Read the book. For elementary school age students it may be helpful if you read the book to the class while your students read along. You can start with a book your class reads every year, a new book, or a classic.

Keep a journal. When you have finished reading for the day, you and your students should individually write down your thoughts. It might be a scene that you can identify with, or an idea that you care about. It might be an event that upsets you or a passage that piques your curiosity. Respond to a part of the story that makes you laugh, makes you cry, makes you want to keep reading. Don't summarize a segment, but tell how it makes you feel. Enter the world of voice journaling. It is very important that the teacher model read, journal, and question writing for their students. Share an entry from your journal. Tell them a question you would ask. Modeling what you expect from your students will help your students in their journal entries. As students journal they should look for connections:

Self to Text: Connects of the text to their life. Have they or someone they know had a similar experience.

Text to Information: Have the students read about this topic previously. Have they seen a movie about this.

Another way to help students with their journal entries is to write some entries as a whole group.

When you have finished reading the book and made your final journal entries, it will be time to start writing questions. Students should write the chapter and page number that corresponds with each question. By reviewing their journal entries, the students should be able to write questions about those parts of the story that most interested them. The purpose of this exercise is to better understand the story. If you are working with younger students you may wish to encourage them to write questions for each journal entry. Also, you may wish to review what types of questions are appropriate.

Show examples. As the teacher, you should also write some questions and show them to the students so that they can see how it should be done. Try to show connections between the text and yourself or real life.

Explain why you are asking the question. What are you trying to learn?

Review the rules for questions.

The answer is not in the book.

The question can not be answered with a yes or no answer.

The questions should start with...

In the book.....

On page......

In chapter....

Place the students in pairs and encourage them to select their best four questions. Each pair should select only four questions that will be presented to the class. They should look for the questions they want to ask and questions they think other students won't ask.

Conduct a round robin elimination process. When your students have selected their best four questions, ask each group to read their questions to the class. Eliminate duplicate questions among the groups. This is a good time for you to indicate which questions need to be edited and which questions are in final form.

Revise the questions. When the elimination process is completed, each student should have at least one unique question to ask in the interview. It is okay if the question has been rewritten to include aspects of duplicates that were eliminated. It is better if each student has three questions if you are connecting with another class. That way if the other class asks the first question, they will have another question to ask for a backup.

Place the questions in order. Based on the chapter and page number of each question, place the questions in order so that the interview is being conducted, the class and the author are essentially working through the book.

Conduct a practice session. Have each student stand and read his or her question in a confident manner. This is very important. This practice session will prepare the students to interview the author or expert. Depending on your distance learning set-up most students will move to a microphone and ask their question. We highly recommend that students not sit on the floor during the interview, auditorium type seating is most appropriate for the students.
**Conduct the Interview.** One the day of the interview, introduce the author/expert to the class. Each student should stand and ask his or her question so that the guest can see and hear the student clearly. The students should remain standing until his/her question is answered, say thank you, and then return to his/her seat. The author or specialist is your guest. You should request that your students dress as if they were expecting an important guest in their home. Also remind students of proper behavior. Sitting up, listening carefully, being attentive, saying thank you, etc. Remember the students will be seen at the other sites (schools) and you want your students to give a good representation of you and your school.

**Debrief after the interview.** Take some time the day after the interview to review and debrief with the students. Ask them what they learned and what they liked about the interview. Some of the interviews may be very emotional. It is important for the students to have time to discuss not only what happened, but how they felt about it. You may want to discuss how your students' questions compared to the other students' questions. What was the best question they heard asked? What questions surprised them the most? What was the worst question and why? What would they like to ask if they could ask another question?

**Write a letter of thanks to the author/specialist.** The last step in the process is having your students write thank you notes to the author or specialist. This could be done in the form of cards, letters, or drawings done as a class or individually. The bottom line of this assignment is teaching the students manners and the value of a “Thank You” that can be an educational lesson in appreciation and letter writing along with enforcing the appreciation for other's time and effort that was given for such an learning experience. And yes, timeliness is always important when writing a thank-you note.

**Cross-curricular extensions.** Teachers should of course relate the literature selection to other curricular areas they wish to include such as the arts, creative or expository writing, poetry, mathematics, science, sports, social studies, etc. Poetry is an excellent way for students to express feelings about emotional topics. Community Projects - topics like the homeless, domestic violence and others are an excellent way to get your students involved in a community project. Be sure to check in the teacher resource notebook you receive with the books to see some lessons, activities, web resources or supplemental information about the author, the book or subject of the book.