

Close Reading Key Elements

1. Selection of a brief, high-quality, complex text

Not all text is worth close reading. Select your text with a purpose, making sure that it is brief, high-quality and complex. Students should struggle with it productively.

Examples of Complex Text

Science/ Social Studies/ Mathematics

- Maps
- Graphs, Charts
- Brochures
- Consumer text
- Reports
- Technical texts
- Historical, scientific, or economic accounts
- Directions
- Forms

All Content Areas

- Primary Documents (Speeches, Laws, Reports)
- Poems (appropriate to developmental level)
- Essays
- Short stories (as appropriate)
- Biographies or autobiographies
- Editorials
- Journal entries
- Consumer texts
- Reports
- Memoirs
- Personal essay

As you teach close reading, it's important that you know the text backwards and forwards. Every time you raise an issue or ask a question for discussion, you'll know how to help your students find the textual evidence and where it's located in the text.

This link will lead you to CCSS Appendix B which has text exemplars and sample performance tasks for each grade level.
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

2. Multiple reads with a purpose (often with varied group structure-teacher modeled, peer or group reading, independent reading)

After you have read the text aloud once, help students dig deeper by setting a specific purpose for reading it again. That purpose could be to track a concept or theme, or to analyze how an author uses a literary element or creates tone. Giving students something specific to focus on requires that they return to the text and really focus.

If students are new to close reading, spend time modeling how to think about and how to annotate the text. You might want to use a document camera to project pages of the text and read through and annotate a passage around a central question, modeling your thinking. After you do a few pages, release the work to students and have them take the lead.

3. Text-based questions focused on discrete elements of the text.

"As the name suggests, a text dependent question specifically asks a question that can only be answered by referring explicitly back to the text being read. It does not rely on any particular background information extraneous to the text nor depend on students having other experiences or knowledge; instead it privileges the text itself and what students can extract from what is before them." (www.achievethecore.org)

Purpose First!

The quality and power of text dependent questions comes from where you focus a reader's attention in a close read of a text. The more familiar you are with the text, the easier it will be for you to create strong text dependent questions.

To design an effective close reading experience, you must:

- Determine the purpose for reading the text
- Select appropriate passages to highlight in order to uncover the purpose for reading
- Write targeted text dependent questions to scaffold students' reading experience.

4. Discussion about the text using text dependent questions -meaningful conversations where students talk to each other about the text. This should be done in varied groupings also.

5. Every close read should end with a writing task where students must use evidence from the text.

CLOSE READING PLANNER

A close read is most valuable when the text is tough/at frustration level. Close reading is an opportunity to have kids persevere and build tenacity – to productively struggle.

CCSS 1 & 10 are the foundation of a CLOSE READ.

CCSS 2–9 are addressed depending on the text you select.

TITLE/TEXT: _____

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE: _____

WHAT BEGS TO BE TAUGHT? *Why this text? Why now? Why with my students?*

What does the text support that I am already teaching? *How does this text fit thematically (ELA) or tie into the topic/unit of study (SS/Science)?* **What about this text is particularly challenging?**

TEXT INTRODUCTION/PRE-READING ENGAGEMENT (3–5 MINUTES):

Brief – no longer than the instructional time spent with the text itself.

Give students just enough information so that they have a reason to read. What is the minimum students need to know to successfully comprehend/understand the text? Put the text in CONTEXT, but don't give up the CONTENT. This time is intended to frame the text before you dive deeper into the content itself. Give students a "teaser," not a "spoiler."

(E.g., Pre-teach critical vocabulary, connect the text to the unit/other thematically related pieces, provide necessary background knowledge).

MULTIPLE READS WITH A TEXT-DEPENDENT FOCUS:

Close reading lends itself to writing, speaking, and listening: "Re-read it, think it, talk it, write it."

4–5 text-dependent questions will drive an engaging, content-rich, student-centered discussion.

CLOSE READING

- Read the text once for pleasure
- Number each paragraph
- "Chunk" your paragraphs {Read no more than 3 paragraphs at a time}
- Circle key terms about the topic
- Underline key ideas or important statements about the topic of the text
- "Talk-back" to the "chunks" by summarizing in 10 words or less what you just read in the left margin
- Dig Deeper in each chunk by finding out what the author is doing with the information and "talk-back" in the right margin

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Five close reading strategies to support the Common Core

The best part? Highlighters are not required.

1. Number the paragraphs

The Common Core asks students to be able to cite and refer to the text. One simple way to do this is by numbering each paragraph, section or stanza in the left hand margin. When students refer to the text, I require them to state which paragraph they are referring to. The rest of the class will be able to quickly find the line being referred to.

2. Chunk the text.

When faced with a full page of text, reading it can quickly become overwhelming for students. Breaking up the text into smaller sections (or chunks) makes the page much more manageable for students. Students do this by drawing a horizontal line between paragraphs to divide the page into smaller sections.

At the beginning of the year, I group the paragraphs into chunks before I hand out the assignment. In the directions I will say, "Chunk paragraphs 1-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12." I look at the paragraphs to see where natural chunks occur. Paragraphs 1-3 may be the hook and thesis statement, while 6-8 may be the paragraphs where the author addresses the opposition. It is important to understand that there is no right or wrong way to chunk the text, as long as you can justify why you grouped certain paragraphs together.

By the end of the year, I begin to let go of that responsibility and ask my students to chunk the text on their own. They number the paragraphs then must make decisions about what paragraphs will be grouped together. Usually, most of the class is very similar in the way they chunked the text.

3. Underline and circle... with a purpose.

Telling students to simply underline "the important stuff" is too vague. "Stuff" is not a concrete thing that students can identify. Instead direct students to underline and circle very specific things. Think about what information you want students to take from the text, and ask them to look for those elements. What you have students circle and underline may change depending on the text type.

For example, when studying an argument, ask students to underline "claims". We identify claims as belief statements that the author is making. Students will quickly discover that the author makes multiple claims throughout the argument.

When studying poetry, students could underline the imagery they find throughout the poem.

Circling specific items is also an effective close reading strategy. I often have my students circle "Key terms" in the text. I define key terms as words that: 1. Are defined. 2. Are repeated throughout the text. 3. If you only circled five key terms in the entire text, you would have a pretty good idea about what the entire text is about.

I have also asked students to circle the names of sources, power verbs, or figurative language.

Providing students with a specific thing you want them to underline or circle will focus their attention on that area much better than "underlining important information".

4. Left margin: What is the author SAYING?

It isn't enough to ask students to "write in the margins". We must be very specific and give students a game plan for what they will write. This is where the chunking comes into play.

In the left margin, I ask my students to **summarize** each chunk. I demonstrate how to write summaries in 10-words or less. The chunking allows the students to look at the text in smaller segments, and summarize what the author is saying in just that small, specific chunk.

5. Right margin: Dig deeper into the text

In the right-hand margin, I again direct my students to complete a specific task for each chunk. This may include:

Use a power verb to describe what the author is DOING. (For example: Describing, illustrating, arguing, etc..) Note: It isn't enough for students to write "Comparing" and be done. What is the author comparing? A better answer might be: "Comparing the character of Montag to Captain Beatty".

Represent the information with a picture. This is a good way for students to be creative to visually represent the chunk with a drawing.

Ask questions. I have found this to be a struggle for many students, as they often say they don't have any questions to ask. When modeled, students can begin to learn how to ask questions that dig deeper into the text. I often use these questions as the conversation driver in Socratic Seminar.

There are many other things students can write in the margins. However, we must model and teach these strategies so that students will have an idea of what to write when they are on their own.

To ensure our students are college and career ready, we must teach them critical reading strategies in order for them to independently attack a text. They must learn how to own a text, rather than letting the text own them. After following these steps, students have read the text at least five times and they are actively interacting with the text. This is a much different experience than skimming through a text one time with a highlighter in hand.

Finding Text Based Evidence While Close Reading

Title: _____

Paragraph	Most Important Detail	What is the author doing in this paragraph?	2 Key terms or phrases in this paragraph
			1) 2)
			1) 2)
			1) 2)
			1) 2)

Finding Text Based Evidence While Close Reading

Title: _____

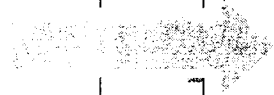
Paragraphs Chunked	Write a summary of these paragraphs in 10 words or less	What is the author's purpose in this chunk?

Finding Text Based Evidence While Close Reading

Title: _____

3 Main Points in Text

Text evidence that supports this point



Finding Text Based Evidence While Close Reading

Title: _____

Topic of this text:	
My <u>INITIAL</u> thoughts about this topic:	
Evidence from the text that CHANGES my initial thoughts:	
Evidence from the text that SUPPORTS my initial thoughts:	

Website Resources

<http://www.readworks.org/>

<http://www.achieve3000.com/>

<https://www.newsela.com/>

http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf

<http://achievethecore.org/>