Support: Close Reading

ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
➔ closely reading texts for different purposes ◆analyzing characters ◆determining theme ◆locating text evidence ◆comparing and contrasting topics across texts ◆interpreting graphs/images/charts/tables	➔ Solving word problems with complex text	➔ collecting relevant data and/or evidence across various, valid resources ➔ comparing various sources to create a coherent understanding of a phenomenon ➔ revising a consensus model	➔ reading: ◆primary sources ◆secondary sources

Who could this support?   Students in any content area where they will need to read a complex text and make meaning from what they have read.

Purpose: Provide students with a method to help them analyze complex texts to prepare them to speak and write about what they have read.

Communicating the purpose: It is very important to communicate the purpose of the strategy with the students so that they know what they are doing and why. This helps with motivation and buy-in for the lesson and topic.

Process

Prework

- Prepare a piece of text that you will be working with. There should be a first read of the entire text (whether that is a short story, chapter, section, etc) before moving on to close reading. Make sure there is space in the margins or between lines of text for students to annotate. This section of text should be a portion of the text that students can dig deep into and use to answer a pre-selected text-dependent question/prompt that students will need to discuss and/or write about after reading. This is a good place to use some backwards design. Ask yourself: What is the end goal with this unit and how does this activity fit into it? What portion of the text offers the most value in achieving the goals of the lesson, section, or unit? Use this as a starting point for planning what to extract on each read through. A blank template to support this strategy can be found **here**.

Step 1 Inform students of the purpose for the activity. Emphasize that each re-reading of the text serves a distinct purpose aimed at aiding their ability to respond to a prompt later. Encourage them to annotate while reading, utilizing an annotation guide or established procedures.

- There is also an example of an annotation guide here or the annotations symbols chart. But you can use other established annotation procedures as well.

Step 2 The teacher reads the selected text while students follow along and the teacher models annotating areas of confusion, points of interest, or connections to other texts or real life. After reading, briefly discuss these annotations and guide students on using subsequent reads to clarify confusion and deepen understanding. Teacher models how to develop a brief summary or gist statement and ensure students connect the section to the larger work of literature.

Step 3 Instruct students to silently read independently or with a partner, annotating unfamiliar words or phrases. Limit them to identifying 5-7 terms. Have students share their circled words with a partner to compile a combined list. Together, explore the meanings of these words before rereading the text. Consider additional vocab activities like Synonym Swap or Morpheme Activity.

- Synonym Swap - students look up synonyms that they are familiar with and write it above the word or phrase they are unfamiliar with to reference when reading.
- Morpheme Activity (examples of some are found here).

Step 4 Model rereading the text with a predetermined purpose, such as identifying the claim with supporting evidence, main idea and supporting details, tone, theme, conflict, narrative techniques, point of view, or characterization. This can be done independently or in pairs, with established expectations for partner reading. Explain the purpose for the reread and provide specific instructions for annotating the text, using highlighting or predetermined markings. Repeat this process for additional purposes as needed to aid students in answering questions.

- Repeat as needed for another specific purpose to help students answer the questions.

Step 5 Students review their annotations and teacher models writing a claim for the pre-selected prompt individually. After modeling, have students write their own claims and have them share their claims with a partner for feedback and adjustments. If students struggle, utilize the creating claims resource. Model claim analysis and use student examples for class discussion.

- If you notice students are struggling to complete this step, consider using the creating claims resource.
- It may be helpful to model analyzing a claim and then use some student examples to analyze as a class.

Process (continued)

Step 6 Have students engage in small group or whole class discussions about the prompt as an extension. Encourage them to use their annotations and refer back to the text to support their answers. While listening, students should take notes on others' points as well. This provides formative assessment feedback before students begin writing about the text.

Step 7 Students independently respond to the prompt in writing, including a claim, evidence, and reasoning. Those struggling may benefit from reviewing student examples or using writing frames.

I know I'm successful when… Students are able to speak to the text and/or write a well-developed response to the prompt, including a strong claim, relevant text evidence, and reasoning. The composition should demonstrate a deep understanding of the text, content, and tagged standard.

Additional Considerations

- The first time you do this with your class, model via think-aloud and visually with a projector or smartboard. You can start by modeling a re-read using only the first paragraph, then have students continue in groups or independently. Alternatively, you may model each step with the entire text initially. Adapt based on your class's proficiency level, deciding how many iterations are necessary before they work in pairs or independently.

- Some students may need several models before they are proficient. Feel free to pull groups to a teacher table who need more support with this strategy.

- Monitor student annotation for formative assessment and intervene if needed before they reach the claim step. For additional support, embed scaffolded questions throughout the text.

- While this method aids in close text analysis, reserve it for enriching experiences with complex texts rather than every text.

References

Flygare, Jeff. "Helping Students to Enjoy Close Reading." *Solution Tree Blog*, www.solutiontree.com/blog/helping-students-to-enjoy-close-reading/. Accessed 1 Mar. 2024.

Shanahan, Timothy . "What Is Close Reading?" *Shanahan on Literacy*, 18 June 2018, www.shanahanonliteracy.com/blog/what-is-close-reading#:~:text=Close%20reading%20requires%20a%20substantial,it%20through%20some%20textbook%20commentary). Accessed 1 Mar. 2024.

ELA Example Using Close Read Protocol

Before teaching, establish the purpose for each reread. Typically, the first read is conducted by the teacher. Subsequent reads, done independently or in pairs, focus on vocabulary and grasping the text's essence. These subsequent reads should target information relevant to answering a pre-selected prompt. As part of preparation, you should complete each round as a student to ensure they glean desired information from this portion of text. Examples of possible consumables for ELA can be found here:

- *Gatsby* Example from Section 1, lesson 3 of ELA Guidebooks 9-12 (2020)
  - How does this align with the big picture of the novel/unit::
    - **Section Diagnostic:** What is the narrative structure of *The Great Gatsby*? How could that narrative structure influence the way the story is told? Use details from the first four pages of the novel to support your claim.
    - One of the look-fors for this lesson is: Can students locate places in pages 1 - 4 in which Nick discusses his perception of himself, other characters, events, or settings? The close read directly aligns to this look for. From here you could address the other objective of how the author supports a claim he develops (about Nick) via a class discussion. Additionally, this is something they can refer back to when they work on the section diagnostic for this section.
- *Gatsby* Example from Section 3, lesson 2 of Guidebooks 3.0
  - How does this align with the big picture of the novel/unit:
    - **Section Diagnostic:** Students participate in a whole-class discussion in response to the prompt: According to the texts in this section, what is the relationship between perception and ambition? How does perception influence Jay Gatsby's ambition?
      - Students can refer back to this annotation/writing prompt to discuss how Gatsby's ambition for the American dream led him to the curation of a life that he hoped would win Daisy over.
    - **Lesson Objectives:** Can students identify how the author is developing a theme about perception? Can students identify the way the author uses symbolism to communicate the character's perceptions of each other?
- *Gatsby* Example from section 4, lesson 1 of Guidebooks 3.0
  - How does this align with the big picture of the novel/unit:
    - **Section Diagnostic:** Write a response to the prompt: How does Fitzgerald use mistakes in perception to develop a theme in the last three chapters?
    - This close read focuses on Nick and Daisy's changing perspectives on Gatsby when Tom reveals several inaccuracies in their perceptions of Gatsby. This activity can be something they refer back to when having class discussions or writings about this prompt.
- Blank Template is **here**.