

It is inevitable that students will need you when you are unavailable...

If you don't troubleshoot this situation ahead of time, you will have students who:

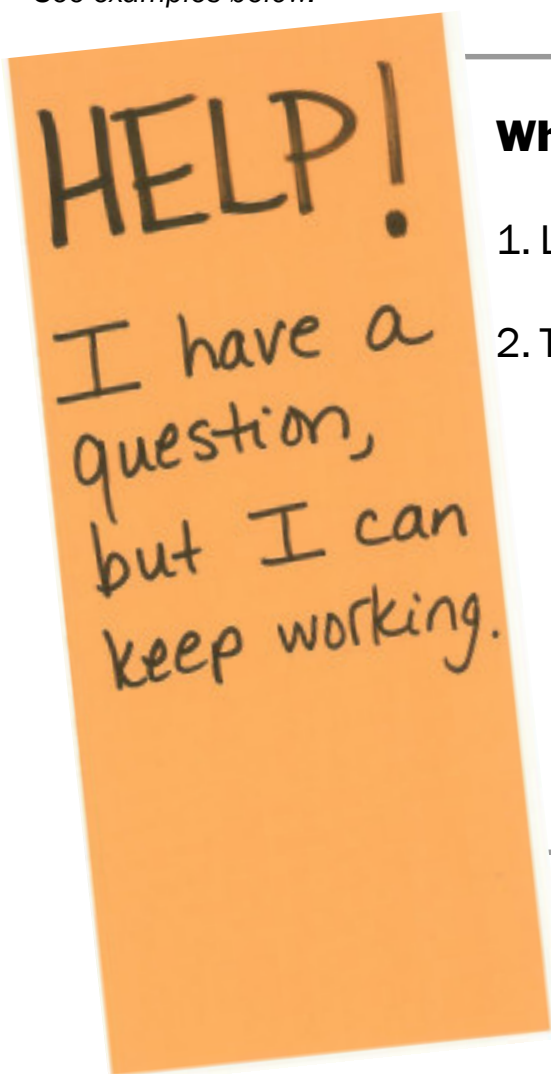
- Follow you around the room
- "Poke" you
- Sit with their hand raised, waiting
- Distract those around them
- Do nothing

There are two goals with this procedural mini-lesson:

- 1) Give students a means of signaling that they have a question.
- 2) Give students a game-plan so they can continue working as writers, despite their questions.

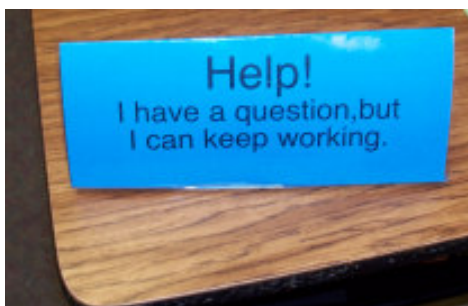
Within the lesson:

- 1) Pass out a Help Strip per student.
 - 2) Brainstorm strategies to keep writing. Put this list on flipchart paper within the room environment.
- See examples below.



What to do when the teacher is busy...

1. Lay a "Help Strip" on your desk.
2. Then, select one or more of the following activities:
 - Skip a couple lines, and keep writing.
 - Start a new writing.
 - Work on an old writing.
 - Quietly ask another writer.
 - Reread what you've written so far. Add three more details.
 - Circle two "dinky" words. Replace them with "WOW" words.



Adaptation:

Fifth grade teacher Sandy Sprunger replaced the Help Strip with a tri-fold tent. The list of "what to do" tasks is on the backside. Each student in her South Adams Middle School classroom has one in his desk for quick access.