

INSTRUCTIONAL ROUTINES TO HELP STUDENTS COMPREHEND COMPLEX TEXTS:

THINKING PROCESS FOR READING AND TEXT ANNOTATION



Thursday, September 20th READ Method for AIR Preparation (Standardized Test Preparation Thursday Program)

MINI ACTIVITY TO DRAW ATTENTION TO READING THE ENTIRE TEXT—INCLUDING TITLES/SUBTITLES/EXPLANATIONS

-Display or share digitally this paragraph (below and [Google Doc](#)). Ask students to read it. Read it aloud to them for the second reading. As you read it, ask the students to write a sentence in their notebooks (spiral or digital) about what the “hero” is doing. Allow them to share their ideas. Ask them if their inability to really know what the hero is doing is similar to experiences they have had on the AIR or other standardized test? Have they read passages and not been able to figure them out? Let them know that throughout the year, especially each Thursday, you are going to give them strategies for succeeding on the AIR or other standardized tests. This first lesson will help them unlock the passages on standardized tests, i.e. help them comprehend complex texts.

“With hocked gems financing him, our hero bravely defied all scornful laughter that tried to prevent his scheme. “Your eyes deceived,” he had said. “An egg not a table correctly typifies this unexplored entity.” Now three sturdy sisters sought proof. Forging along, sometimes through calm vastness, yet more often over turbulent peaks and valleys, days became weeks as many doubters spread fearful rumors about the edge. At last from somewhere, welcomed winged creatures appeared, signifying momentous success.”

-Now, let them reread the paragraph with its title and description (below and [Google Doc](#)). Have them write down in their notebooks (spiral or digital) what the hero is doing. Ask them how often they skip over the title, brief explanation, or subtitles when they read a passage. Let them know that those features should be part of the reading, since they can contain valuable context. They should now realize that the “hero” is Columbus and he is sailing to the Americas.

Christopher Columbus

Between 1492 and 1503, Columbus completed four round-trip voyages between Spain and the Americas, each voyage being sponsored by Spanish monarchs who forced the citizens of Palos to contribute to the expedition.

“With hocked gems financing him, our hero bravely defied all scornful laughter that tried to prevent his scheme. “Your eyes deceived,” he had said. “An egg not a table correctly typifies this unexplored entity.” Now three sturdy sisters sought proof. Forging along, sometimes through calm vastness, yet more often over turbulent peaks and valleys, days became weeks as many doubters spread fearful rumors about the edge. At last from somewhere, welcomed winged creatures appeared, signifying momentous success.”

TEACHER MODELING OF THINKING PROCESS THAT SHOULD HAPPEN DURING READING

-Display or share digitally the paragraph from the Mini Activity ([Google Doc](#)). Read each sentence aloud and make comments about the text as you read that assist you with comprehension. See some possible comments you can make (below and [Google Doc with comments](#)). Make the experience authentic by adding any of these comments or others you feel are appropriate to your own comprehension as you read.

Christopher Columbus (When I see this name, I always think about that [rhyme](#) I learned in elementary—“In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue . . .”

Between 1492 and 1503, Columbus completed four round-trip voyages between Spain and the Americas, each sailing trip being sponsored by Spanish monarchs who forced the citizens of Palos to contribute to the expedition. Many believed the trips were doomed because they believed the earth was flat. (I did not know how many trips he made, but I did know he sailed from Spain. I wonder how the citizens were forced to pay. Where is Palos? I am guessing it is part of Spain.)
“With hocked gems financing him, our hero bravely defied all scornful laughter that tried to prevent his scheme. (My first thought is that “our hero bravely” seems like language I might see in a picture book for elementary readers, but the rest of the sentence has too many advanced vocabulary words to be written for kids: hocked, financing, defied, scornful, prevent, scheme. Six difficult words—do I know what they all mean? Let’s see, “hocked” describes the gems that were financing him, so I am going to guess that the voyages were paid for by gems and hocked could be selling of the gems or the forced selling of the gems if I tie it to the explanation after the title. A scheme is usually a plan to do something, so the scheme is

Columbus' trip to the Americas. Scheming usually has a negative connotation and I am not sure why that is associated with the voyage. It seems people laughed at his idea to sail there, but he didn't listen to them. Scornful describes the laughter—I am not sure exactly what that is but I understand that it has a negative connotation.)

“Your eyes deceived,” he had said. “An egg not a table correctly typifies this unexplored entity.” (The unexplored entity must be the new world. He says it is an egg, not a table. These are obviously metaphors—egg for round and table for flat—describing the earth which I know from my prior knowledge of early beliefs that the world was flat. Whose eyes were deceived? I am thinking this ties to the sentence before—the ones who laughed at his “scheme.”)

Now three sturdy sisters sought proof. Forging along, sometimes through calm vastness, yet more often over turbulent peaks and valleys, days became weeks as many doubters spread fearful rumors about the edge. (This writer loves metaphors. The three sturdy sisters are the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria. I only know that from my prior knowledge of the names of Columbus' ships. However, since they are described as forging along over peaks and valleys, I could possibly figure out they referred to his ships, even if I did not know their names. When it said peaks and valleys, I assumed those were in the water and not mountains because he sailed, not walked to the Americas as noted in the explanation. Turbulent describes the peaks and valleys and I can tell by the word “yet” that it is the opposite of calm vastness. Because the trip took a long time the ones who thought the world was flat spread “fearful” rumors-probably that he fell off and was dead.)

At last from somewhere, welcomed winged creatures appeared, signifying momentous success.” (Welcomed winged creatures are probably birds. The fact that they signified success means that they must have greeted Columbus when he found land in the Americas. Momentous describes the success and I can tell that it is a positive adjective—like memorable or fabulous.)

ANNOTATING TEXT-A BRIEF VERSION OF THE THINKING PROCESS FOR READING

-Show students a copy of the text with comments, or share it digitally ([Google Doc with comments](#)). Tell them you know that there is obviously not enough time to write all of this on their scratch paper or on the online notetaking box during the AIR exam, but they can use symbols and brief annotations while reading to represent their thinking process as they read the passages on the test. Hand out or share digitally the [Close Reading Annotation Guide](#) or [Close Reading Annotation Bookmarks](#) from the ELA 6-12 Webpage. Together, use the guidelines to mark up the text. Below is an example of the text with annotation mark ups ([PDF of annotations](#)). After marking up the text, talk about how the annotations or symbols helped them see elements in the text that aided their comprehension.

Christopher Columbus

Between 1492 and 1503, Columbus completed four round-trip voyages between Spain and the Americas, each voyage being sponsored by Spanish monarchs who forced the citizens of Palos to contribute to the expedition. *connection to song*

“With *hocked? forced to sell?* hocked gems financing him, *child-like for Columbus' side* our hero bravely defied all scornful laughter that tried to prevent his scheme. “Your eyes deceived,” he had said. “An egg not a table correctly typifies this unexplored entity.” Now three sturdy sisters sought proof. Forging along, sometimes through calm vastness, yet more often over turbulent peaks and valleys, days became weeks as many doubters spread fearful rumors about the edge. At last from somewhere, welcomed winged creatures appeared, signifying momentous success.” *birds*

Who is Speaking or Narrating?	Someone who wants Columbus to succeed
To Whom?	School-aged audience
About What?	Columbus' first trip to the Americas
When? Where?	Post(1492) Between Spain + America
Why? Purpose?	Inform Show Columbus had doubters
Tone?	Informative (with school-age + literary language)

PRACTICE WITH THINKING PROCESS FOR READING AND TEXT ANNOTATION

-Display or share digitally this paragraph from “All in a Summer Day” by Ray Bradbury (below and [Google Doc](#)). Have students work in pairs. Ask each student to read it once silently, then have one of them read it aloud. Tell them to be sure to read the title and description. Ask each person to share with their partner some of their thinking process that happened around one or more of the sentences. Together, ask them to use the [Close Reading Annotation Guide](#) or [Close Reading Annotation Bookmarks](#) to mark up the text. Have a brief share out about what annotation/symbols were used and what how those elements helped with comprehension. Tell them to focus on what makes Margot different.

All in a Summer Day (excerpt) by Ray Bradbury

In this excerpt from a short story, Margot, a child who just moved to the planet Venus, where it has been raining for seven years, sees herself as different from the other students in her class.

Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost.

Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass. She felt the other children go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows.

And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.