

Close Reading of Informational/ Literary Nonfiction Texts

Learning Targets

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9–10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Read Aloud, Marking the Text, Summarizing, Jigsaw, SOAPSTone, OPTIC

Close Reading for Meaning

In this workshop, you will read three different texts and practice close reading using strategies that will help you make meaning of the text. Your teacher will guide you through the first activity. In Activity 2, you will work in a collaborative group to read and respond to the text. For the third activity, you will work independently to apply the close reading strategies you have learned to understanding a new text.

ACTIVITY 1

Guided Practice

You will read the text in this activity at least three times, focusing on a different purpose for each reading.

First Reading: First Impressions

Read the following passage silently. Your focus for this first reading is on understanding the meaning of the passage. As you read, practice diffusing the words you may not know by replacing unfamiliar words with synonyms or definitions for the underlined words. Use the definitions and synonyms to the right of the paragraphs to help your understanding.

In addition, stop after each paragraph and do these two things:

1. Underline the topic sentence of each paragraph.
2. Circle the most important word in the sentence that you underlined.

Essay

*A Quilt of a Country:
Out of Many, One?*

by Anna Quindlen

mongrel: of mixed origin

1 America is an improbable idea. A mongrel nation built of ever-changing disparate parts, it is held together by a **notion**, the notion that all men are created equal, though everyone knows that most men consider themselves better than someone. “Of all the nations in the world, the United States was built in nobody’s image,” the historian Daniel Boorstin wrote. That’s because it was built of bits and pieces that seem discordant, like the crazy **quilts** that have been one of its great **folk-art** forms, velvet and calico and checks and brocades. Out of many, one. That is the ideal.

discordant: incompatible;
disagreeingpluralistic: many cultures
coexisting in a society
bigotry: prejudice
ostracism: exclusion from
social acceptance

2 The reality is often quite different, a great national **striving** consisting frequently of failure. Many of the oft-told stories of the most pluralistic nation on earth are stories not of **tolerance**, but of bigotry. Slavery and sweatshops, the burning of crosses and the ostracism of the other. Children learn in social-studies class and in the news of the **lynching** of blacks, the denial of rights to women, the murders of gay men. It is difficult to know how to convince them that this amounts to “crown thy good with brotherhood,” that amid all the failures is something spectacularly successful. Perhaps they understand it at this moment, when enormous **tragedy**, as it so often does, demands a time of **reflection** on enormous blessings.

conundrum: difficult puzzle
or problem

3 This is a nation founded on a conundrum, what Mario Cuomo has characterized as “community added to individualism.” These two are our defining ideals; they are also in constant conflict. Historians today **bemoan** the ascendancy of a kind of prideful apartheid in America, saying that the cling to **ethnicity**, in background and custom, has **undermined** the concept of unity. These historians must have forgotten the past, or have gilded it. The New York of my children is no more Balkanized, probably less so, than the Philadelphia of my father, in which Jewish boys would walk several blocks out of their way to avoid the Irish divide of Chester Avenue. (I was the product of a mixed marriage, across barely bridgeable lines: an Italian girl, an Irish boy. How quaint it seems now, how incendiary then.) The Brooklyn of Francie Nolan’s famous tree, the Newark of which Portnoy complained, even the uninflected WASP suburbs of Cheever’s characters: they are ghettos, pure and simple. Do the Cambodians and the Mexicans in California coexist less easily today than did the Irish and Italians of Massachusetts a century ago? You know the answer.

apartheid: segregation,
separationgilded: made something
seem better than it really is
Balkanized: divided into
hostile subgroupsincendiary: arousing violent
or intense conflict

4 What is the point of this **splintered** whole? What is the point of a nation in which Arab cabbies chauffeur Jewish passengers through the streets of New York—and in which Jewish cabbies chauffeur Arab passengers, too, and yet speak in theory of hatred, one for the other? What is the point of a nation in which one part seems to be always on

the verge of fisticuffs with another, blacks and whites, gays and straights, left and right, Pole and Chinese and Puerto Rican and Slovenian? Other countries with such divisions have in fact divided into new nations with new names, but not this one, impossibly interwoven even in its **hostilities**.

fisticuffs: fighting with the fists

5 Once these disparate parts were held together by a common enemy, by the fault lines of world wars and the electrified fence of communism. With the end of the cold war there was the creeping concern that without a focus for hatred and distrust, a sense of national identity would **evaporate**, that the left side of the hyphen—African-American, Mexican-American, Irish-American—would overwhelm the right. And slow-growing domestic traumas like economic unrest and increasing crime seemed more likely to emphasize division than community. Today the citizens of the United States have come together once more because of armed conflict and enemy attack. **Terrorism** has led to **devastation**—and **unity**.

disparate: different, distinct

traumas: physical and emotional shocks

6 Yet even in 1994, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center agreed with this statement: “The U.S. is a unique country that stands for something special in the world.” One of the things that it stands for is this vexing notion that a great nation can consist entirely of **refugees** from other nations, that people of different, even warring religions and cultures can live, if not side by side, then on either side of the country’s Chester Avenues. Faced with this **diversity** there is little point in trying to **isolate** anything remotely resembling a national character, but there are two strains of behavior that, however tenuously, abet the concept of unity.

vexing: annoying, confusing

abet: encourage or support

7 There is that Calvinist undercurrent in the American **psyche** that loves the difficult, the demanding, that sees mastering the impossible, whether it be prairie or subway, as a test of character, and so glories in the struggle of this fractured coalescing. And there is a grudging fairness among the citizens of the United States that eventually leads most to admit that, no matter what the English-only advocates try to suggest, the new **immigrants** are not so different from our own parents or grandparents. Leonel Castillo, former director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and himself the grandson of Mexican immigrants, once told the writer Studs Terkel proudly, “The old neighborhood Ma-Pa stores are still around. They are not Italian or Jewish or Eastern European any more. Ma and Pa are now Korean, Vietnamese, Iraqi, Jordanian, Latin American. They live in the store. They work seven days a week. Their kids are doing well in school. They’re making it. Sound familiar?”

coalescing: uniting or growing into one whole

8 **Tolerance** is the word used most often when this kind of **coexistence** succeeds, but tolerance is a vanilla-pudding word, standing for little more than the allowance of letting others live unremarked and unmolested. Pride seems excessive, given the American willingness to endlessly complain about them, them being whoever is new, different, unknown or currently under suspicion. But **patriotism** is partly taking pride in this unlikely ability to throw all of us together in a country that across its length and breadth is as different as a dozen countries, and still be able to call it by one name. When photographs of the faces of all those who died in the World Trade Center destruction are

assembled in one place, it will be possible to trace in the skin color, the shape of the eyes and the noses, the texture of the hair, a map of the world. These are the representatives of a mongrel nation that somehow, at times like this, has one spirit. Like many **improbable** ideas, when it actually works, it's a wonder.

Check Your Understanding

Choose one paragraph of the essay. Explain the relationship between the topic sentence and the concluding sentence in terms of the meaning of the paragraph.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Rhetoric is the study and practice of effective communication.

Rhetorical here refers to the art of influencing people's opinions.

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context

Now listen as your teacher reads the passage aloud. Follow along as the passage is being read aloud and this time circle words or phrases (other than the underlined words) that are **allusions** and **images** Quindlen uses in this essay to create a rhetorical effect.

After your teacher has read the passage aloud, look up those allusions and images that you identified as unfamiliar and/or important, and make inferences about the relevance and meaning below.

Selected Image or Allusion	Relevance and Meaning

Check Your Understanding

Now that you have diffused unfamiliar terms and identified and analyzed allusions and images, write an summary of the central idea as presented in the first and last paragraphs of Anna Quindlen’s essay. Connect your understanding of how the idea is developed in last paragraph.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning

Now read the passage again, this time with the focus on the interpretive questions of the Key Ideas and Details. As your class discusses the text, annotate it with your responses to the questions and highlight or underline the textual evidence that supports your answer. During discussions, you may also want to annotate the text to record a new or different meaning of the text.

Background Information: Anna Quindlen is an American author, journalist, and opinion columnist whose *New York Times* column *Public and Private* won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1992. In this essay, written on September 26, 2001, two weeks after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, Quindlen explores the “improbable idea” that is America.

Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts (continued)

A Quilt of a Country: Out of Many, One?
by Anna Quindlen

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How do the images of “mongrel” and “quilt” support Quindlen’s idea of an American ideal?

1 America is an improbable idea. A mongrel nation built of ever-changing disparate parts, it is held together by a **notion**, the notion that all men are created equal, though everyone knows that most men consider themselves better than someone. “Of all the nations in the world, the United States was built in nobody’s image,” the historian Daniel Boorstin wrote. That’s because it was built of bits and pieces that seem discordant, like the crazy **quilts** that have been one of its great **folk-art** forms, velvet and calico and checks and brocades. Out of many, one. That is the ideal.

2 The reality is often quite different, a great national **striving** consisting frequently of failure. Many of the oft-told stories of the most pluralistic nation on earth are stories not of **tolerance**, but of bigotry. Slavery and sweatshops, the burning of crosses and the ostracism of the other. Children learn in social-studies class and in the news of the **lynching** of blacks, the denial of rights to women, the murders of gay men. It is difficult to know how to convince them that this amounts to “crown thy good with brotherhood,” that amid all the failures is something spectacularly successful. Perhaps they understand it at this moment, when enormous **tragedy**, as it so often does, demands a time of **reflection** on enormous blessings.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How do the ideals of community and individualism create a conundrum?

3 This is a nation founded on a conundrum, what Mario Cuomo has characterized as “community added to individualism.” These two are our defining ideals; they are also in constant conflict. Historians today **bemoan** the ascendancy of a kind of prideful apartheid in America, saying that the clinging to **ethnicity**, in background and custom, has **undermined** the concept of unity. These historians must have forgotten the past, or have gilded it. The New York of my children is no more Balkanized, probably less so, than the Philadelphia of my father, in which Jewish boys would walk several blocks out of their way to avoid the Irish divide of Chester Avenue. (I was the product of a mixed marriage, across barely bridgeable lines: an Italian girl, an Irish boy. How quaint it seems now, how incendiary then.) The Brooklyn of Francie Nolan’s famous tree, the Newark of which Portnoy complained, even the uninflected WASP suburbs of Cheever’s characters: they are ghettos, pure and simple. Do the Cambodians and the Mexicans in California coexist less easily today than did the Irish and Italians of Massachusetts a century ago? You know the answer.

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

How does Quindlen connect overcoming the “splintering” with the tragic events of 9/11?

4 What is the point of this **splintered** whole? What is the point of a nation in which Arab cabbies chauffeur Jewish passengers through the streets of New York—and in which Jewish cabbies chauffeur Arab passengers, too, and yet speak in theory of hatred, one for the other? What is the point of a nation in which one part seems to be always on the verge of fisticuffs with another, blacks and whites, gays and straights, left and right, Pole and Chinese and Puerto Rican and Slovenian? Other countries with such divisions have in fact divided into new nations with new names, but not this one, impossibly interwoven even in its **hostilities**.

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KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

In what ways does Quindlen’s paradoxical phrase “fractured coalescing” connect to the metaphor of the quilt and reinforce the ideas in her essay?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Quindlen concludes her essay by rejecting the notion of tolerance as a “vanilla-pudding word.” What does she mean by this phrase, and why is tolerance inadequate to explain our uniqueness?

Check Your Understanding

Now that you have read closely and worked to understand the Key Ideas and Details of this text, choose one of the major ideas Quindlen presents (the ideals of community and individualism; the “fractured coalescing,” the “splintered whole” or “vanilla-pudding” tolerance) and discuss your new understanding of how that idea fits into the essay.

Synthesizing Your Ideas

Now that you have read the passage multiple times and have studied its vocabulary, language, and ideas, show your understanding by responding to the following questions about the subject, occasion, audience, purpose, speaker and tone of the essay.

Work with your peers to examine some of the elements that Quindlen considered when crafting her piece. In your group, use the **SOAPStone** strategy to analyze the essay. Consider the guiding questions as you examine each component of the essay. Write your responses on a poster that you will share with the class.

SOAPSTone

S – Speaker	How might Anna Quindlen’s position as a journalist influence her message?
O – Occasion	In what ways might the timing of this essay influence Quindlen’s message?
A – Audience	This essay was published in <i>Newsweek</i> magazine, a widely read weekly news publication. Who, then, is her primary audience? How might this audience shape her essay?
P – Purpose	What is Anna Quindlen’s purpose in writing this essay? How do you believe she wants her audience to respond to the ideas in her essay?
S – Subject	What is the primary subject or central topic of this essay?
Tone	Consider how the tone changes over the course of the essay. Try to characterize the progression. The tone moves from _____ to _____ and finally to _____.

Check Your Understanding

In a manner that your teacher determines, share and compare your group's responses with another's. Check for agreement on important elements such as Purpose and Tone. After discussion, adjust your responses to show new insights.

Writing Prompt: Now that you have exchanged ideas with your peers, write a response in which you analyze how Quindlen uses the controlling metaphor of the quilt to advance her central idea. Be sure to:

- Create a thesis that states Quindlen's central idea.
- Use textual evidence from the essay to support your thesis.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from the ideas presented.

ACTIVITY 2

Collaborative Practice

Look carefully at the painting below. A number of visual texts have come to symbolize the idea of a unified American nation. One famous painting is *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, painted in 1851 by German American artist Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze. Examine the overall effect of this painting and the details by applying the **OPTIC** strategy to your study.

Art

George Washington **CROSSING** *the* **DELAWARE**

by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze



Introducing the Strategy: OPTIC

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.

Applying OPTIC

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.

Work collaboratively to respond to the following prompts that are part of the OPTIC strategy. To do a close reading of a visual image, you should view and review the painting each time you respond to the prompts.

O	Write a brief <i>overview</i> of the content of the painting.
P	Look at each <i>part</i> of the image and note details that seem important. These details can be anything: color, figures, textures, scenery, or any other feature that you notice.
T	Use the <i>title</i> to clarify the subject of the painting.
I	Specify the <i>interrelationships</i> in the painting. In other words, how are the parts related both to one another and to the painting as a whole?
C	Draw a <i>conclusion</i> about the painting as a whole. What is the main idea that the painting offers?

Writing Prompt: Write an essay in which you connect the subject and purpose of this painting to Quindlen’s commentary stemming from the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Be sure to:

- Create a thesis that connects the two texts.
- Provide textual support for your assertion(s).
- Provide a conclusion that follows from your major points.

ACTIVITY 3

Independent Practice

The complete text of Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address, delivered on March 4, 1865, appears below. Lincoln was reelected as President of the United States while the Civil War still raged, and his address needed to recognize the ongoing conflict.

First Reading: First Impressions

Read Lincoln's speech silently to yourself. As you read, think about the meanings of the underlined words and diffuse the vocabulary by replacing the underlined words with synonyms or definitions. Use the definitions included, your knowledge of words, and context clues to understand Lincoln's thinking.

In addition, during your first reading, stop after each paragraph and do two things:

1. Underline the topic sentence of each paragraph.
2. Circle the most important word in the sentence that you underlined.

Speech

Second Inaugural Address

by Abraham Lincoln

1 Fellow countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first.

Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

2 On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

expiration: end of

ventured: dared to do something

impending: soon to happen

insurgent: rebellious, forceful opposition to lawful authority
deprecated: disapproved of

3 One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

rend: tear apart

4 Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should **cease**. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less **fundamental** and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in **wringing** their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

invoke: appeal to someone or something, such as an authority

woe: deep distress or misery

5 The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the **offense** came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty **scourge** of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the **bondsman's** two hundred and fifty years of unrequited **toil** shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the **lash** shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and **righteous** altogether."

providence: protective guidance or care

unrequited: not returned

malice: an intention or desire to do evil

6 With malice toward none; with **charity** for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and **cherish** a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context

After reading the speech to yourself, listen and follow along as the speech is read aloud. As you read along, note the sentences you underlined and the words you circled as important. You may want to underline another, different sentence this time.

After Reading

Pair with another student and share your underlined sentences. Discuss the meanings and the effect of the sentences on your understanding and appreciation of Lincoln's comments. Together, choose one sentence from the speech that you both consider important.

Check Your Understanding

Now that you have defined unfamiliar terms and identified important sentences and ideas in Lincoln's speech, show your understanding of this important speech by choosing a significant sentence and explaining its importance within the context of the entire speech.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning

Now read the passage again, this time with the focus of reading to respond to the interpretive questions in the Key Ideas and Details.

Second Inaugural Address
by Abraham Lincoln

1 Fellow countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first.

Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

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KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Lincoln calls the progress of the Civil War “reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all.” However, he does not specifically predict that the forces in the North will win. What is the effect of expressing hope while not claiming certain victory?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Lincoln uses the term “insurgent” to describe the Confederate forces. What other language does Lincoln use to remind his audience that he believes the fault of the continuing war lies exclusively in the hands of those who fight on the side of the South?

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Lincoln recognizes that both sides in the conflict “read the same Bible, and pray to the same God.” How does he use this reference to religion to make a larger point?

the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

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After Reading

Writing Prompt: Based on your understanding of Lincoln’s speech at his Second Inauguration, summarize his points as to why the United States is at war. Be sure to:

- Begin the paragraph with a topic sentence.
- Use quotations as you summarize.

Synthesizing Your Understanding Using SOAPSTone

You are familiar with the analytical strategy of SOAPSTone. Use it now to bring together your thinking about the important elements of this speech. Use the following space or create a similar graphic organizer and list the six aspects used to analyze text.

S – Speaker	
O – Occasion	
A – Audience	
P – Purpose	
S – Subject	
Tone	

Writing Prompt: Taking into account all the ideas you have heard, write a response in which you analyze how Lincoln has structured his ideas in his second inaugural address, including the order in which he makes the points, how he introduces and develops the points, and the connections he draws between them.

Be sure to:

1. Create a topic sentence that makes a general statement about the structure or organization of the speech
2. Explain how Lincoln develops his structure
3. Examine the connections Lincoln draws from the points he makes.

ACTIVITY 4

Synthesis Questions

Your teacher may choose, or ask you to choose, one of the following assessments to demonstrate your understanding of the texts you have read.

Writing Prompt: Quindlen’s essay and Lincoln’s second inaugural address both express the message that it is important for people in America to move past divisions to a more perfect union. How does the painting of George Washington crossing the Delaware express the same ideas visually?

Debate/Discussion: Conduct a Socratic Seminar. Now that you have analyzed elements of Lincoln’s second inaugural address, work with a group to create three or four open-ended questions connected to the text of Lincoln’s address to be used in a Socratic Seminar. Remember that your text-based questions should not have a “yes” or “no” answer but should be questions that will encourage a rich discussion. With your questions and your annotated text in front of you, engage with your peers in a Socratic Seminar in which you share your questions and hear the questions that other students have generated.

Multimedia Presentation: Images that show a contrast between the ideal of unity and the ideal of community abound in depictions of historical and modern America. Create a collage or a collection of contrasting images, and explain how the images embody the ideals of American unity and the realities of American discord. Consider using presentation software to create and show your collection.

Reflection

Think about what you have learned from your close reading and analysis of the text passages you have read in this workshop.

1. Do the words on our national emblem – *E Pluribus Unum*, or “Out of Many, One” – truly express the current reality in America? In what ways is the United States a unique country that stands for something special in the world?
2. In this workshop, what have you learned about how to make sense of complex texts? How can you use what you have learned to help you as you encounter challenging texts in the future? What strategies best helped you as a learner during this workshop? When and why would you use these strategies in the future?