

CLOSE READING



CLOSE READING STRATEGIES FOR ACCESSING COMPLEX TEXTS

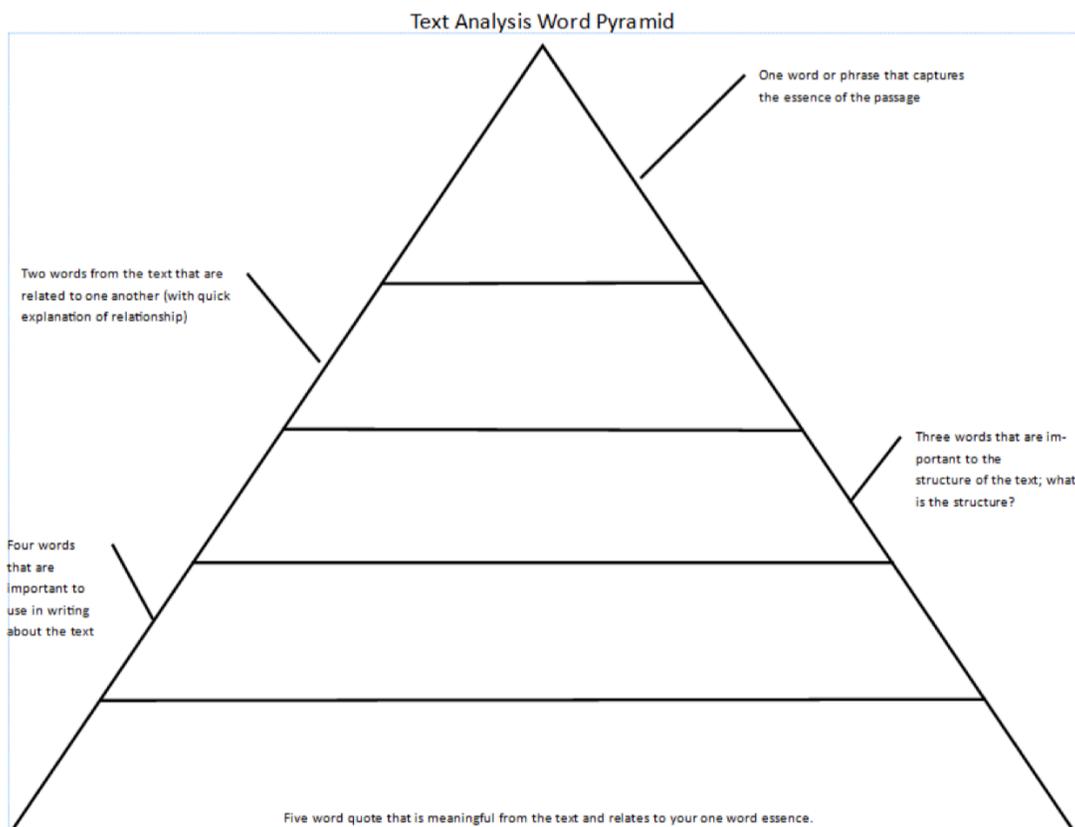
TEXT ANALYSIS WORD PYRAMID

To help students begin to see that they can make sense of the text even if they struggle reading every word, focus on the basic level of the reading— words. This TEXT ANALYSIS WORD PYRAMID strategy asks students to focus on words and pull them out for a graphic organizer as they read. Because the graphic is just a pyramid (triangle with four horizontal lines), it can be replicated on scratch paper by students at any time and does not require a pre-made organizer. When we ask students to pull out words from a text, we are helping them understand the analysis that happens when we use close reading—breaking down a text into smaller parts (e.g. words) to tie to a whole (e.g. style). In this strategy students are looking for fifteen words/phrases for specific reasons, i.e. looking for parts (words) to tie to a whole (relationships, structure, overall essence/meaning/theme). Here are the five words/phrases the pyramid asks students to find:

- One word or phrase that captures the essence of the passage**
- Two words from the text that are related to one another (with quick explanation of relationship)**
- Three words that are important to the structure of the text; what is the structure?**
- Four words that are important to use in writing about the text**
- Five word quotation that is meaningful from the text and relates to the One word essence**

Notice how each of the categories directs students to possible areas for discussion, writing, or standardized test questions. The strategy is simple, but has the potential to help students discuss and write about complex text. It lends itself especially well to informational texts.

You can see an example of the organizer (TEXT ANALYSIS WORD PYRAMID) at the ELA Strand Resources Quick Link under Reading Resources on the ELA 6-12 Webpage and below.



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QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL

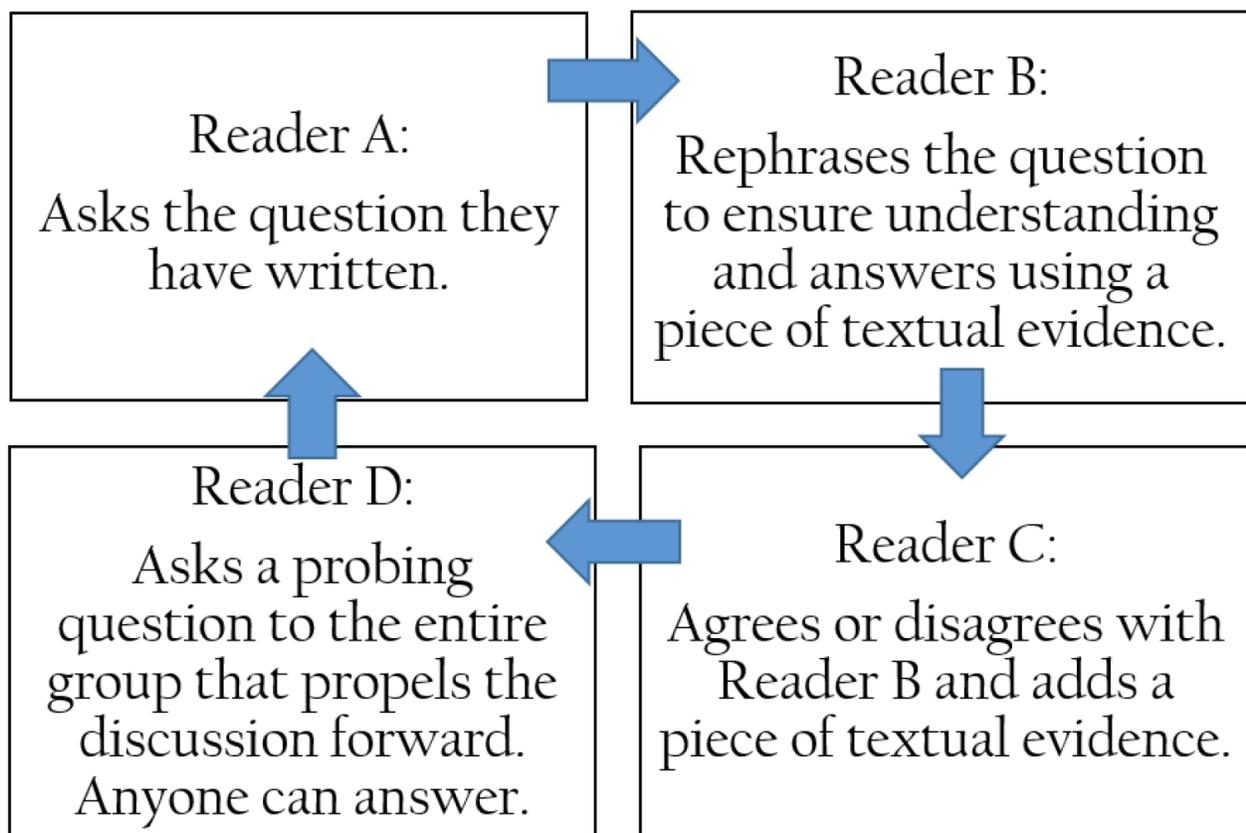
As accomplished readers, we know that there is thinking and questioning that happens while we read. For struggling readers, sometimes just pronouncing words takes their thinking/questioning focus and they do not replicate the types of thinking and questioning that lead to comprehension. Giving them an arsenal of question stems to guide their thinking can elevate the meaning they get from a text and their ability to talk and write about it. One tool that does this in a non-threatening, almost game-like way is the QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL. Here are the steps in the protocol that can be used with any text.

- **Separate the class into groups of four readers (A, B, C, D).** This step allows for flexible groupings that teachers can use to their advantage, such as placing some struggling and some better readers in the same group.
- **Provide students with the handout (next two pages) that includes the Questions Quad Graphic, Question Quad Stems, and the Possible Question Quad Probes.** The Question Quad Graphic will remain the same with all texts, but teachers can vary the Stems and Probes based upon the text. However, it may be helpful to use the same stems and probes for several readings to help students add those questioning tools to their knowledge-base. That way, they can use them on future texts, where they struggle with simply reading and do not activate comprehension questioning during reading. Think about having a set of Stems for Literary Text and a set for Informational Text.
- **Ask each student to pick one of the Question Quad Stems and write two questions about the text using the stem. Readers write two different questions in case someone who asks a question before them has written something similar.** This helps the protocol seem innocuous. Students are given a choice of stems and know that during the upcoming discussion, they have a back-up. It allows them to prepare before discussing and not be put on the spot. They are able to ask questions for which they don't know the answer.
- **Students decide who will be A, B, C, and D. Then, they follow the roles given on the Question Quads Graphic (next page). Reader A asks a question they have written, Reader B rephrases the question for understanding and provides an answer using textual evidence, Reader C agrees or disagrees and provides textual evidence, Reader D uses the Possible Question Quad Probes to extend the conversation to all Readers in the quad. There is a 90 second limit to Reader D's part of the conversation and each Reader A-D should participate.** This step builds in many scaffolds to understanding. The students rely on each other and the text for discussion. They are playing "roles" which makes the activity more game-like and allows students to engage in analysis and text-dependent questioning/answering in a non-threatening way. The entire group is involved in answering the questions. By choosing Stems and Probes that address items/topics frequently seen on standardized tests, such as AIR, students become familiar with the thinking that needs to happen when they read and answer questions on those tests.
- **Repeat the previous step three more times, changing Reader roles. Reader A will become Reader B, Reader B will become Reader C, Reader C will become Reader D, and Reader D will become Reader A.** By repeating

You can get the QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL at the at the ELA Strand Resources Quick Link under Reading Resources on the ELA 6-12 Webpage and below.

QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL

- Separate the class into groups of four readers (A, B, C, D).
 - Provide students with this handout that includes the Questions Quad Graphic, Question Quad Stems, and the Possible Question Quad Probes.
 - Ask each student to pick one of the Question Quad Stems and write two questions about the text using the stem. Readers write two different questions in case someone who asks a question before them has written something similar.
 - Students decide who will be A, B, C, and D. Then, they follow the roles given on the Question Quads Graphic below. Reader A asks a question they have written, Reader B rephrases the question for understanding and provides an answer using textual evidence, Reader C agrees or disagrees and provides textual evidence, Reader D uses the Possible Question Quad Probes to extend the conversation to all Readers in the quad. There is a 90 second limit to Reader D's part of the conversation and each Reader A-D should participate.
 - Repeat the previous step three more times, changing Reader roles. Reader A will become Reader B, Reader B will become Reader C, Reader C will become Reader D, and Reader D will become Reader A.
-



QUESTION QUAD STEMS



- What words and phrases help you to understand...
- Why does the author organize/structure...
- What examples does the author provide for the claim...
- Why do you think the author...
- What evidence is most (or least) credible? Why?
- How does the author relate...
- What structures does the author use to...
- What words and phrases stick out to you in terms of...
- What evidence from the text shows...
- What is the most effective...

POSSIBLE QUESTION QUAD PROBES

- It seems like many of us talked about _____, but we didn't really look at _____. Why is that?
- If the (choose one) context/time period/country/figure involved were different (provide example), how might our ideas shift?
- How does this evidence seem to contradict _____?
- What other information would you like to know to _____?
- How did this evidence/quote/etc. that we discussed impact your personal ideas/beliefs?
- If you could ask the author a question, what would it be? Why?

CLOSE READING



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READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND

Because our readers sometimes have trouble with comprehension, it can help them to read for a purpose or for a particular question. This allows them to have a laser focus and not a broad focus where they feel they must understand everything and become overwhelmed. Certain close reading protocols that ask students to read the same passage multiple times usually do so by having a focus for each reading. Both the *Progress to Success* and the *SpringBoard Close Reading/Writing Workshop* CCS Supplementals use this protocol. On standardized tests with writing prompts, the writing prompt can serve as the purpose/question. Here are two samples of the READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND protocol. Notice how both samples have the students actively engaging with the text or each other after each reading. This helps with comprehension. The more modalities used with reading, the greater the comprehension. Notice how the second sample includes more scaffolding. As an added scaffold, you could have an introduction before each reading that includes background or summary information and defines terms needed such as theme, purpose, etc. As the teacher creating the purposes/questions for each reading, you can let the text and standards drive your decisions.

READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND SAMPLE ONE

First Reading: First Impressions

Read the following passage silently. Your focus for this first reading is on understanding the meaning of the text. Consider stopping after every few paragraphs and paraphrasing what you read to demonstrate your understanding. For unfamiliar words, use context clues or reference resources such as dictionaries or thesauruses to determine the word's meaning. Use the definitions and synonyms in the margin to help your understanding.

Check Your Understanding

Pair with another student and talk for one minute each about the passage.

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context

Now that you have read the passage silently, listen and follow along as your teacher reads the text aloud. As you read along with your teacher, continue to mark the text by highlighting or circling unfamiliar words and/or phrases (other than the underlined words, i.e. the ones already defined in the margins), and figure out their meaning. To demonstrate your comprehension, annotate further with paraphrases and/or summary statements of the paragraphs, and note their relation to the overall meaning of the text.

Check Your Understanding

Pair with another student and annotate each paragraph of the text by paraphrasing one statement the author makes about _____ in each paragraph it is mentioned.

Choose a paragraph from the passage and write a **summary** statement of the paragraph's main idea. Use two or three words that you have highlighted, underlined, and/or circled as part of your summary.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning

Now read the passage again. This time read it to respond to the questions that follow it. As your class discusses the text, write your responses to each question and highlight or underline the textual evidence that supports your answer. During discussions, you may also want to continue annotating the text to record a new or different meaning of the text.

Check Your Understanding

Now that you've read the passage three times and worked to understand its implications as well as its content, reflect on _____. Explain in your own words how the author _____.

READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND SAMPLE TWO (Literature Focus)

FIRST READ: DETAILS

As you read through this excerpt, make a note of the _____ (dialogue, description, specific concept, words, etc.) that has the greatest impact on you.

JOURNAL RESPONSE

What image stays in your mind from the reading?

SECOND READ: FOCUSING ON THEME (OR IDEA/CONCEPT OF YOUR CHOICE)

Read the excerpt again. This time look for repeated ideas. Underline every time the word _____ appears in the text. Think about why the author (narrator/character) is continually focused on _____.

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions in pairs and/or Fill in a provided graphic organizer.

THIRD READ: STYLE SUPPORTS THEME (OR SUPPORT AND IDEA OF YOUR CHOICE)

Listen as your teacher or other students read the excerpt aloud. Think about how the writing sounds.

- Do you hear long, flowing sentences or short, clipped sentences?
- Does the writer use many unfamiliar words or are most of them used in everyday speech?
- Are there many descriptive passages with figurative language or realistic dialogue?

PARTNER WORK

Using the graphic organizer/questions you answered to help you analyze the style of the excerpt, discuss with your partner how the style is appropriate for the themes you uncovered in your second reading. After your discussion, each of you should write one or two paragraphs explaining how the style fits the theme that includes examples from the excerpt. Here are some sentence starters to help you compose your paragraphs.

- The style of the novel is ...
- The writer's words are ... One example of this is ...
- The author uses/does not use sentences that are ... For example ...
- This formal/informal style supports the topic because ...
- The writing style also supports the theme by ...

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ACRONYMPALOOZA FOR COMPLEX TEXTS

Education is full of acronyms. Since they are easy to remember, readers can use them as an access path to close reading analysis. They can stand for before, during, and after reading actions. They can aid in decoding and comprehension. They can clue students into thinking and writing strategies. Here are several acronyms for accessing complex texts. Many, many more are available and to get buy-in, you and your students can create your own.

QCC-Gathering First Impressions

Q-Questions, **C**-Comments, **C**-Connections

Write questions, comments, and connections in the margins of a text or on paper while you read. When you have a question, need clarification, or are unsure, write down your uncertainty. When you discover something surprising, exciting, or fun that makes you say wow, cool, awesome, yuck, no way, whoa, etc., put a comment in the margin. When you discover something new, a knowledge you did not have before or a knowledge that can connect or add to something previously learned, write down your new knowledge and its connection to what you already know, to your own experiences, or to other texts.

SOAPSTONE (Analyzing)

Students need to recognize that any good composition, whether written, spoken, or drawn, is carefully planned. This composition has integral parts that work together in a complex and subtle arrangement to produce meaning. SOAPSTONE provides a concrete strategy to help students identify and use these central components in readings and to use in their own writing. **SOAPSTONE** (**S**peaker, **O**ccasion, **A**udience, **P**urpose, **S**ubject, **T**one) is an acronym for a series of questions that students can ask about a text.

S-Who is the Speaker? (the voice that tells the story or information)

O-What is the Occasion? (the time and the place of the piece; the context that prompted the writing) Writing does not occur in a vacuum. All writers are influenced by the larger occasion: an environment of ideas, attitudes, and emotions that swirl around a broad issue. Then there is the immediate occasion: an event or situation that catches the writer's attention and triggers a response.

A-Who is the Audience? (the group of readers to whom this piece is directed) It may be one person or a specific group.

P-What is the Purpose? (the reason behind the text) Students need to consider the purpose of the text in order to find the thesis or the argument and its logic. They should ask themselves, "What does the author/speaker/narrator want his/her audience to think or do as a result of reading the text?"

S-What is the Subject? Students should be able to state the subject in a few words or phrases.

TONE-What is the Tone? (the attitude of the author) The spoken word can convey the speaker's attitude and thus help impart meaning through tone of voice. With the written word, tone extends meaning beyond the literal, and students can identify tone through diction (choice of words), syntax (sentence construction), and imagery (metaphors, similes, and other types of figurative language).

LEAD (How to Describe Diction)

To help students find and understand literary elements in texts they read, it helps to have language around that element. Once "how" to talk about that element is established, you can create an acronym to remember the ways it can be categorized and discussed. Here is an acronym to help students talk about diction.

L=level of diction-formal, neutral, or informal

E=description of level e.g., is it elevated, colloquial, slang, jargon, dialect, etc.?

A=abstract or concrete words-are the words mostly things or ideas?

D=denotations and connotations-are the words literal or do they have multiple meanings

SMELL (Synthesizing)

SMELL can help students see that authors have a message and use strategies to convey that message. Learning those strategies can help them improve their speaking and writing, as it clues them into synthesizing texts.

S – Sender-Receiver Relationship

Example: What inference can you draw about the target audience based on the author's/speaker's/narrator's/character's position?

M – Message

What is the message or main idea of the text? What is the purpose?

E – Emotional Strategies (Pathos)

In what ways does the author/speaker/narrator/character appeal to the emotions of his/her audience? What are examples of appeals to emotion?

L – Logical Strategies (Logos)

In what ways does the author/speaker/narrator/character appeal to the reader's sense of reason or logic? What are some examples of appeals to logic or reason?

L – Language Strategies

How would you characterize the author's/speaker's/narrator's/character's use of language? What specific rhetorical strategies does he/she employ, and what is their intended effect?

OPTIC (Analyzing Visual Text)

OPTIC is a strategy for systematically analyzing visual texts—including paintings, photographs, advertisements, maps, charts, or graphs—and developing an interpretation regarding the meaning or theme(s) of the text. The acronym stands for **Overview, Parts, Title, Interrelationships, and Conclusion**. The **OPTIC** strategy allows you to analyze a visual image in a systematic way in order to understand how all aspects of the artwork combine to create an overall impression. To do a close reading of a visual image, you should view and review the image each time you respond to parts of the acronym.

O – Write a brief **overview** of what the visual appears to be about.

P – Zoom in on all of the **parts** of the visual by describing any elements or details that seem important.

T – Use the **title(s)** to clarify the subject of the visual.

I – Specify the **interrelationships** of the visual. In other words, use the title as the theory and the parts of the visual as clues to detect and specify how the elements of the graphic are related.

C – Draw a **conclusion** about the visual as a whole. What does the visual mean? Summarize the message of the visual in one or two sentences.

WAVE (Analyzing Visual Text)

W.A.V.E.

A strategy for analyzing historical images to help draw a conclusion about the artist's point of view

W: Words—What words are in the picture? Do the words used have more than one meaning?

A: Actions—What is happening in the image? What was happening when the image was made?

V: Visuals—What do you notice first? What are the observable facts in the image? What do you see that looks different than it would if it were in a photograph?

E: Emotions—How does the image make you feel? Who do you think was the audience for this image? What do you think the artist's opinion on the topic is?

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LEVELED QUESTIONING

When writing questions for a text with struggling readers in mind, you want to order them in a manner that builds confidence. Although the ELA AIR tests do not ask DOK Level 1 reading questions, struggling readers (really, all readers) could use explicit questions to help clarify items before answering deeper questions. Modeling levels of questions is an easy way to get students to write their own questions about texts. It helps them think critically about what is in the text and the levels are easy to remember. The first level, Explicit Questions or “finger facts” are ones that can be answered directly in the text—you can physically put your finger on the answer. The second level, Implicit Questions are ones that require some analysis or interpretation in addition to what is written in the text. The relationship between the two levels can be very helpful in allowing struggling students to answer DOK 2 and 3 level questions. If students can take an Implicit Level Question and reduce it to parts that are explicit, this can give an access point to the text that leads to deeper thinking.

Below, you will see three levels of questioning. You can find more help with leveled questioning by using the [Close Reading Text-Dependent Questioning Guide](#) at the [ELA Strand Resources](#) Quick Link under Reading Resources on the [ELA 6-12 Webpage](#).

Three Levels of Questioning

Level One: The Explicit Question (Comprehension)

These questions are “finger facts” because we can put a finger directly on the answer within the text.

Example: Who was riding on the elephant?

Level Two: The Implicit Question (Analysis, Interpretation, Synthesis)

These questions are related to details of the text but cannot be answered by simply pointing your finger; they require analysis and interpretation.

Example: Why does the rat compare himself to the elephant in paragraph 3?

Level Three: The Philosophical/Universal Question (Reflection, Evaluation)

These questions are much more open-ended and go beyond the text. They are intended to be used in the culminating assessment that uses text for support, i.e. essays/seminars.

Example: Are there advantages in life to going unnoticed?

The Rat and the Elephant

Some people say that rats are ugly creatures. When they see a rat running along, they go ee-yuck! Well I don't know about you, but I've always thought that this was rather rude. Rats can have hurt feelings too you know! In any case, when I catch sight of my reflection in a stream, I think I'm rather cute.

Just recently, I was trotting along the King's Highway, in my sweet little way, when I heard a great commotion on the road up ahead. Who or what is causing all that fuss? I wondered.

When I got closer, I saw the King himself, riding along on top of a great fat lump of an elephant. The crowd of onlookers were ooo-ing and aah-ing full of admiration for that stupid beast with a nose that's far too big for her face. She's much uglier than me, I thought. So I started to spring up and down and say: "Hey everyone! Why not look at me? I'm such a cutie-pie! I could join the King's household and be a royal rat, if only there was any justice in the world."

At first, nobody noticed me. They were all too busy ogling that stupid elephant. Little did I know that riding behind the elephant in a carriage, was the princess, and she was holding a beastly cat in her arms. When he caught sight of me, the cat leapt out of the carriage and started to chase me. I had to run for my life, and popped down a hole just in time before the cat could eat me up.

Now I've changed my mind about wanting people to notice me and admire me. I've decided that sometimes, it's far better not to draw attention to yourself, but just to get on quietly with your own business.

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BEING A CAREFUL READER!

Four Strategies to Better Understand What You Are Reading

When reading an article, book chapter, or story, students can use these four simple techniques to be sure that they fully understand the content.

Student Instructions

Prediction. Before you begin to read the selection, look at the main title, scan the pages to read the major headings, and look at any illustrations. Based on these clues, try to predict what the article or story is about. Then, read the selection to see whether it turns out as you predicted! Stop at several points during your reading and ask yourself how closely the content of the actual story or article fit your initial prediction. How do the facts and information that you have read change your prediction about what you will find in the rest of the story or article?

List Main Ideas. Stop after each paragraph or major section of the passage. Construct one or two complete sentences that sum up only the most important idea(s) that appear in the section. (Good summary sentences include key concepts or events but leave out less important details!) Write these summary (main idea) sentences down and continue reading.

Question Generation. Look at the ideas that you have summarized as you read the passage. For each main idea listed, write down at least one question that the main idea will answer. Good questions should include words like “who,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “what.” Your teacher may provide you with sentence stems so that you can write the kinds of questions that appear on standardized tests. (Stems for ELA AIR questions are available on the [ELA 6-12 Webpage](#) at the [Standardized Testing Quick Link: AIR Question Stems.](#))

Clarifying. Sometimes in your reading you will run into words, phrases, or whole sentences that really don’t make sense. Here are some ways that you can clarify the meaning of your reading before moving on:

-*Unknown words.* If you come across a word whose meaning you do not know, read the sentences before and after it to see if they give you clues to the word’s meaning. If the word is still unclear, look it up in a dictionary.

-*Unclear phrases or sentences.* Reread the phrase or sentence carefully and try to understand it. If it contains words such as “them,” “it” or “they”, be sure that you know what nouns (persons, places, or things) to which these words refer.

-If all else fails, ask another student or an adult to help you to clarify the meaning of a confusing word, phrase, or sentence.

CLOSE READING



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GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: ALPHABET SOUP

One of the most effective scaffolds for close reading is to use graphic organizers. They help focus the work of reading and comprehending, and enable students to use information gathered from texts in discussions and writings. Many graphic organizers are so simple that they can be replicated on scratch paper with each text the students read. Below are a few graphic organizers. A quick URL search will yield many, many more. You can check a catalog of free ones here: http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm.

ALPHABET SOUP

This close reading strategy/graphic organizer can help students pull explicit information from a complex text. The students must identify an overall topic for a reading passage and create sentences that summarize key ideas in the text. The strategy can help students find main ideas and supporting details. It can be used to help them cite what a text says explicitly.

-Begin by picking letters for the first column of the graphic organizer. You could use letter die, online program, scrabble tiles, or take student suggestions. You may want to eliminate x, y, and z. For each letter, the student will create a sentence that summarizes a key point about the topic from the text. The first word of each sentence should begin with the letter in the box. Students should be sure their sentences have enough details to help them remember the important ideas or concepts.

TOPIC : _____

(What is the broad topic of the article, chapter, passage, etc.?)

ENTER LETTERS HERE	WRITE YOUR SENTENCES HERE (For each letter, create a sentence that summarizes a key point about the topic. The first word of each sentence should begin with the letter in the box. Be sure your sentences have enough details to help you remember the important ideas or concepts.)
S	
T	
N	
O	

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GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: FQR

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FQR-FACTS, QUESTIONS, RESPONSES

This close reading strategy/graphic organizer can help students determine importance, ask questions, and respond to complex text. It works especially well with nonfiction/informational texts, in particular historical fiction. It lends itself to an in-depth reading of text. It goes beyond just summarizing a text. It asks students to investigate and find answers to lingering questions. It forces them to provide textual citations for their responses/conclusions.

-While reading, students will need to model stopping every few paragraphs for filling out the Facts column. The Questions column can be filled out both during and after reading. The Response column should be filled out after reading and /or after class discussion of the text and the items are written in the Facts and Questions columns. The Response column must contain textual evidence for their conclusions.

FACTS (Complete During Reading)	QUESTIONS (Complete During and After Reading)	RESPONSE (Complete After Reading and After Discussion. <u>Must</u> Contain Textual Citation)

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GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: SYNTHESIS HAT

One of the most effective scaffolds for close reading is to use graphic organizers. They help focus the work of reading and comprehending, and enable students to use information gathered from texts in discussions and writings. Many graphic organizers are so simple that they can be replicated on scratch paper with each text the students read. Below are a few graphic organizers. A quick URL search will yield many, many more. You can check a catalog of free ones here: http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm.

SYNTHESIS HAT

Synthesizing the information from the varied sources is a reading skill that students will need to have to do well on standardized assessments. “Synthesizing is the process whereby a student merges new information with prior knowledge to form a new idea, perspective, or opinion to generate insight” (Shannon Bumgarner). Therefore, synthesis is an ongoing process. As new knowledge is acquired, it is synthesized with prior knowledge to generate new ideas. “Synthesis is the most complex of the reading strategies. Synthesizing lies on a continuum of evolving thinking. Synthesizing runs the gamut from taking stock of meaning while reading to achieving new insight” (Harvey and Goudvis). The skills needed to synthesize reading materials are the ability to summarize information, paraphrase it, and compare and contrast it. Other necessary skills are the ability to separate fact from opinion, draw inferences based on the facts presented, and evaluate that information to form your own conclusions. It is especially helpful tool when students are reading paired texts on the same topic.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER ON THE NEXT PAGE

First, have the students write the topic in the bar at the top of the Synthesis Hat graphic. Let the students know that the topic could be a prompt that they have to write about, an idea or concept they are studying, a debate topic, a process, a procedure, etc. Sometimes the topic will be given to them and other times the topic must be chosen by them.

-Begin to read Article #1. Pause when you encounter important information. Record this information inside the “Prior Knowledge” hat on the Synthesis Hat graphic page. Remind students that careful readers stop every so often and think about what they have read.

-Continue by reading Article #2. Encourage students to share when they hear new or important information that was not included in the first article. Record that information inside the “New Information” oval on the Synthesis Hat graphic.

-Note how the new information, combined with what you wrote in the hat from the first article begins to change your thinking to create new ideas. The new insights are the syntheses and are recorded in the “Synthesis” oval on the graphic page.

