
HOW

Wonder Walls. We gather kids together and write questions on sticky notes, placing a few notes on a dedicated wall titled Wonder Wall. After seeing the modeling, we invite kids to jot or draw their own questions on sticky notes and place them on the wall. We review their questions and point out the variety. We look to see if any questions are linked by topic, theme, or issue. If so, we group them together on the wall, perhaps encircling them with yarn

to encourage kids with similar queries to collaborate. Wonder Wall questions fuel classroom conversations. Going forward, Wonder Wall questions may focus on curricular topics and spur research in science or social studies. But we never forget to make time for open wondering throughout the year.

Wonder Books. We keep our own research notebooks that we call Wonder Books. We use our own to model how to use these books so kids can create their own. Wonder Books give us a place to hold our questions, observations, thoughts, and interests. Kids write and/or draw questions they want to research and inquiries they want to pursue—Wonder Books contain questions and inquiries related to topics in the curriculum, as well as anything under the sun that kids are curious about. We assure them that these precious books are theirs alone. We don't value writing over drawing. The books will not be graded. This alleviates pressure on striving readers who are used to feeling judged at every turn. Wonder Books remind strivers that schooling is not merely about evaluating and grading, but is also importantly about learning and expressing one's thoughts, ideas, opinions, and questions. See the lesson "Keeping a Wonder Book" on page 266.

Wonder Boxes. We provide young children with recipe boxes full of index cards and alphabet tabs. They jot down or draw topics that intrigue them and any questions they have. If they wonder about puppies, they write *puppy* on the card along with a question about puppies and place the card behind the P tab. They go on to research their questions and write the information they find on the index card. Whenever we can seamlessly weave the phonemic side of reading into the meaning-making side, our striving readers benefit.



I wonder...

How did the Earth get its name? Was it named after someone? Maybe some of the first people to ever lived named it Earth. There could've been a time where Earth didn't even have a name. Earth might have just been land that people didn't care about enough to name it. Could it be that people just automatically knew that they're living on Earth? Does its name have a meaning in some other language like Latin? There's millions of possibilities for why it's called Earth and I still don't know why.

