Close Reading
For Adult Learners

What Close Reading Actually Means

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Close reading is a meaningful reading and rereading of a piece of text. This purposeful reading is designed to help the student gain more knowledge of text structure, be able to determine what's important, and have a deeper understanding of the author's purpose. The ultimate goal is for the student to be prepared to answer complex questions.

The format of this mini-grant is a general outline including ideas for how to conduct a close reading. Also included is a list of ideas for classroom activities, activity examples, and vocabulary activities (whole class and individual).

Close Reading General Guidelines

I. **Choose a piece of text**:
   a. Start with a short piece and gradually increase the length/complexity.
   b. To motivate students choose text/topics that interest students.
   c. Vary styles: non-fiction, fiction, poetry, articles, informational text, documents….
   d. More on Text Types:
      i. Descriptive: perception in space
      ii. Expository: explanation, factual
      iii. Informational
      iv. Narrative: telling a story
      v. Argumentative(Persuasive): subject judgment

II. **Close Reading Steps**:
   a. Use the poster on page 7 created by Tracy Watanabe to guide students through the process.
   b. Limit pre-reading discussions and activities.
   c. Invite students to read and reread and reread the text several times.
   d. Hint: (Test Accommodation) If students are unable to write on the text have them use a clear transparency sheet and wet erase markers.

III. **Annotation Keys**: Concrete note taking guides designed for students to record their thinking are located on pages 8 - 10.
   a. Level 1: good for grade levels 3-5 OR students new to annotation
   b. Level 2: good for grade levels 6-8 OR students with practice
   c. Level 3: good for grade levels 9-15/college readiness OR students with practice

IV. **Annotation Examples**: Examples of each annotation level using one of the three pieces of text from the HiSet Language Arts Reading Practice Test are located on pages 12 -14.
   a. Level 1: Poem from *Two Trees*
   b. Level 2: Non-fiction – Excerpt from *"Busy as a Bee?"*
   c. Level 3: Fiction – Excerpt from *Typhoon*

V. **Annotation with Technology**
    a. *Educreations*: an interactive recordable whiteboard allowing students to capture handwriting and speech. Available for iPad and PC's
    b. *Notability*: a note taking App for the iPad or iPhone
    c. *Google Docs/Apps*: a web word processor allowing users to edit documents. Available for iPad and PC's.

VI. **Close Reading in the classroom**: videos at different grade levels
    a. 4th grade: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZIQcwbHRKY
    b. 6th grade: annotation http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE9YbeCkLeQ
    c. 10th grade: non-fiction http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFRClI2q18Y

VII. **Asking Text-Dependent Questions**:
    a. Hand-out created by Tracy Watanabe located on page15.
    b. Open-Ended Discussion questions organized by literature topic located on pages 16 - 18.
    c. Follow questions with:
        i. Point to this in the text
        ii. Use details from the text
        iii. Support your answers with information from the text
        iv. How do you know?

VIII. **Close Read Activity Ideas**:
    a. Annotation Poster- An activity used to help students organize and choose important facts/details. Included are directions and a sample.on page 19 & 20.
    b. Jigsaw Activity: Emphasizing cooperative learning by providing students an opportunity to actively help each other build comprehension. Located on page 21.
    c. Context Clues: Giving students strategies to use to find the hints that authors use to define meanings of unknown words. Context Clue Steps and Strategy directions can be found on pages 22 & 23. Activity on pages 24 – 26.
    d. Resources
        i. ReadWriteThink: www.readwritethink.org
            A collection of comprehension classroom resources K-12 including lesson plans, student interactives, mobile apps and calendar activities
        ii. Readworks: www.readworks.org
            Organized lesson plans with over 1000 non-fiction reading passages for grade levels K-7 that assist with reading comprehension.

iii. Adolescent Literacy: www.adlit.org
Literacy activities and reading comprehension resources
designed for struggling students 4-12

IX. **Whole Class Vocabulary Lessons:** choose 10 – 12 vocabulary words from each of the stories and invite student to participate in the following class lessons.
   a. The "Looping Game": create tickets and invite the students to play the looping game: Using the cards, shuffle and hand them out evenly to all students. It's fine if a student has more than one card. The student who has the card with a star goes first and reads out loud the "Who has…" section. Then the student who has the correct vocabulary word reads the "I have…" then that same student reads their "Who has…" section. Play continues like this until it has cycled around to the student who spoke first (the card with the star on it). An example of this game is located
   b. Tangram Practice Puzzles: copy tangram puzzle pieces onto cardstock and have students cut them out so that they have 7 puzzle pieces: 2 large right triangles, 1 medium right triangle, 2 small right triangles, 1 square, and 1 parallelogram. Once they are finished invite them to start matching the vocabulary word with the definition. As students continue matching a formation will appear. Have students switch and try different puzzles.
   c. "Define That Word" like the popular Balderdash. Have students write the definitions of the vocabulary words on notecards before discussing them. Include the real definition and after reading all definitions aloud have students vote on which one is the real meaning.
   d. "Vocabulary Pyramid" played like the game show "$10,000 Pyramid Game Show". Have students work in pairs.
   e. For more Game Show ideas and templates go to: wiki.fms.k12.nm.us/groups/middlescoolteachingideas/wiki/94d30/

X. **Individual Vocabulary Activities:** using the same 10 – 12 words encourage students to pick 3 – 4 of the following individual activities to complete.
   a. Write a story or a poem using at least 5 of the vocabulary words.
   b. Design a bookmark for each word. Write the word and illustrate the meaning of the word.
   c. Create a comic strip that has at least 6 squares. Tell a story and include at least 5 vocabulary words.
   d. Search for the words in a magazine or newspaper. Circle/highlight them.
   e. Act out the words and have someone guess what it is. (Charades)
   f. Look up the words in the dictionary or a thesaurus and write their synonyms.

g. Write a story using all the vocabulary words.
h. Write a sentence for each word.
i. Create a game using the vocabulary words.
j. Make up a song using at least 5 words.

XI. **Graphic Organizers**: located on pages 27 – 29.
  a. KWL: a visual strategy used to determine what students know and what they have learned.
  b. Venn Diagram: Two overlapping circles used to show the similarities/differences of an idea. Check out the **Venn Diagram App** to use on an iPad or PC
  c. SQ3R:
       i. S-Survey: find topic/main idea by looking at title of text
      ii. Q-Question: record all questions about the topic
     iii. R-Read: read the text
      iv. R-Recite/Recall: think about what was read
       v. R-Review: reread the text and discuss what was learned
  d. Resource: Multiple Reading Graphic Organizers can be found here: http://www.readinga-z.com/comprehension/reading-graphic-organizers/
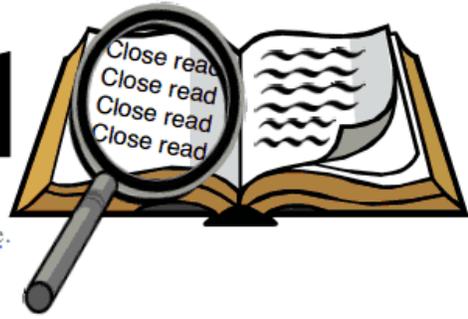
Close Read

1 **1st Read:** Students read and annotate

2 Students think and quick write

3 Students talk with partner

4 **2nd Read:** Teacher reads, students listen

5 Think, write, talk

6 **3rd Read:** Listen and watch while teacher reads and annotates

7 **4th Read:** Students reread to find answers and evidence

8 Respond in writing, citing evidence from the text

Annotation Key – Level #1

*   Background knowledge

\+   Important facts

?   Questions

!   Surprising or exciting information

Annotation Key - Level #2

(Circle) Words or phrases that are unknown or confusing

Underline Major points, powerful and repeated words or phrases

EX Example of evidence

?? Questions that you have during reading - Ask How & Why? (write question in margin)

!! Something that is GREAT or SURPRISING. Idea that you love!

→ Make a connection to the text, idea, or experience (note the connection in the margin)

1, 2, 3, … Number key details or important ideas

Annotation Key - Level #3

 # Number Paragraphs   Numbering the paragraphs will allow students to be able to cite and refer back to text.

Group Text   Break up the text into smaller sections by drawing a horizontal line across the page after a few paragraphs.

Circle   Circle words or phrases that are unknown or confusing.

Underline   Underline major points, powerful and repeated words or phrases.

Left Margin   Summarize each group.

Right Margin   Write, draw or doodle examples of what the author is DOING (Use Power Verbs – list attached) **AND** tell more (what is the author comparing or demonstrating) Be Specific
OR Ask How and Why Questions??

Power Verbs

(Use these verbs to describe what the author of the text is DOING!)

Acknowledges
Analyzes
Articulates
Asserts
Characterizes
Cites
Clarifies
Compares
Compliments
Confirms
Contrast
Criticizes
Debates
Declares
Defends
Demonstrates
Draws attention to
Establishes
Evokes
Exaggerates
Explores
Exposes
Expresses
Highlights
Hints
Illustrates
Implies

Indicates
Justifies
Lists
Mocks
Notes
Observes
Points out
Portrays
Praises
Questions
Quotes
Reflects
Reinforces
Reveals
Sheds Light
Signifies
Suggest
Supports
Symbolizes
Trivializes
Unifies
Verifies

Level #1 Example

A soccer field is the setting in the untitled poem below, which was written by Ellen Bryant Voigt.

Muscular and fleet, he moves without thinking
among the shifting jerseys on the field.
In his wake the paler one,
through wave after wave of the enemy line,
presses the white ball forward: winded and earnest,
he has willed his body to this pitch
until the body is inside his mind
as the mind arranges pieces on the board—now
he cuts a wide angle and passes the ball
though he knows his friend will never give it back.
Ahead of him, always ahead of him:
this is the pattern
already set in their early victories,
one at the prow, one at the wheel.

* Soccer is a game that is played on a field with a ball.

* When playing Soccer the ball is kicked.

* No Hands are allowed to touch the ball.

* Soccer players run a lot during a game.

+ The Main character is a natural Soccer player

+ The main character is a team player and is a good Sport.

+ The main character is quick and athletic.

+ The team has won games in the past.

? Is the "friend" or "team mate" a better player than the main character? Faster runner?

? Does the main character play a specific position on the team? Is this why the "friend" never returns the ball?

! The main character is NOT Selfish!

! The main character continues to pass the ball to his "friend" Even when he knows he will NOT get the ball back

Level #2 Example

Recent animal behavior studies have found that most species appear to spend a great deal of time resting. Monkeys, for example, spend three-quarters of their waking hours just sitting, while hummingbirds perch motionless about 80 percent of every day.

Giving the lie to the old fables about the (unflagging industriousness) of ants, bees, beavers, and the like, a new specialty known as time budget analysis reveals that the great majority of creatures spend most of their time doing nothing much at all. They eat when they must or can. Some species build a makeshift shelter now and again; others fulfill the occasional social (obligation,) like picking out fleas from a fellow creature's fur.

A fair analysis of animal inactivity shows it is almost never born of aimless (indolence,) but instead serves a broad variety of purposes. Some animals lounge around to conserve precious calories, others to improve digestion of the calories they have consumed. Some do it to stay cool, others to keep warm. The hunted is best (camouflaged) when it's not fidgeting or fussing, and so too is the hunter, who wishes to remain (concealed) until the (optimal) moment for attack. Some creatures linger quietly in their territory to guard it, and others stay home to avoid being (cannibalized) by their neighbors.

Even the busy bees or worker ants dedicate only about 20 percent of the day to doing chores like gathering nectar or tidying up the nest. Otherwise, the insects stay still. The myth of the tireless social insect probably arose from observations of entire hives or anthills, which are little galaxies of ceaseless activity. But now that scientists have learned to tag individual insects to see what each does from one moment to the next, they find that any single bee or ant has a lot of (surplus) time.

Biologists studying animals at rest turn to sophisticated mathematical models, resembling those used by economists, which take into account an animal's energy demands, fertility rate, the relative abundance and location of food and water, weather conditions, and other factors. They do extensive cost-benefit analyses, asking questions like: How high is the cost of (foraging) compared with the potential calories that may be gained? Such a calculation involves not only a measure of how much energy an animal burns as it (rummages) about relative to what it would spend resting, but also a consideration of, for example, how hot it will become in motion, and thus how much of its stored water will be needed to evaporate away heat to cool the body. Once they complete their computations, the biologists usually acknowledge their respect for the animal's decision to lie low.

Humans generally spend more time working than do other creatures. One reason for human diligence is that we can often override our impulses to slow down. Many humans are driven to work hard by a singular desire to gather resources far beyond what is required for survival. Squirrels collect what they need to make it through one winter; only humans worry about college bills or retirement.

Handwritten margin notes:

Ex Animals have different reasons to rest and lie low.

Ex Scientist find that it is a good idea for the insects to rest because the bugs expel more energy & use up their resources faster then if they just hang-out.

|| Bees + ants spend 20% of the day working!

?? Are these animals able to hang out because of brain size? OR brain functionality

?? When they are inactive do they sleep a lot?

Ex Scientist use statistics to compare the amount of energy burned vs. the calories saved.

Do Humans get extra rest while watching TV?

→ I want to enjoy nice things and vacations so I need to work more than rest.

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Level #3 Example

A violent storm has threatened the first voyage of the ship Nan-Shan. This excerpt from a work of fiction portrays several crew members, including the first mate, Jukes, as they confront the storm.

Jukes takes on his responsibilities and encourages his shipmates to help. **1**

Jukes was as ready a man as any half-dozen young mates that may be caught by casting a net upon the waters; and though he had been somewhat taken aback by the startling viciousness of the first squall, he had pulled himself together on the instant, had called out the hands, and had rushed them along to secure such openings about the deck as had not been already battened down earlier in the evening. Shouting in his fresh, stentorian voice, "Jump, boys, and bear a hand!" he led in the work, telling himself the while that he had "just expected this."

Allows the reader to feel a bit nervous for Jukes but at the same time let's us know he can take charge and perform his job with confidence

The storm is progressing quickly and it is getting bad. **2**

But at the same time he was growing aware that this was rather more than he had expected. From the first stir of the air felt on his cheek the gale seemed to take upon itself the accumulated impetus of an avalanche. Heavy sprays enveloped the Nan-Shan from stem to stern, and instantly in the midst of her regular rolling she began to jerk and plunge as though she had gone mad with fright.

Jukes is relieved when the Captain arrives. **3**

Jukes thought, "This is no joke." While he was exchanging explanatory yells with his captain, a sudden lowering of the darkness came upon the night, falling before their vision like something palpable It was as if the masked lights of the world had been turned down. Jukes was uncritically glad to have his captain at hand. It relieved him as though that man had, by simply coming on deck, taken most of the gale's weight upon his shoulders. Such is the prestige, the privilege, and the burden of command.

Introduces the Captain as a wise man with authority and experience

The Captain has lots of experience at sea and knows that this is a bad storm. **4**

Captain MacWhirr could expect no relief of that sort from anyone on earth. Such is the loneliness of command. He was trying to see, with that watchful manner of a seaman who stares into the wind's eye as if into the eye of an adversary to penetrate the hidden intention and guess the aim and force of the thrust. The strong wind swept at him out of a vast obscurity; he felt under his feet the uneasiness of his ship, and he could not even discern the shadow of her shape. He wished it were not so; and very still he waited. . . .

Explains how brutal the storm is and gives the reader the sense that the ship may sink...

Excerpt from Typhoon by Joseph Conrad.
stentorian: loud and far-reaching
palpable: able to be felt
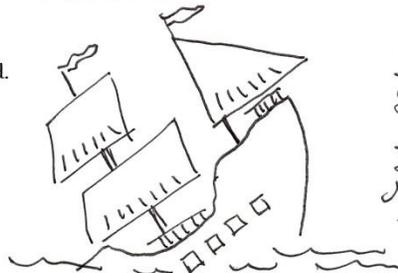
Is the ship going to sink?

Does Captain MacWhirr know this?

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Text-Dependent Questions

1 **Key understanding:** Identify the key understandings and insights you want students to learn from the text. (You may use this later to write an essential question.)

2 **Build understanding of the meaning:** Start with easier questions about what, where, why, and how, to help build understanding of the meaning of the passage.

Primary Example Retell the story using time sequence words such as *first, next, then, & finally.*

Elementary Example How does the main character change in the text?

3 **Vocabulary and text structure:** Craft questions about the most powerful academic words, and text structures (such as cause/effect, problem/solution, compare/contrast, sequence, etc.).

Primary Example How did the author help us understand what *angle* means?

Elementary Example What does the word *postal* mean in paragraph three? or Knowing the structure, what can we expect?

4 **Author's purpose and point of view:** Ask questions to draw the reader's attention to genre, author's purpose, point of view, and multiple perspectives.

Primary Example Who tells the story?

Elementary Example Whose point of view do we see? Whose point of view is not represented in the text? or Why does the author write this?

5 **Inference questions:** Challenge students to examine inferences on ideas or key details/arguments in the text.

Primary Example What caused the bird to fly away? Why do you think that?

Elementary Example What can we infer about what really happened to the main character? What evidence in the text supports your claim/ thinking?

6 **Opinion and intertextual questions:** Have students assert their opinions or make connections to other texts, and support their claims with evidence from the text.

Primary Example Is Ramona Q's family a loving family? What in the books makes you think that?

Elementary Example Think about both authors' attitudes towards conservation. Which author do you agree more with? Defend your thinking with evidence from the text.

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QUESTIONS TO USE WITH FICTION

Questions That Foster Personal Connections

✦ How are your feelings and the feelings of a character in your book alike? How are they different?

✦ What feelings did you have as you read the story? Find some places that made you feel this way. Share and discuss these.

✦ What words does the author use that you might want to use in your own writing? Jot these down in your notebook.

✦ Have you had experiences similar to a character in the story? Discuss these.

✦ Select and read to the group a passage that you found meaningful. Explain why.

✦ How did the story change your thinking? Or can you show how it validated or affirmed your thinking?

Questions About Setting

✦ Where does the story take place? Discuss the important settings and explain why you believe each is important to the story.

✦ When does the story take place? Was it long ago, in the future, or the present? What did you learn about this time period?

✦ How much time passes in the story? Skim through your book and find places that show how the author makes time pass, and share these.

Questions About Characters

✦ Who is the main character? Why is this character important to the story?

✦ Are there words a character spoke and/or actions a character took that helped you learn what kind of a person he or she was? Find and discuss two important sections.

✦ Did any of the characters change? Pick one and discuss how an event, person, and decision changed that character.

✦ Discuss what you think the main character learned about himself, his family, or his friends.

✦ Describe a conflict between two characters. How was it resolved? What did you learn about these characters?

✦ Name one to two minor characters. Show how each affected the main character.

✦ Were there problems characters couldn't solve? Identify one or two and explain why you think they weren't resolved.

Questions About Structure

✦ What is the genre of your book? Give examples that support your decision.

✦ What literary techniques did you find? flashback? foreshadowing? figurative language? Find examples of two of these techniques, and share.

✦ Did the author create different moods? Find passages in the text that reveal two different moods, and share. Point out the words, phrases, and actions that helped create the mood.

Questions About Theme

✦ How does the title relate to the story?

✦ Discuss some points that the author is making about family, friends, feelings, nature, life experiences, or an historical period. Use details from the story that back up a point you're making.

✦ Discuss what the author might have been saying about family relationships and offer support from the story to back up your position.

QUESTIONS FOR BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL FICTION

Biography, Autobiography, Memoir

+ Why is this person famous?

+ Discuss three to four personality traits that helped make this person achieve his or her goal.

+ What are two to three problems this person had to overcome?

+ What about this person do you feel enabled him or her to realize personal hopes and dreams?

+ Were there people and/or events that helped this person realize his or her dream? Select two and show how each influenced the person.

+ What do you admire or dislike about this person? Explain your position.

+ How are you and this person alike? different? Give specific examples in your discussions.

+ How did this person affect the lives of other people during his or her time? during our time?

Historical Fiction

+ What clues did you use to determine the time and place of this book?

+ What does the book teach you about family life and relationships between family members?

+ What does this book teach you about the role of men and women during these times?

+ What kinds of struggles and problems did the main character face? List three and explain how the main character dealt with and solved each one. If there was no solution, explain why you think the problem couldn't be solved.

+ Would you enjoy living during the time of this book? Explain why or why not.

+ What problems, conflicts does the main character face that you deal with in your life?

+ How do the main character's problems differ from yours?

+ How do people cope with economic problems such as scarcity of food? money? jobs?

+ How are minorities portrayed? Are they stereotyped? Offer examples.

QUESTIONS FOR FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

Fantasy

+ What are the settings? Explain the elements of fantasy that you see in the setting.

+ How does the author enable you, the reader, to enter the fantasy world? Are there realistic elements? Discuss some of these and how they affect the story.

+ How do trips to other times and worlds help the characters cope with the present time?

+ Is there a struggle between forces of light and dark? Who wins? Offer support for the victory.

+ What special powers does the hero possess? For what purposes does he or she use these powers?

+ What does the hero learn about himself/herself? about life?

+ What personality traits do you have in common with the hero? Discuss two of these.

+ How do ideas and themes in this book connect to other fantasy books you've read?

+ Does the story deal with values and themes about death?

+ How has this book changed your thinking?

Science Fiction

+ What scientific advances do you see in the society? How do these advances in technology affect the characters' decisions and actions?

+ Are problems characters face in the story similar to or different from those people face today? Explain with examples.

+ Does the author deal with present-day issues such as population, food supplies, ecology, technological advances? Compare the author's views to your own.

+ Does the story offer hope for humanity or is it a warning? Explain your conclusion.

+ How do people fit into this futuristic society? Are they subordinate to machines? Has democracy vanished? See if you can identify the changes and offer reasons for each one.

+ Would you like to live in this society? Are there advantages and disadvantages? Offer reasons from the text for your decisions.

QUESTIONS FOR REALISTIC FICTION AND HISTORICAL FICTION

Realistic Fiction

✦ What problems does the main character face? Do you feel these problems are realistic? Why? Why not?

✦ Describe three or four settings and show how each influences the events and characters' actions and decisions. Would similar settings have influenced you in the same way? Explain.

✦ What about the main character is realistic in terms of your experiences?

✦ What about two to three minor characters is realistic in terms of your experiences?

✦ What problems and conflicts in this book are realistic?

✦ What problems do you and the main character or a minor character have in common? Compare the way you deal with those problems to the way the character dealt with them.

✦ What are the realistic themes and issues in the book? Do they have to do with growing up, peer pressure, friendships, family relationships, survival, divorce, stereotyping? Discuss three themes the book explored.

✦ In real life, events and people can change a character. How did an important event or person change the character at the end of the book?

Mystery

✦ How does the author build suspense and excitement? Find two to three passages and discuss how the author accomplished this. Was it through description? characters' thoughts and actions?

✦ What is the mystery that must be solved? How does setting affect the mystery?

✦ What are some clues that the author includes to lead you away from solving the mystery?

✦ What traits does the main character possess that enables him or her to solve the mystery?

✦ Why did the main character become involved in the mystery?

✦ How does danger affect the decisions and actions of the main character/detective?

✦ At what point in the book were you able to solve the mystery? Why could you do this?

✦ What part did you consider most suspenseful? Share it and explain why.

QUESTIONS FOR NONFICTION AND FOLK- AND FAIRY TALES

Nonfiction

✦ Why did you select this book?

✦ What new information did you learn?

✦ What questions did the book raise but did not answer?

✦ What did you learn from photographs? from charts and diagrams? from illustrations?

✦ Did this book change your thinking on this topic? How?

✦ Did the author weave opinions into facts? Can you find examples of each?

Folk and Fairy Tales

✦ Can you classify your fairy/folktale and explain why you selected the category? Was it a cumulative, circular, realistic, wonder, beast, numskull, giant, or quest tale?

✦ Does the tale revolve around magic numbers? If so, explain the role of these magic numbers in the story and how they affected the adventures and characters.

✦ Why must heroic tasks or deeds be accomplished?

✦ How do the adventures, the magic, and other characters change the life of the hero or heroine?

✦ What are two difficult decisions characters made? What influences these decisions? How do their decisions change their lives?

✦ What human characteristics do animals, flowers, and toys have? How are their qualities similar to yours?

✦ What is the clash and struggle between good and evil? Who wins? Offer support for your opinion on the victory.

✦ Who is the hero? The heroine? What qualities make him or her heroic?

Annotation Poster

1. Have students use Annotation Key - Level #1

2. Encourage students to write in complete sentences.

3. Have students write only 1 sentence per sticky note.

4. Invite students to annotate as many ideas as they can and write on sticky notes.

5. Have students choose 2-3 most important sticky-notes in each of the four categories.

6. Give students a piece of poster board/construction paper and ask them to arrange their chosen sticky notes in the middle of the page.

7. Ask the question, "What did the author want you to learn?" or "What was the author's purpose in writing this piece or text?"

8. Allow for students to share their posters with each other and display them for the whole center to read.

The author wants us to learn that scientists are

Studying and analysizing the amout of energy an animal burns and

* Ants + Bees are small insects that work hard and can carry items that are heavier then themselves.

+ Many animals spend most of their time resting.

+ Scientist are studying about animals and resting.

? Do the animals and insects fall asleep after sitting around all day?

? Is there really a myth about insects being busy all the time?

! It is hard to believe that most animals just sit around all day.

how important it is for animals to stay still and rest.

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Close-Read Jigsaw Activity

1. Read Text Aloud

2. Invite students to re-read text silently

3. Ask Students " What is the text mainly about?" or What are some topics that tell about the text?"

4. Record 2-4 topics as headings on the board or chart paper (leave space below or beside each topic in order to add more information) Always include a miscellaneous topic section.

5. Break students into small groups and assign each group a close-reading focus to analyze
   a. Vocabulary
        i. Unfamiliar words
        ii. Important & repeated words
        iii. Diction & slang
        iv. Mood words
   b. Author's style
        i. Word Choice
        ii. Figurative Language
        iii. Sentence Structure
   c. Imagery
        i. Sensory details
        ii. Metaphors & Analogies
        iii. Symbolism

6. Have students Re-Read text again and annotate their focus area recording their findings on post-it-notes

7. Invite students to bring post-it-notes to the board(chart paper) and categorize them under the correct topic (if it doesn't fit a category them place it under miscellaneous)

8. Come together as a whole group and review the details/related topics.

9. Lead students into drawing a conclusion tying the key details of the text together.

Steps for Using Context Clues

Step 1: Check for synonyms or definitions embedded right there. If you find one, reread the sentence with the new term keeping the synonym or definition in mind. Then tell yourself in your own words what the sentence is saying.

Step 2: Check for a contrast clue. If you find one, think about its meaning, telling yourself the opposite meaning. Then reread the sentence and rephrase it in your own mind.

Step 3: When you read a sentence that you have trouble understanding because of an unfamiliar word, reread the sentence and substitute a word that seems to make sense in the context.

Step 4: Read on. If the word you substituted does not make sense in the context of the rest of the paragraph, try again.

Step 5: If the sentence still does not make sense to you and you do not understand the main point, look for a synonym, definition, and contrast clue. If you are still uncertain, check a dictionary.

Word-Attack Strategies

Word-attack strategies help students decode, pronounce, and understand unfamiliar words, using all three cueing systems. They help students attack words piece by piece or from a different angle.

- Use Picture Clues
    - Look at the picture.
    - Are there people, objects, or actions in the picture that might make sense in the sentence?

- Sound Out the Word
    - Start with the first letter, and say each letter-sound out loud.
    - Blend the sounds together and try to say the word. Does the word make sense in the sentence?

- Look for Chunks in the Word
    - Look for familiar letter chunks. They may be sound/symbols, prefixes, suffixes, endings, whole words, or base words.

    - Read each chunk by itself. Then blend the chunks together and sound out the word. Does that word make sense in the sentence?

- Connect to a Word You Know
    - Think of a word that looks like the unfamiliar word.

CONTEXT CLUES

Grades	6 – 8
Lesson Plan Type	Standard Lesson
Estimated Time	Five 45-minute sessions plus extensions
Lesson Author	**Scott Greenwood, Ed.D.** West Chester, Pennsylvania **Kevin Flanigan** West Chester, Pennsylvania
Publisher	International Reading Association

SESSION 1: INTRODUCING CONTEXT CLUES

1. Ask students what context clues are. Remind them that some authors "leak" information on the page and that it sometimes requires detective work to "solve" word meanings. Remind students also that context clues are helpful for learning new words and better understanding what they read.

2. Prepare students to work as detectives, using clues to figure out what an unfamiliar word means. Divide students into pairs (see Preparation, Step 1). Write the following sentence on the board or overhead: "The *vixen* was not as fortunate." Ask students to define the word *vixen*. At the middle level, most students will need to guess its meaning. Have them share their definitions with their partners. Discuss with students how there is not enough context in the sentence to infer the meaning of the word *vixen*.

3. Write the following sentence: "The *vixen* was not as fortunate as her mate, and was caught in the steel-jawed trap. Her red pelt would bring a good price." Model for students your reasoning as you think aloud how to infer the meaning of the word *vixen* from the context of the sentence (e.g., must be an animal, definitely female, has red fur, must be a female fox). Note: This is a fairly challenging first example. If students are not familiar with the word *pelt*, you may need to provide another sentence with context clues to help them figure out its meaning.

4. Introduce the LPR3 mnemonic as a useful aid for figuring out unknown words from context.
    Look-before, at, and after the new word

    Predict-quickly predict the word's meaning, remembering that a wrong prediction is often a good start

Reason-think more carefully about the word's meaning, trying to be as precise as the context clues permit

Resolve-recognize that you may need to take other steps (e.g., look it up, ask someone)

Redo-go through the steps again if necessary

5. Write the following sentence on the board or overhead:
   "Billy's reply was *incoherent*."
   Model through a think-aloud process the LPR3 mnemonic to solve the meaning of the word *incoherent* as follows: "First, I need to <u>look</u> before, at, and after the unfamiliar word *incoherent*. Then I need to <u>predict</u>what the word might mean by substituting other words that could make sense in the sentence, like *funny*,*stupid*, *clever*, or *wrong*. When I try to <u>reason</u> or look more closely at the context, all I know is that *incoherent*is being used to describe Billy's reply. I think I need more help to <u>resolve</u> the meaning of this word."

6. Next write the following sentence on the board or overhead:
   "Due to a severe lack of sleep and extreme nervousness, Billy's reply was *incoherent*."
   Think aloud while modeling the LPR3 mnemonic again. "When I <u>look</u> this time, there are no words after*incoherent*, but I can figure out a lot from what's before the word. I'm going to <u>predict</u> that it means 'does not make any sense.' My <u>reason</u> is that it says 'severe lack of sleep and extreme nervousness.' I think I can<u>resolve</u> the meaning based on this context because I know what it's like when I'm overtired and nervous." Discuss as a class how the context clues in the sentence and the LPR3 mnemonic helped to solve the meaning of the word *incoherent*.

7. Have students work in pairs to practice applying the LPR3 mnemonic with a few unfamiliar words found in a text they are reading in class. Make sure they are able to explain their thought process as they work through each step. (You might also assign this activity for homework if time in class is limited.)

8. Distribute the Types of Context Clues handout, and introduce the four different types of context clues. After discussing the examples on the handout, have students work with their partners to write two sentences, each exemplifying one of the types of context clues just introduced. Have dictionaries and thesauri available or encourage students to access the online versions at dictionary.com and thesaurus.com.

9. Take time at the end of the session for pairs to share their sentences with other pairs or the whole class. Collect the sentences and check for understanding.

SESSION 2: PRACTICING CONTEXT CLUES

1. Begin this session by reviewing a few of the student-generated sentences from Session 1, Step 8 showing examples of the four types of context clues. Reinforce how the meaning of an unknown word can be solved by identifying the type of context clue in the sentence. Review also the LPR3 mnemonic-students do not need to follow the mnemonic slavishly, but remind them that it is a good starting point. You may also wish to promote the mnemonic as a bookmark or wall chart.

2. Write the following sentence on the overhead or board:
    "They _____ across the street."
    Have students fill in plausible answers. Make it clear that there are many good action verbs that may fit, but that students need more information, particularly what or who "they" refers to, to identify the unknown word.

3. Next, add to the context by writing:
    "Kelly dropped her can of tennis balls. They _____across the street."
    Discuss how the context helps to narrow the words that would make sense in the sentence.

4. Demonstrate another example:
    "They are still seeing the optimistic, charmingly <u>loquacious</u> teenager."
    As opposed to filling in a blank, in this example, students are encountering a genuine word in an authentic context. Think aloud while you model the LPR3 mnemonic one more time. "I have no idea what *loquacious*means, but I'm going to try to figure it out. First, I need to <u>look</u> before, at, and after the word. I know the words *charming* and *optimistic* are positive traits, and that *loquacious* is another adjective describing the teenager. I <u>predict</u> that it will also be a positive trait...I'm going to say that it means *pretty*, just as a guess. Now, I'm going to <u>reason</u> a little more, but I'm not sure I'll be able to <u>resolve</u> the meaning from this sentence alone. Let me look at the next sentence."
    "She was constantly on the phone for hours at a time."
    "This is a huge clue-I'm going to <u>redo</u> my prediction and <u>resolve</u> that *loquacious* must mean r*eally talkative-a motormouth*-but not in an obnoxious way."

5. Distribute the Context Clues handout for guided practice. Have students complete the examples provided. Then, allow students time to add to the contexts. For example, in sentence 4, a student could have written, "Charlie was *exhausted*." The objective in this second part of the exercise is for students to enrich the context so that *exhausted* is explicitly called for in the sentence. An example would be, "After working a double shift, Charlie was *exhausted*." Collect the handouts and check for understanding.

K-W-L CHART

TOPIC:

Know	**W**ant to Know	**L**earned

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Name : _____   **Venn Diagram**

_____   _____

(Venn diagram with two overlapping circles containing blank writing lines)

28

Math-Aids.Com
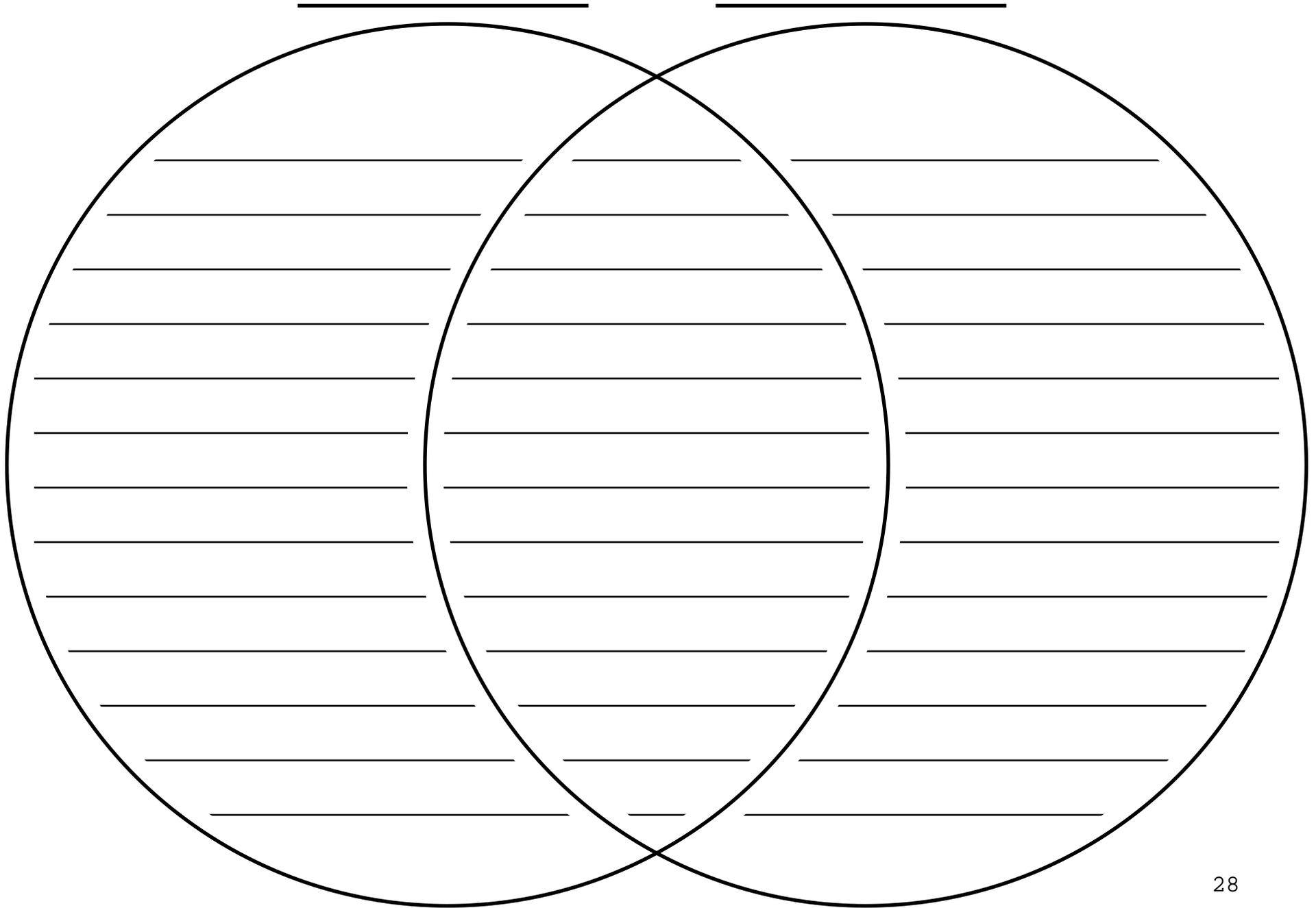
Name _____   Date _____

SQ3R Chart

Title of Work: _____

Survey: Record important titles and subtitles from work.

_____

_____

Question: Write "Who, What, When, Where, and Why" questions from main topics.

_____

_____

Read: Write answers to questions from above.

_____

_____

Recite: Record key facts and phrases as needed for each question.

_____

_____

Review: Create a summary paragraph for each question.

_____

_____

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