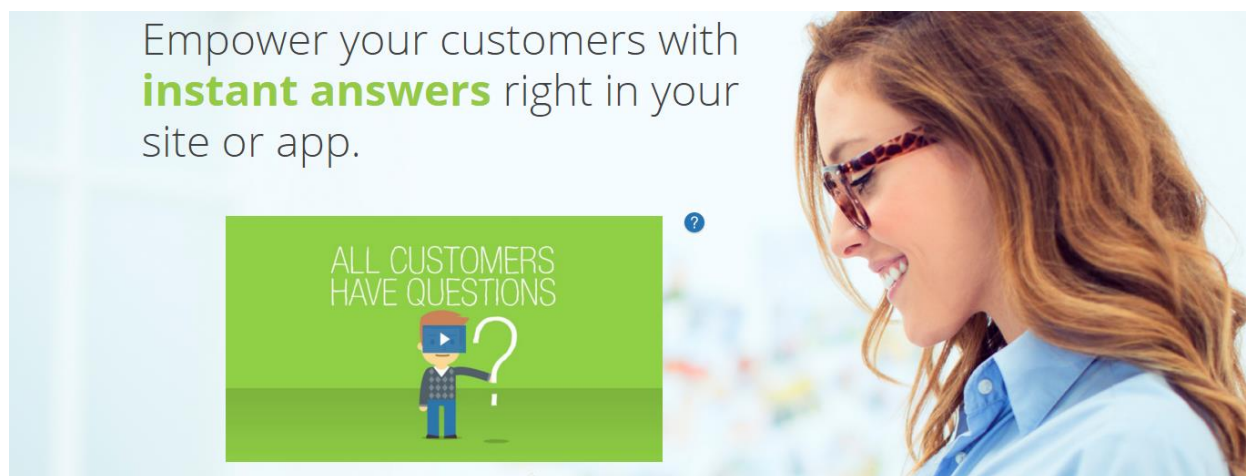




How to Use AnswerMarks for On-Object Contextual Help

In this guide, we describe how to add AnswerMarks to objects on your web pages. AnswerMarks give your users visible targets on which to click to retrieve object-specific Q&A. In the screenshot below, you can see a blue AnswerMark at the top-left corner of the AnswerDash homepage video. Clicking on the blue AnswerMark causes AnswerDash's Object Search algorithm to retrieve Q&A relevant to the video and show it right there on the page.



What Exactly Are AnswerMarks?

AnswerMarks are fully customizable visual targets, by default circles with question marks in them, that give users a place to click to find more information about page objects. Yes, AnswerDash already has Object Search—the ability to place the mouse cursor into a special mode in which *any* page object can be clicked upon for more information.¹ But with AnswerMarks, you can bring the power of Object Search even closer to your users by putting powerful Q&A search capabilities within just one click of the user.

With AnswerMarks, when a user moves his or her mouse cursor over a mark, the page object associated with that mark highlights and a smart tag appears indicating how many object-specific Q&A will be retrieved. When the AnswerMark is clicked, the smart tag expands in place to reveal the Q&A.

As stated above, AnswerMarks are circles by default. Site owners can customize AnswerMarks' size and color. Site owners can also define their own AnswerMarks however they like. They can even use images or text as AnswerMarks. The rest of this guide explains where and how to use AnswerMarks.

Where to Put AnswerMarks

AnswerMarks are useful when placed next to important or complex features of a web page. You should strike a balance between the desire to offer help to users in many places and cluttering the page with marks. But when in doubt, it is better to err on the side of being helpful and adding an AnswerMark than to withhold them from your users. Ask your customer support or product teams which features they think

¹ Object Search is activated by clicking on the pushbutton on the AnswerHub after clicking the AnswerTab.
[See a short video illustrating Object Search in action.](#)




could benefit from having AnswerMarks. Common AnswerMark locations include next to labels, images, input fields, drop-down lists, checkboxes, and other user-selectable options.

AnswerMarks in Code

The following sections show the many ways to use AnswerMarks. We cover seven common code variations and show how they look. Experienced developers will know even more ways they can customize AnswerMarks to their liking, but these examples cover most people's needs.

1. An Inline AnswerMark Using a Scalable Vector Graphic (SVG)

You can add an AnswerMark defined entirely inline as an `<svg>` with a question mark on it using the code below. The following code produces an AnswerMark that looks like this: 

```
<span data-answerdash-mark-target="# target-object-id"
      class="answerdash-mark-circle"
      style="display: none;
            font-size: 20px;
            color: #94C944;
            background-color: rgb(70,70,70);
            vertical-align: top;">
  <svg viewBox="0 0 256 256">
    <g fill="currentColor">
      <path d="M256,128 C256,57.3075485 198.692451,0 128,0 C57.3075485,0 0,57.3075485 0,128 C0,198.692451
        57.3075485,256 128,256 C198.692451,256 256,198.692451 256,128 Z M137.001221,181.773438
        L137.001221,203 L116.693115,203 L116.693115,181.773438 L137.001221,181.773438 Z
        M128.939209,51.1484375 C142.341945,51.1484375 153.074178,54.9753035 161.13623,62.6291504
        C169.198282,70.2829973 173.229248,80.062766 173.229248,91.96875 C173.229248,99.1803746
        171.749527,105.031228 168.790039,109.521484 C165.830552,114.011741 159.860641,120.610959
        150.880127,129.319336 C144.348844,135.646516 140.113779,141.004128 138.174805,145.392334
        C136.23583,149.78054 135.266357,156.260699 135.266357,164.833008 L117.101318,164.833008
        C117.101318,155.104118 118.257882,147.263295 120.571045,141.310303 C122.884208,135.357311
        127.952679,128.536985 135.776611,120.849121 L143.940674,112.787109 C146.389905,110.473947
        148.362867,108.058769 149.859619,105.541504 C152.580987,101.119281 153.94165,96.527042
        153.94165,91.7646484 C153.94165,85.0972974 151.95168,79.3144776 147.97168,74.4160156
        C143.991679,69.5175536 137.40947,67.0683594 128.224854,67.0683594 C116.863143,67.0683594
        109.005311,71.2864162 104.651123,79.7226562 C102.201892,84.4170157 100.807212,91.1863165
        100.467041,100.030762 L82.302002,100.030762 C82.302002,85.3353757 86.4520256,73.5146118
        94.7521973,64.5681152 C103.052369,55.6216187 114.447926,51.1484375 128.939209,51.1484375 Z">
      </path>
    </g>
  </svg>
</span>
```

The `` utilizes the following attributes:

- `data-answerdash-mark-target`: This required attribute must be set to the id of the object to which the AnswerMark applies. For example, if the AnswerMark applies to an image, the image element might be written as `` and then this attribute would be set as `data-answerdash-mark-target="#logo"`.
- `class="answerdash-mark-circle"`: This class attribute is required when using the default AnswerMark circle design.
- `display: none`: This style setting initially hides the AnswerMark until AnswerDash loads. AnswerDash then forces the AnswerMark to show. That way, if AnswerDash were to fail to load, the AnswerMark will not show.



- font-size: This style setting governs the overall size of the AnswerMark.
- color: This style setting, despite its name, sets the background color for this type of AnswerMark. In the above example, #94C944 sets the dark green color of the mark.
- background-color: This style setting, because of the way this type of AnswerMark is defined, corresponds to the color of the question-mark symbol. (The question-mark is not a text glyph but is drawn via the <path> contained within the <svg>. The background-color entry sets that <path>'s color.)
- vertical-align: top: This style setting is optional but often used to place an AnswerMark to the top-right of its corresponding object.


The <svg>, <g>, and <path> elements are required for this type of AnswerMark. Of course, other <path>s can be generated to create scalable characters like the question-mark. Tools exist that can generate the <path> code as desired.

2. An SVG AnswerMark with Centrally Defined Colors and Path

It is generally good practice to use a consistent look for all of the AnswerMarks on a page. It is therefore better to define the colors and <path> for every AnswerMark only once, in just one place. To begin, the following code would be written only once on a page.

```
<style>
  .answerdash-mark-circle {
    background-color: #FFFFFF;
  }
  .answerdash-mark-circle svg {
    fill: #2774B3;
  }
</style>
<div style="display: none;">
  <svg>
    <g id="answerdash-mark-icon">
      <path d="M256,128 C256,57.3075485 198.692451,0 128,0 C57.3075485,0 0,57.3075485 0,128 C0,198.692451
57.3075485,256 128,256 C198.692451,256 256,198.692451 256,128 Z M137.001221,181.773438
L137.001221,203 L116.693115,203 L116.693115,181.773438 L137.001221,181.773438 Z
M128.939209,51.1484375 C142.341945,51.1484375 153.074178,54.9753035 161.13623,62.6291504
C169.198282,70.2829973 173.229248,80.062766 173.229248,91.96875 C173.229248,99.1803746
171.749527,105.031228 168.790039,109.521484 C165.830552,114.011741 159.860641,120.610959
150.880127,129.319336 C144.348844,135.646516 140.113779,141.004128 138.174805,145.392334
C136.23583,149.78054 135.266357,156.260699 135.266357,164.833008 L117.101318,164.833008
C117.101318,155.104118 118.257882,147.263295 120.571045,141.310303 C122.884208,135.357311
127.952679,128.536985 135.776611,120.849121 L143.940674,112.787109 C146.389905,110.473947
148.362867,108.058769 149.859619,105.541504 C152.580987,101.119281 153.94165,96.527042
153.94165,91.7646484 C153.94165,85.0972974 151.95168,79.3144776 147.97168,74.4160156
C143.991679,69.5175536 137.40947,67.0683594 128.224854,67.0683594 C116.863143,67.0683594
109.005311,71.2864162 104.651123,79.7226562 C102.201892,84.4170157 100.807212,91.1863165
100.467041,100.030762 L82.302002,100.030762 C82.302002,85.3353757 86.4520256,73.5146118
94.7521973,64.5681152 C103.052369,55.6216187 114.447926,51.1484375 128.939209,51.1484375 Z">
    </path>
  </g>
</svg>
</div>
```




The `<style>` block defines the question-mark color using `background-color` and the AnswerMark color using `fill`. The `<div>` defines the `<svg>` as in the first AnswerMark type but now uses an id of `answerdash-mark-icon` for to the `<g>` element. Next, that id is used when we place each AnswerMark on the page. In this case, the AnswerMarks  look like this:

```
<span data-answerdash-mark-target="# target-object-id"
      class="answerdash-mark-circle"
      style="display: none;
            font-size: 20px;
            vertical-align: top;">
  <svg viewBox="0 0 256 256">
    <use xlink:href="#answerdash-mark-icon" />
  </svg>
</span>
```

The `<use>` element imports the centralized AnswerMark definition in just one line. By having defined the AnswerMark in one place, the code needed for each AnswerMark placement is now much less than for the first AnswerMark type.


3. An SVG AnswerMark with a Centrally Defined Path but Locally Defined Colors

What if you want to use a centrally defined `<path>` and colors but have an individual AnswerMark whose colors you would like to locally customize? No problem. You can still centrally define the mark as in the second AnswerMark type, above, but locally define the colors used for your particular mark. The code below makes  a mark that looks like this:

```
<span data-answerdash-mark-target="# target-object-id"
      class="answerdash-mark-circle"
      style="display: none;
            font-size: 20px;
            vertical-align: top;
            background-color: white;">
  <svg viewBox="0 0 256 256" style="fill: red;">
    <use xlink:href="#answerdash-mark-icon" />
  </svg>
</span>
```

The `background-color: white` style is applied to the `` to set the color of the question-mark. The `fill: red` style is applied to the `<svg>` to set the color of the AnswerMark. These settings override the centrally defined colors in the `<style>` block.

4. An AnswerMark Whose Label Is an Image


So far, we have seen AnswerMarks whose labels have been a `<path>` that traces out a question-mark. But AnswerMarks can have images as labels, too. The code below defines an AnswerMark entirely inline with an `` for its label. The  AnswerMark looks like this:



```
<span data-answerdash-mark-target="# target-object-id"
      class="answerdash-mark-circle"
      style="display: none;
            font-size: 30px;
            background-color: #94C944;
            vertical-align: top;">
  
</span>
```

In the style settings for the ``, we set the width to be 80% so that the `cow.png` image is smaller than the AnswerMark on which it resides. Setting height to auto ensures the image will maintain its aspect ratio when scaled. Setting the margin to auto and the top, bottom, left, and right values to zero causes the image to be centered on the AnswerMark. Note that unlike AnswerMark types 1-3, now that we are no longer using an `<svg>`, the background-color style setting on the `` governs the fill color of the AnswerMark.


5. An AnswerMark Whose Label Is A Text Glyph

You can use a text character as a label for an AnswerMark. The code below produces an AnswerMark entirely inline with a bold inverted question-mark (`¿`) as its label. The AnswerMark looks like  this:

```
<span data-answerdash-mark-target="# target-object-id"
      class="answerdash-mark-circle"
      style="display: none;
            font-size: 20px;
            font-weight: bold;
            color: blue;
            background-color: yellow;
            vertical-align: top;">
  &iquest;
</span>
```

Note how the inverted question-mark does not look quite centered in the AnswerMark. That is because text glyphs are rendered in different positions with respect to a text baseline. It is for this reason that asterisks and quotation marks are high, commas and periods are low, and so forth. This issue is why AnswerMark types 1-3 defined their question-mark as a drawn `<path>` rather than as a text glyph. Doing so guaranteed their question-mark symbol to look centered. You can experiment with various text glyphs to see which ones look good in AnswerMarks of this type.

6. An AnswerMark That Itself Is an Image

Perhaps you do not want a circular AnswerMark at all. Perhaps you have an image that you want to be a mark, not just a mark's label. You indeed can use an `` to be the AnswerMark itself. Note, however, that some of the visual feedback that occurred for AnswerMarks 1-5 when a mark is hovered or clicked will not occur when an AnswerMark is an ``. This feedback includes the AnswerMark growing and becoming outlined when clicked. The code below  reuses our `cow.png` image as an AnswerMark:



```

```

7. An AnswerMark That Itself Is Text

Just as we can make an AnswerMark from an image, we can also make an AnswerMark from text. We do this with [What's this?](#) an anchor element `<a>`, a common element to use when making a “What’s this?” link that offers more explanation for a nearby object. The code below creates just such a link, which can, for example, be placed next to input fields to offer helpful Q&A about them. The rendered link looks like this:

```
<a data-answerdash-mark-target="# target-object-id"
  style="display: none;
        font-size: 9pt;
        color: blue;">
  What's this?
</a>
```

Clearly, AnswerMarks offer a great deal of flexibility and power. They give you control and give your users quick access to helpful Q&A with just one click. Putting AnswerMarks on your page is a great way to help your users accomplish their goals on your site.

Happy marking!