

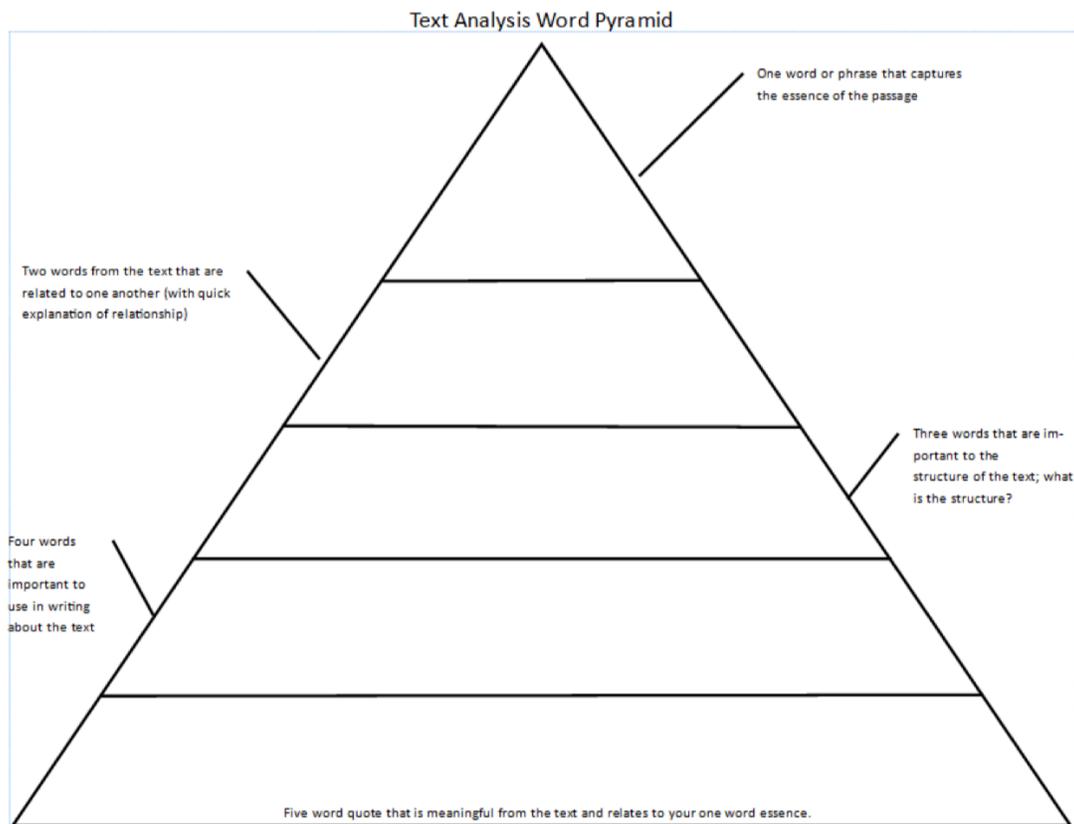


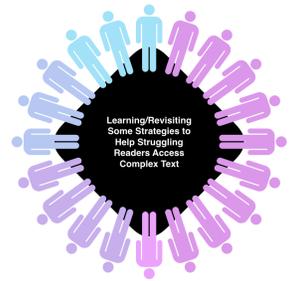
TEXT ANALYSIS WORD PYRAMID

To help students begin to see that they can make sense of the text even if they struggle reading every word, focus on the basic level of the reading— words. This TEXT ANALYSIS WORD PYRAMID strategy asks students to focus on words and pull them out for a graphic organizer as they read. Because the graphic is just a pyramid (triangle with four horizontal lines), it can be replicated on scratch paper by students at any time and does not require a pre-made organizer. When we ask students to pull out words from a text, we are helping them understand analysis—breaking down a text into smaller parts (e.g. words) to tie to a whole (e.g. style). In this strategy students are looking for fifteen words/phrases for specific reasons, i.e. looking for parts (words) to tie to a whole (relationships, structure, overall essence/meaning/theme). Here are the five words/phrases the pyramid asks students to find:

- One word or phrase that captures the essence of the passage
 - Two words from the text that are related to one another (with quick explanation of relationship)
 - Three words that are important to the structure of the text; what is the structure?
 - Four words that are important to use in writing about the text
 - Five word quotation that is meaningful from the text and relates to the One word essence
- Notice how each of the categories directs students to possible areas for discussion, writing, or standardized test questions. The strategy is simple, but has the potential to help students discuss and write about complex text. It lends itself especially well to informational texts.

You can see an example of the organizer (TEXT ANALYSIS WORD PYRAMID) at the ELA Strand Resources Quick Link under Reading Resources on the ELA 6-12 Webpage and below.





QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL

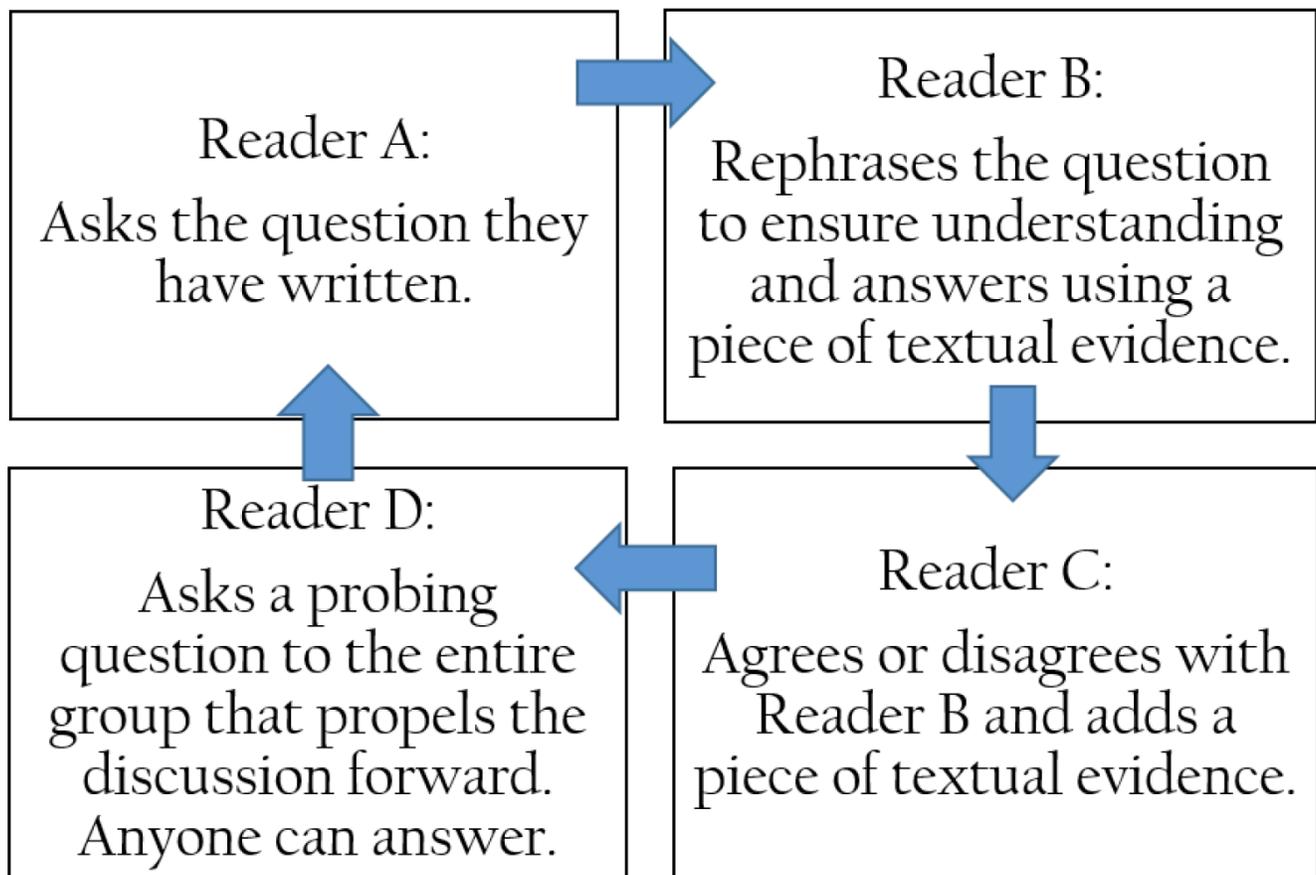
As accomplished readers, we know that there is thinking and questioning that happens while we read. For struggling readers, sometimes just pronouncing words takes their thinking/questioning focus and they do not replicate the types of thinking and questioning that lead to comprehension. Giving them an arsenal of question stems to guide their thinking can elevate the meaning they get from a text and their ability to talk and write about it. One tool that does this in a non-threatening, almost game-like way is the QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL. Here are the steps in the protocol that can be used with any text.

- **Separate the class into groups of four readers (A, B, C, D).** This step allows for flexible groupings that teachers can use to their advantage, such as placing some struggling and some better readers in the same group.
- **Provide students with the handout (next two pages) that includes the Questions Quad Graphic, Question Quad Stems, and the Possible Question Quad Probes.** The Question Quad Graphic will remain the same with all texts, but teachers can vary the Stems and Probes based upon the text. However, it may be helpful to use the same stems and probes for several readings to help students add those questioning tools to their knowledge-base. That way, they can use them on future texts, where they struggle with simply reading and do not activate comprehension questioning during reading. Think about having a set of Stems for Literary Text and a set for Informational Text.
- **Ask each student to pick one of the Question Quad Stems and write two questions about the text using the stem. Readers write two different questions in case someone who asks a question before them has written something similar.** This helps the protocol seem innocuous. Students are given a choice of stems and know that during the upcoming discussion, they have a back-up. It allows them to prepare before discussing and not be put on the spot. They are able to ask questions for which they don't know the answer.
- **Students decide who will be A, B, C, and D. Then, they follow the roles given on the Question Quads Graphic (next page). Reader A asks a question they have written, Reader B rephrases the question for understanding and provides an answer using textual evidence, Reader C agrees or disagrees and provides textual evidence, Reader D uses the Possible Question Quad Probes to extend the conversation to all Readers in the quad. There is a 90 second limit to Reader D's part of the conversation and each Reader A-D should participate.** This step builds in many scaffolds to understanding. The students rely on each other and the text for discussion. They are playing "roles" which makes the activity more game-like and allows students to engage in analysis and text-dependent questioning/answering in a non-threatening way. The entire group is involved in answering the questions. By choosing Stems and Probes that address items/topics frequently seen on standardized tests, such as AIR, students become familiar with the thinking that needs to happen when they read and answer questions on those tests.
- **Repeat the previous step three more times, changing Reader roles. Reader A will become Reader B, Reader B will become Reader C, Reader C will become Reader D, and Reader D will become Reader A.** By repeating the process, students get more time to become good at questioning and discussing, as well as get help with comprehension.

You can get the QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL at the at the ELA Strand Resources Quick Link under Reading Resources on the ELA 6-12 Webpage and below.

QUESTION QUAD PROTOCOL

- Separate the class into groups of four readers (A, B, C, D).
 - Provide students with this handout that includes the Questions Quad Graphic, Question Quad Stems, and the Possible Question Quad Probes.
 - Ask each student to pick one of the Question Quad Stems and write two questions about the text using the stem. Readers write two different questions in case someone who asks a question before them has written something similar.
 - Students decide who will be A, B, C, and D. Then, they follow the roles given on the Question Quads Graphic below. Reader A asks a question they have written, Reader B rephrases the question for understanding and provides an answer using textual evidence, Reader C agrees or disagrees and provides textual evidence, Reader D uses the Possible Question Quad Probes to extend the conversation to all Readers in the quad. There is a 90 second limit to Reader D's part of the conversation and each Reader A-D should participate.
 - Repeat the previous step three more times, changing Reader roles. Reader A will become Reader B, Reader B will become Reader C, Reader C will become Reader D, and Reader D will become Reader A.
-



QUESTION QUAD STEMS

- What words and phrases help you to understand...
 - Why does the author organize/structure...
 - What examples does the author provide for the claim...
 - Why do you think the author...
 - What evidence is most (or least) credible? Why?
 - How does the author relate...
 - What structures does the author use to...
 - What words and phrases stick out to you in terms of...
 - What evidence from the text shows...
 - What is the most effective...
-

POSSIBLE QUESTION QUAD PROBES

- It seems like many of us talked about _____, but we didn't really look at _____. Why is that?
- If the (choose one) context/time period/country/figure involved were different (provide example), how might our ideas shift?
- How does this evidence seem to contradict _____?
- What other information would you like to know to _____?
- How did this evidence/quote/etc. that we discussed impact your personal ideas/beliefs?
- If you could ask the author a question, what would it be? Why?



READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND

Because struggling readers have trouble with comprehension, it can help them to read for a purpose or for a particular question. This allows them to have a laser focus and not a broad focus where they feel they must understand everything and they become overwhelmed. Certain close reading protocols that ask students to read the same passage multiple times usually do so by having a focus for each reading. Both the *Progress to Success* and the SpringBoard Close Reading/Writing Workshop supplementals use this protocol. On standardized tests with writing prompts, the writing prompt can serve as the purpose/question. Here are two samples of the READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND protocol. Notice how both samples have the students actively engaging with the text or each other after each reading. This helps with comprehension. The more modalities used with reading, the greater the comprehension. Notice how the second sample includes more scaffolding. As an added scaffold, you could have an introduction before each reading that includes background or summary information and defines terms needed such as theme, purpose, etc. As the teacher creating the purposes/questions for each reading, you can let the text and standards drive your decisions.

READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND SAMPLE ONE

First Reading: First Impressions

Read the following passage silently. Your focus for this first reading is on understanding the meaning of the text. Consider stopping after every few paragraphs and paraphrasing what you read to demonstrate your understanding. For unfamiliar words, use context clues or reference resources such as dictionaries or thesauruses to determine the word's meaning. Use the definitions and synonyms in the margin to help your understanding.

Check Your Understanding

Pair with another student and talk for one minute each about the passage.

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context

Now that you have read the passage silently, listen and follow along as your teacher reads the text aloud. As you read along with your teacher, continue to mark the text by highlighting or circling unfamiliar words and/or phrases (other than the underlined words, i.e. the ones already defined in the margins), and figure out their meaning. To demonstrate your comprehension, annotate further with paraphrases and/or summaries of the paragraphs, and note their relation to the overall meaning of the text.

Check Your Understanding

Pair with another student and annotate each paragraph of the text by paraphrasing one statement the author makes about _____ in each paragraph it is mentioned.

Choose a paragraph from the passage and write a **summary** statement of the paragraph's main idea. Use two or three words that you have highlighted, underlined, and/or circled as part of your summary.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning

Now read the passage again. This time read it to respond to the questions that follow it. As your class discusses the text, write your responses to each question and highlight or underline the textual evidence that supports your answer. During discussions, you may also want to continue annotating the text to record a new or different meaning of the text.

Check Your Understanding

Now that you've read the passage three times and worked to understand its implications as well as its content, reflect on _____. Explain in your own words how the author _____.

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

READING WITH A QUESTION/PURPOSE IN MIND SAMPLE TWO

FIRST READ: DETAILS

As you read through this excerpt, make a note of the _____ (dialogue, description, words, etc.) that has the greatest impact on you.

JOURNAL RESPONSE

What image stays in your mind from the reading?

SECOND READ: FOCUSING ON THEME

Read the excerpt again. This time look for repeated ideas. Underline every time the word _____ appears in the text. Think about why the narrator (author/character) is continually focused on _____.

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions in pairs and/or Fill in the graphic organizer.

THIRD READ: STYLE SUPPORTS THEME

Listen as your teacher or other students read the excerpt aloud. Think about how the writing sounds.

- Do you hear long, flowing sentences or short, clipped sentences?
- Does the writer use many unfamiliar words or are most of them used in everyday speech?
- Are there many descriptive passages with figurative language or realistic dialogue?

PARTNER WORK

Using the graphic organizer/questions you answered to help you analyze the style of the excerpt, discuss with your partner how the style is appropriate for the themes you uncovered in your second reading. After your discussion, each of you should write one or two paragraphs explaining how the style fits the theme that includes examples from the excerpt. Here are some sentence starters to help you compose your paragraphs.

- The style of the novel is ...
- The writer's words are ... One example of this is ...
- The author uses/does not use sentences that are ... For example ...
- This formal/informal style supports the topic because ...
- The writing style also supports the theme by ...



ACRONYPALOOZA FOR COMPLEX TEXTS

Education is full of acronyms. Since they are easy to remember, struggling readers can use them as an access path to analysis. They can stand for before, during, and after reading actions. They can aid in decoding and comprehension. They can clue students into thinking and writing strategies. Here are several acronyms for accessing complex texts. Many, many more are available and to get buy in, you and your students can create your own.

QCC-Gathering First Impressions

Q-Questions, **C**-Comments, **C**-Connections

Write questions, comments, and connections in the margins of a text or on paper while you read. When you have a question, need clarification, or are unsure, write down your uncertainty. When you discover something surprising, exciting, or fun that makes you say wow, cool, awesome, yuck, no way, whoa, etc., put a comment in the margin. When you discover something new, a knowledge you did not have before or a knowledge that can connect or add to something previously learned, write down your new knowledge and its connection to what you already know, to your own experiences, or to other texts.

SOAPSTONE (Analyzing)

Students need to recognize that any good composition, whether written, spoken, or drawn, is carefully planned. This composition has integral parts that work together in a complex and subtle arrangement to produce meaning. SOAPSTONE provides a concrete strategy to help students identify and use these central components in readings and to use in their own writing. **SOAPSTONE** (**S**peaker, **O**ccasion, **A**udience, **P**urpose, **S**ubject, **T**one) is an acronym for a series of questions that students can ask about a text.

S-Who is the Speaker? (the voice that tells the story)

O-What is the Occasion? (the time and the place of the piece; the context that prompted the writing) Writing does not occur in a vacuum. All writers are influenced by the larger occasion: an environment of ideas, attitudes, and emotions that swirl around a broad issue. Then there is the immediate occasion: an event or situation that catches the writer's attention and triggers a response.

A-Who is the Audience? (the group of readers to whom this piece is directed) It may be one person or a specific group.

P-What is the Purpose? (the reason behind the text) Students need to consider the purpose of the text in order to find the thesis or the argument and its logic. They should ask themselves, "What does the author/speaker/narrator want his/her audience to think or do as a result of reading the text?"

S-What is the Subject? Students should be able to state the subject in a few words or phrases.

TONE-What is the Tone? (the attitude of the author) The spoken word can convey the speaker's attitude and thus help impart meaning through tone of voice. With the written word, tone extends meaning beyond the literal, and students can identify tone through diction (choice of words), syntax (sentence construction), and imagery (metaphors, similes, and other types of figurative language).

DIDS (How to Determine Tone)

D-Diction Describe the level and kinds of words used (See LEAD below.)

I-Imagery What appeals to the five senses are in the passage?

D-Details What are the specific details given

S-Syntax Consider arrangement of words, phrases, clauses, sentences; use of long or short sentences (telegraphic, short, medium, long); use of simple, complex, compound, compound-complex structure; use of interrogative, declarative, imperative, exclamatory, rhetorical question, and rhetorical fragment sentence types; cumulative, periodic, balanced, asyndeton, polysyndeton, natural s-v-o, inverted structures; and look at patterns and repetitions (parallelism, chiasmus/antimetabole, zeugma)

LEAD (How to Describe Diction)

To help students find and understand literary elements in texts they read, it helps to have language around that element. Once "how" to talk about that element is established, you can create an acronym to remember the ways it can be categorized and discussed. Here is an acronym to help students talk about diction.

L=level of diction-formal, neutral, or informal

E=description of level e.g., is it elevated, colloquial, slang, jargon, dialect, etc.?

A=abstract or concrete words-are the words mostly things or ideas?

D=denotations and connotations-are the words literal or do they have multiple meanings

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

SMELL (Synthesizing)

SMELL can help students see that authors have a message and use strategies to convey that message. Learning those strategies can help them improve their speaking and writing, as it clues them into synthesizing texts.

S – Sender-Receiver Relationship

Example: What inference can you draw about the target audience based on the author's/speaker's/narrator's/character's position?

M – Message

What is the message or main idea of the text? What is the purpose?

E – Emotional Strategies (Pathos)

In what ways does the author/speaker/narrator/character appeal to the emotions of his/her audience? What are examples of appeals to emotion?

L – Logical Strategies (Logos)

In what ways does the author/speaker/narrator/character appeal to the reader's sense of reason or logic? What are some examples of appeals to logic or reason?

L – Language Strategies

How would you characterize the author's/speaker's/narrator's/character's use of language? What specific rhetorical strategies does he/she employ, and what is their intended effect?

OPTIC (Analyzing Visual Text)

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**. 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. To do a close reading of a visual image, you should view and review the image each time you respond to parts of the acronym.

O – Write a brief **overview** of what the visual appears to be about.

P – Zoom in on all of the **parts** of the visual by describing any elements or details that seem important.

T – Use the **title(s)** to clarify the subject of the visual.

I – Specify the **interrelationships** of the visual. In other words, use the title as the theory and the parts of the visual as clues to detect and specify how the elements of the graphic are related.

C – Draw a **conclusion** about the visual as a whole. What does the visual mean? Summarize the message of the visual in one or two sentences.

WAVE (Analyzing Visual Text)

W.A.V.E.

A strategy for analyzing historical images to help draw a conclusion about the artist's point of view

W: Words—What words are in the picture? Do the words used have more than one meaning?

A: Actions—What is happening in the image? What was happening when the image was made?

V: Visuals—What do you notice first? What are the observable facts in the image? What do you see that looks different than it would if it were in a photograph?

E: Emotions—How does the image make you feel? Who do you think was the audience for this image? What do you think the artist's opinion on the topic is?

STEAL (Indirect Characterization)

Indirect Characterization shows things that reveal the personality of a character. There are five different methods of indirect characterization that can be remembered by **STEAL**.

S-Speech What does the character say? How does the character speak?

T-Thoughts What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings?

E-Effect on others toward the character. What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do other characters feel or behave in reaction to the character?

A-Actions What does the character do? How does the character behave?

L-Looks What does the character look like? How does the character dress?

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

ATOM (ACRONYM FOR INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS)

A (Attention/Articles/Authors) Grabs Attention and Names the Articles (Texts)/Authors upon which the essay is based

[two or three sentences]

NOTE-This is not addressed specifically in the ODE Rubric, but it helps interest the reader in the essay, sets up the transition to the controlling idea/thesis, allows the student to establish an objective tone (informational/expository) or formal/dignified/partial tone (argumentative) for a scholarly audience, and fully-develops the paragraph.

T & O (Thesis & Organization) Must address the task of prompt and purpose of essay; Dictates/Previews the order for the main points to be made in the body paragraphs

[one or more sentences]

Multiple sentences will likely be needed when the prompt is based upon multiple readings.

M (MUGS/Style/Tone) Be sure you are using an objective tone (informational/expository) or formal/dignified/partial tone (argumentative) for a scholarly audience and have no errors in MUGS (mechanics, usage, grammar, and spelling).

PIECE T (ACRONYM FOR BODY PARAGRAPHS)

P (Point) [one or two sentences]

This is the topic sentence/main point of the paragraph; it gives the point to be supported by evidence and elaboration. It must be a point that supports the thesis of the essay. It can be one or two sentences.

I (Integrated) E (Explanations) with C (Citations) and E (Elaborations) [multiple sentences]

These sentences explain or elaborate on the point/topic sentence and include textual evidence/citations. (Note: Transitions will be worked into these sentences to clarify relationships among points/evidence/elaboration.

T (Transitions and Tie to Thesis)

Transitions clarify relationships among points/evidence/elaboration and are sprinkled throughout the paragraph. [worked into other sentences throughout essay]

Tie to Thesis happens at the end of the paragraph to connect the point of the paragraph to the thesis of the essay. [one or two sentences at end]

TOO (ACRONYM FOR CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS)

T (Thesis) Restates Thesis/Claim (Controlling Idea)

Must address the task of prompt and purpose of essay

[one or two sentences]

O (Overview) Gives an overview of the main points made in the body paragraphs

[three or more sentences]

O (Outlook) Adds insight by tying to a whole, student's life, other writings, current/future time, the world, etc.

[one sentence]

TIP THE PROMPT (Analyzing Essay Prompts)

TIP a prompt by finding the Task, Indicators needed, and Points that could made.

Here is an example that clarifies what **TIP** means. If students use this strategy during testing, it can help students read with a purpose/question in mind and quickly focus their writing. Students may do the steps by **boxing the Task(T)**, **underlining the Indicators (I)**, and **listing the Points (P)**. The sample below shows the steps with color coding for additional clarity.

The “**T**” is the main **TASK** asked for in the prompt.

The “**I**” stands for the **INDICATORS** needed by the task. There are *content indicators* and *format indicators*. These become a check list for the students to be sure that all are included in their answers.

The “**P**” is the list of **POINTS** that could be made make in an essay that is focused on the Task and Content Indicators.

The idea is to write what comes to mind from the passages as a place to start and to focus evidence finding. These points become the main points used in each body paragraph.

SAMPLE PROMPT: Construct a multi-paragraph written response in which you analyze the development of similar central ideas in both passages. In your analysis consider how the central ideas are developed through specific details. Your response must be based on ideas and information that can be found in the passages.

POINTS

-Passages one and two have similar central ideas.

-The central idea of passage one is developed through the structure of the passage and the events detailed.

-The central idea of passage two is developed through the structure of the passage and the individuals detailed.



ANNOTATING TEXTS

Brain theory supports the idea that the more modalities that are used during reading, the greater the comprehension. So, it makes sense for students to actively interact with the text as they read. Annotation guides direct that interaction into actions that help students find and analyze the smaller parts of a text in order to be able to tie them to a whole. Included below is a general annotation guide that is followed by different versions to adjust the annotations for specific types of texts, such as poetry and prose. All of the annotation guides below can be found at the [ELA Strand Resources Quick Link](#) under Reading Resources on the [ELA 6-12 Webpage](#).

Columbus City Schools
CLOSE READING/ANNOTATION GUIDE

Close reading involves interacting with the text as you read. Small details can suggest larger ideas and pinpoint your focus on HOW meaning is revealed. Become a close reader by marking and annotating your interactions with text as you read.

1. **QCC:** Write questions, comments, and connections in the margins. When you have a question, need clarification, or are unsure, write down your uncertainty. When you discover something surprising, exciting, or fun that makes you say wow, cool, awesome, yuck, no way, whoa, etc., put a comment in the margin. When you discover something new, a knowledge you did not have before or a knowledge that can connect or add to something previously learned, write down your new knowledge and its connection to what you already know, to your own experiences, or to other texts.
2. **△ Triangle** characters' names so they are easy to locate on each page.
3. **□ Box** each word you do not know. Write brief definitions beside them if you do not figure them out from context clues.
4. **○ Circle and label** literary elements. (Here are some of the literary elements that you may find: allusion, apostrophe, flashback, foreshadowing, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, motif, paradox, parallelism, personification, satire, simile, symbol, theme, etc. You do not have to find all of them; you may find some that are not listed. If you need definitions for any literary terms, use the following link: <https://literarydevices.net>.)
5. **≈ Put wavy lines** under patterns or repetitions. If the patterns or repetitions are literary elements, label them with alliteration, anaphora, assonance, sibilance, parallelism, theme, etc.
6. **★ Star** shifts or turns in the text resulting from an epiphany, realization, insight, style choice, etc.
7. **Highlight** key phrases or sentences that give insight into a character, relate to the theme, indicate the tone, indicate setting or effect of setting, effective or unusual diction, critical events, etc. Highlighting stands out from the page and allows you to scan a page quickly for information. Be careful not to mark too much. If you feel that several lines are important, bracket them. See step eight.
8. **<> Bracket** important ideas or passages that are several lines in length. Place a bracket around the entire passage and only **highlight** key phrases within the bracket.

OTHER CLOSE READING MARKINGS YOU COULD USE

- a. **Mark off sentences with backward slashes** (pay attention to semicolons and colons, parentheses, italics, compound-complex sentences, etc.) This can help with poetry, archaic language, compound-complex sentences, etc.
- b. **Make a dramatic situation chart.**

Who is speaking or narrating?	
To whom?	
About what/subject?	
When/Where?	
Why/Purpose?	
Tone?	

- c. **Write down the rhyme scheme** at the end of each line of poetry. (ex. aabba)

WE ARE A CIRCLE AND NEVER BEGINNING

UNLOCKING PROSE

“The text is a lazy machine that needs to be activated” (Eco).

“Good prose is like a windowpane” (Orwell).

Prose is lazy. To activate it, you must read closely with intent! You have to read and reread sentences to garner their meaning. Close reading involves interacting with the text as you read. Small details can suggest larger ideas and pinpoint your focus on HOW meaning is revealed. Become a close reader by marking and annotating your interactions with text as you read. Until you unlock the written codes, the text is not activated. You should think of prose as a window—there is something to see beyond the windowpane itself. Happy Viewing!

1. **QCC:** Write **q**uestions, **c**omments, and **c**onnections in the margins. When you have a question or need clarification, write down your uncertainty. When you discover something surprising, fun, or exciting that makes you say wow, cool, awesome, yuck, no way, whoa, etc., put a comment in the margin. When you discover something new, a knowledge you did not have before or a knowledge that can connect or add to something previously learned, write down your new knowledge and its connection to what you already know, to your own experiences, or to other texts.
2. **Δ Triangle** characters' names ☉ they are easy to locate on each page; label protagonist/antagonist; note direct and indirect characterizations.
3. **□ Box** each word you do not know. Write brief definitions beside them if you do not figure them out from context clues.
4. **○ Circle and label** literary elements. (Here are some of the literary elements that you may find: allusion, ambiguity, antithesis, apostrophe, archetype, asyndeton, colloquialism, conceit, ethos, flashback, foreshadowing, hyperbole, imagery, irony, litotes, logos, metaphor, metonymy, motif, paradox, parallelism, pathos, personification, polysyndeton, rhetorical question, satire, simile, symbol, synecdoche, theme, etc. You do not have to find all of them; you may find some that are not listed. If you need definitions for any literary terms, use the following link: <https://literarydevices.net>.)
5. **≈ Put wavy lines** under patterns or repetitions. If the patterns or repetitions are literary or syntactical elements, label them with alliteration, anadiplosis, anaphora, assonance, epistrophe, epanalepsis, sibilance, parallelism, theme, etc.
6. **/Mark off** sentences with backward slashes (pay attention to semicolons and colons, parentheses, italics, compound-complex sentences, etc.) This can help with archaic language, compound-complex sentences, periodic sentences, etc.
7. **Rewrite** inverted phrases/sentences or longer, periodic sentence beside the original.
8. **★Star** shifts or turns in the text resulting from a realization, insight, style choice, etc.
9. **Determine point of view and type/level of diction.** Write them near the title.
10. **Write the type of prose** at the end [nonfiction (essay, letter, journal, etc.) or fiction (novel, novella, short story, etc.)]
11. **Make a dramatic situation chart.**

Who is speaking or narrating?	
To whom?	
About what/subject?	
When/Where?	
Why/Purpose?	
Tone?	

Need More Help?

- paraphrase the piece
- do a partner think aloud
- read literary criticisms

UNLOCKING POETRY

“The text is a lazy machine that needs to be activated” (Eco).

Poems are lazy. To activate them, you have to do more than say “I don’t get it” and wait for the teacher to explain it. You must treat poems like songs. You don’t always relate to a song the first time, but after several listens, you know all of the lyrics, can make sense of them, and the song becomes you. You must read the poem several times before it can become you. On your second or third reading, do a close reading. Close reading involves interacting with the text as you read. Small details can suggest larger ideas and pinpoint your focus on HOW meaning is revealed. Become a close reader by marking and annotating your interactions with text as you read.

1. **QCC**: Write **q**uestions, **c**omments, and **c**onnections in the margins. When you have a question or need clarification, write down your uncertainty. When you discover something surprising, fun, or exciting that makes you say wow, cool, awesome, yuck, no way, whoa, etc., put a comment in the margin. When you discover something new, a knowledge you did not have before or a knowledge that can connect or add to something previously learned, write down your new knowledge and its connection to what you already know, to your own experiences, or to other texts.
2. **Δ Triangle** characters’ names so they are easy to locate on each page.
3. **□ Box** each word you do not know. Write brief definitions beside them if you do not figure them out from context clues.
4. **○ Circle and label** literary elements. (Here are some of the literary elements that you may find: allusion, ambiguity, antithesis, apostrophe, archetype, asyndeton, colloquialism, conceit, ethos, flashback, foreshadowing, hyperbole, imagery, irony, litotes, logos, metaphor, metonymy, motif, paradox, parallelism, pathos, personification, polysyndeton, rhetorical question, satire, simile, symbol, synecdoche, theme, etc. You do not have to find all of them; you may find some that are not listed. If you need definitions for any literary terms, use the following link: <https://literarydevices.net>.)
5. **≈ Put wavy lines** under patterns or repetitions. If the patterns or repetitions are literary or syntactical elements, label them with alliteration, anadiplosis, anaphora, assonance, epanalepsis, epistrophe, sibilance, parallelism, theme, etc.
6. **/Mark off** sentences with backward slashes (pay attention to semicolons and colons, parentheses, italics, compound-complex sentences, etc.) This can help with poetry, archaic language, compound-complex sentences, etc.
7. **Rewrite** inverted phrases/sentences beside the original.
8. **★Star** shifts or turns in the text resulting from a realization, insight, style choice, etc.
9. **Write down the rhyme scheme** at the end of each line of poetry. (ex. aabba)
10. **Count the number of syllables** in a few lines and write that number at the end of the lines to ascertain the prosody.
11. **Count the number of lines** and write it below the poem to ascertain the type of poem.
12. **Make a dramatic situation chart.**

Who is speaking or narrating?	
To whom?	
About what/subject?	
When/Where?	
Why/Purpose?	
Tone?	

Need More Help?
 -paraphrase the poem
 -explicate the poem
 -read poetic criticisms

UNLOCKING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

“The text is a lazy machine that needs to be activated” (Eco).

Reliance on textual evidence and citations is integral to reading, writing, and thinking. Gone are the days where a standardized test only asked students to pick out a main idea. Students need to be able to cite other portions of text that offer important concepts, paramount issues, or supporting ideas. Understanding that there are often several important ideas in a piece of text rather than a single main idea is necessary when students try to make sense of a text. This marking strategy is a simple way to get students to focus on important information beyond the main idea. It will help them defend their stance, cite evidence, and explain the thinking behind their decisions.

1. **QCC:** Write **q**uestions, **c**omments, and **c**onnections in the margins. When you have a question or need clarification, write down your uncertainty. When you discover something surprising, fun, or exciting that makes you say wow, cool, awesome, yuck, no way, whoa, etc., put a comment in the margin. When you discover something new, a knowledge you did not have before or a knowledge that can connect or add to texts previously read, write down your new knowledge and its connection to what you already know, to your own experiences, or to other texts.
2. **Underline** the main idea and/or write it at the top if the main idea is not directly stated.
3. **★Star** important supporting points in the text.
4. **□Box** each word you do not know. Write brief definitions beside them if you do not figure them out from context clues.
5. **≈ Put wavy lines** under repeated ideas or words.
6. **Δ Triangle** peoples’ names so they are easy to locate on each page; label the author/speaker.
7. **Determine point of view and type/level of diction.** Write them near the title.
8. **/Mark off** longer or really difficult sentences with backward slashes (pay attention to semicolons and colons, parentheses, italics, compound-complex sentences, etc.) This can help with archaic language, compound-complex sentences, periodic sentences, etc.
9. **Write the type of text** at the end (essay, article, image, chart, speech, etc.).
10. **Make a dramatic situation chart.**

Who is speaking or writing?	
To whom?	
About what/subject?	
When/Where?	
Why/Purpose?	
Tone?	

Need More Help?

- paraphrase the piece
- do a partner think aloud
- read literary criticisms



HEAVY SCAFFOLDING WITH DIGITAL TOOL ASSISTS

For our lowest level readers, the scaffolding can begin before they have read the text. Many of the ideas listed below come from ELL and ESL strategies. At first glance, they may seem very time consuming. The good news is that varied Google Add-ons and Extensions, such as Screen Mask, Read&Write, TLDR, Pic Monkey, Translator, Speak It, Announcify, Mercury Reader, Simple Highlighter, Voiceln, Fluency Tutor, IntoWords, TextSummary, Kami, Post It All: Sticky Notes, etc. allow students to access these scaffolds without any prep on your part even if the scaffold calls for it. [You may want to look up some of these in the Chrome Web Store (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore>) before sharing the ideas below to be able to discuss which apps apply to which actions. Simply put the name of the extension/add-on in the search box at <https://chrome.google.com/webstore> to find out what they do.] Also, online supplementals you have access to like CommonLit and Achieve3000 have the ability to create some of the strategies listed below such as chunking (guided reading mode on CommonLit) and text-dependent questioning. Many of the items listed are singled out in some of the other Passing Experts strategies. Most of these scaffolds will not be allowed on standardized tests. Therefore, they should not become crutches, but rather supports used as needed. Be sure to take them away at times to see if the student can function without them.

Before Reading

- Pre-expose students to the selected text with support (audio recording, read-aloud, peer tutor etc.).
- Provide a student-friendly glossary of key vocabulary (may include words &/or illustrations).
- Have students read a simple article, watch a video, or read student-friendly explanations of key information to help build background knowledge that will aid in comprehension.
- Reformat the text itself to include visuals or definitions of key vocabulary.
- Annotate text with a defined purpose for reading it (what they will learn from the reading).
- Number lines whenever possible to support students in referencing evidence from the text.

Here are some digital tools that can be used with these before-reading strategies: Google (Read&Write, IntoWords, TLDR, TextSummary, Kami, Simple Highlighter, Speak It, Pic Monkey) and CommonLit.

During Initial Reading

- Make sure students experience (hear/read) the entire selection uninterrupted (except for supplying brief definitions essential for understanding). This gives students a sense of the whole text and supports comprehension and motivation.
- Teacher conducts a read-aloud with students following along to help build fluency (grades 2 +)
Note- if reading aloud, students should have ample opportunities to follow along while listening and revisit the text independently.
- Provide summaries of sections to help students build comprehension more quickly.
- Have students annotate the text for key ideas while reading and/or model annotation for students.
- Allow students time to discuss/write about the text following the first read:
 - using sentence starters or prompts as needed
 - by jotting or discussing the “gist” or “big idea” of the text as a whole
 - by working with partners to ensure all students are participating.

Here are some digital tools that can be used with these strategies: Google Tools (Post It All: Sticky Notes, Read&Write, IntoWords, TLDR, TextSummary, Kami, Simple Highlighter, Speak It, Fluency Tutor), Google Docs/Classroom, and CommonLit.

During Subsequent Readings

- Ask a series of pre-planned, scaffolded text-dependent questions that build comprehension of the central idea of the text.
- Chunk the text. Provide text-dependent questions by chunk, to be answered before moving to the next portion of the text.

Here are some digital tools that can be used with these strategies: CommonLit.

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

After/Between Readings (discussing or writing about text)

- Have scaffolded questions ready to support students in moving from concrete to more abstract reasoning.
- Provide oral or written sentence frames.
- Provide picture cues with text-dependent questions.
- Provide “hint cards” to direct students toward sections of the text as needed.
- Include text cues such as paragraph number, section, heading, etc., in wording of questions.
- Provide oral rehearsal time (with buddies, small group, or a teacher) prior to writing, and/or provide writing/thinking time prior to oral presentations.
- Make time for guided re-reading.

Here are some digital tools that can be used with these strategies: [Google Docs](#) & [CommonLit](#).

To help craft Scaffolded Questions, you can use the [Close Reading Text-Dependent Questioning Guide](#) at the [ELA Strand Resources](#) Quick Link under Reading Resources on the [ELA 6-12 Webpage](#).



TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONING (SCAFFOLDS & TYPES)

When writing questions for a text with struggling readers in mind, you want to order them in a manner that builds confidence. Although the AIR test does rarely asks DOK Level 1 reading questions, struggling readers (really, all readers) could use explicit questions to help clarify items before answering deeper questions. Modeling levels of questions is an easy way to get students to write their own questions about texts. It helps them think critically about what is in the text and the levels are easy to remember. The first level, Explicit Questions or “finger facts” are ones that can be answered directly in the text—you can physically put your finger on the answer. The second level, Implicit Questions are ones that require some analysis or interpretation in addition to what is written in the text. The relationship between the two levels can be very helpful in allowing struggling students to answer DOK 2 and 3 level questions. If students can take an Implicit Level Question and reduce it to parts that are explicit, this can give an access point to the text that leads to deeper thinking.

At the right, you will see definition for text-dependent questions, find seven steps for writing them, and be introduced to three levels of questioning. You can find the [Close Reading Text-Dependent Questioning Guide](#) at the [ELA Strand Resources Quick Link](#) under Reading Resources on the [ELA 6-12 Webpage](#).

SEVEN STEPS

to Creating Text-Dependent Questions for Close Reading

1. Identify Core Understanding/Key Ideas of Text
2. Start Small to Build Confidence (Explicit Questions)
3. Target Vocabulary and Text Structure
 - craft questions that illuminate connections between vocab/structure and key ideas
4. Tackle Tough Sections Head-on
 - more support questions in sections with difficult inferences, syntax, language, etc.
5. Create Coherent Sequences of Text-Dependent Questions
6. Identify the Standards That Are Being Addressed
 - decide if any other standards need to be included
7. Create the Culminating Assessment
 - reflects mastery of one or more standard, involves writing, is structured to be independent work, can be philosophical question

<p style="text-align: center;">Three Types of Text-Dependent Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Assess themes and central ideas</i> 2. <i>Assess knowledge and vocabulary</i> 3. <i>Assess syntax and structure</i> 	<p style="text-align: center;">What Are Text-Dependent Questions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -can only be answered by referring back to the text -do not rely on any particular background information -do not depend on students experience/knowledge
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Level One: The Explicit Question (Comprehension)

These questions are “finger facts” because we can put our finger directly on the answer in the text.

Three Levels of Questioning

Level Two: The Implicit Question (Analysis, Interpretation, Synthesis)

These questions are related to details of the text but cannot be answered by simply pointing your finger; they require analysis and interpretation.

Level Three: The Philosophical/Universal Question (Reflection, Evaluation)

These questions are much more open-ended and go beyond the text. They are intended to be used in the culminating assessment that uses text for support, i.e. essays/seminars.



BE A CAREFUL READER! Four Strategies to Better Understand What You Are Reading

When struggling readers are reading an article, book chapter, or story, they can use these four simple techniques to be sure that they fully understand the content.

Prediction. Before you begin to read the selection, look at the main title, scan the pages to read the major headings, and look at any illustrations. Based on these clues, try to predict what the article or story is about. Then, read the selection to see whether it turns out as you predicted! Stop at several points during your reading and ask yourself how closely the content of the actual story or article fit your initial prediction. How do the facts and information that you have read change your prediction about what you will find in the rest of the story or article?

List Main Ideas. Stop after each paragraph or major section of the passage. Construct one or two complete sentences that sum up only the most important idea(s) that appear in the section. (Good summary sentences include key concepts or events but leave out less important details!) Write these summary (main idea) sentences down and continue reading.

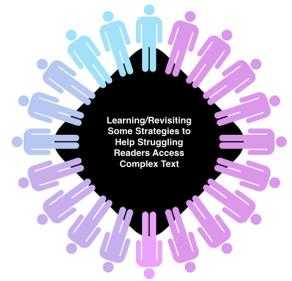
Question Generation. Look at the ideas that you have summarized as you read the passage. For each main idea listed, write down at least one question that the main idea will answer. Good questions should include words like “who,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “what.” Your teacher may provide you with sentence stems so that you can write the kinds of questions that appear on standardized tests. (Stems for AIR questions are available on the [ELA 6-12 Webpage](#) at the [Standardized Testing Quick Link: AIR Question Stems.](#))

Clarifying. Sometimes in your reading you will run into words, phrases, or whole sentences that really don’t make sense. Here are some ways that you can clarify the meaning of your reading before moving on:

- Unknown words.* If you come across a word whose meaning you do not know, read the sentences before and after it to see if they give you clues to the word’s meaning. If the word is still unclear, look it up in a dictionary.

- Unclear phrases or sentences.* Reread the phrase or sentence carefully and try to understand it. If it contains words such as “them,” “it” or “they,” be sure that you know what nouns (persons, places, or things) to which these words refer.

- If all else fails, ask another student or an adult to help you to clarify the meaning of a confusing word, phrase, or sentence.



SHANAHAN'S SCAFFOLDING FOR MORE COMPLEX TEXT

Timothy Shanahan has emerged as champion of close reading and disciplinary literacy. He says that there are many text features that could require scaffolding:

- lack of background knowledge
- complexity of vocabulary
- complexity of syntax
- complexity of coherence
- familiarity of genre demands
- complexity of text organization
- subtlety of author's tone
- sophistication of literary devices or data-presentation
- sufficient fluency
- pairing of texts

Shanahan tries to define why these text features are complex and give some ideas about how to handle the complexity. Here are some of his thoughts around these areas that may require scaffolding.

Background Knowledge

- The reader who doesn't use his prior knowledge when reading is at a disadvantage.
- Provide students with a brief preview of the text that does not tell what the author is going to tell—but that allows students to put it into context: time, place, content, genre.
- Have readers preview a text to gain some idea what it might be about.
- Have readers read multiple texts about a topic. That way the information that is learned from each text helps to scaffold other texts.
- Get readers to think about what they already know about a topic.

Vocabulary

- We need to identify relatively high frequency (usefulness) words that students won't learn on their own to build lexicon, no matter what their immediate impact.
- We need to identify words that students are not likely to know or that can't be figured out easily that have high impact on reading comprehension.
- The more English words the student knows, the better he will read and comprehend English.

In reading, we teach vocabulary, but there are two major purposes for vocabulary instruction:

(1) Building a lexicon

To build a lexicon: Teach Rich definitions (Frayer Model), Develop Relationships among words (Word Families/Word Study), Use across language (Reading, Writing, Drawing, etc.), & Do lots of review.

(2) Enabling immediate understanding of text

When enabling immediate understanding, show how word parts lead to the total word to teach word analysis.

Syntax

- Identify challenging sentences and write questions for those sentences.
 - Particularly long sentences
 - Internal punctuation
 - Dependent clauses
 - Multiple phrases
 - Parentheticals
 - Passive voice
- Break the sentences down (punctuation, conjunctions, demonstrative pronouns, prepositions, etc.).

Cohesion

- Texts can be hard because the relationships and connections may be unclear to readers.
- Identify the repetitions, synonyms, pronouns, etc. Mark the text to show the connections.
- Identify the conjunctions (and, moreover, however, but, consequently, etc.).
- Identify antithesis.

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

Text Structure

- Authors organize their ideas, so texts have structure.
- Some structures are used by many authors.
- Here are some widely used structures:
 - Description/enumeration
 - Sequence/chronological order
 - Comparison/contrast
 - Problem/solution
 - Cause/effect
 - Argument
- Readers use the author's structure to guide their understanding and recall.
- If the reader is able to recognize the organizational plan, then this can be used to remember the text. If the reader does not recognize a common organizational plan, it helps to impose one. This often can be done by briefly identifying the main point of each paragraph or section.

Fluency

- Texts can be hard because they demand more advanced reading skills than the students have.
- Students need practice reading (orally) with accuracy, appropriate speed, and prosody.
- Do not use round-robin reading; Use these instead: repeated reading, echo reading, paired reading, reading while listening, etc.) .
- Parsing texts can be helpful.

Pairing of Texts

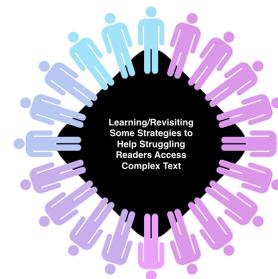
- Texts can be hard because students lack sufficient background knowledge.
- If students have multiple texts on the same topic that are at different difficulty levels, easier "apprentice" texts can help students build background knowledge for the more difficult ones.
- The overlap in important information should increase the likelihood that students will pay attention to it.
- Pairing should increase a student's ability to independently deal with the information in the hard text.

Repetition

- One of the most powerful scaffolds is also one of the most obvious: reading a text more than once makes it more accessible.
- In the past, we tended to have students read a text a single time, but as the text challenge increases it is essential that we encourage students to read texts (and parts of texts) more than once to make sense of it.
- This is an effective strategy, but it is expensive. The idea is to become successful with these texts—which should make it possible to succeed with other texts later with less work.

Comprehension

- Research shows that when students are active readers—that is, when they are actively trying to understand a text—they comprehend and remember more.
- Comprehension strategies are a proven way to get students to think about the ideas in a text.
- Summarization, questioning, monitoring, seeking particular kinds of information have all been found to stimulate learning.
- Students need to practice reading with multiple levels of difficulty and for varied amounts
- Do not always head off the challenges, but always be ready to respond and support.



WORD STUDY

Many adolescent readers struggle to read at the word level but lack opportunities to develop needed skills in this area. Older students who are deficient in decoding and word analysis skills require instruction in word study. Teachers must be able to allocate time and resources to provide appropriate interventions to these students.

Successful readers know that letters and letter patterns are associated with sounds and that these sounds blend to make the words that we read. They are able to use this knowledge to decode unknown or difficult words while they are reading. As they read, readers proficient in word study also employ structural analysis strategies to break words into smaller meaningful parts that help them decode and understand words. This table outlines characteristics common to successful and struggling readers in the area of word study.

Successful Readers	Struggling Readers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read multisyllabic words and use strategies to figure out unknown words. • Make connections between letter patterns and sounds and use this understanding to read words. • Break unknown words into syllables during reading. • Use word analysis strategies to break difficult or long words into meaningful parts such as inflectional endings, prefixes, suffixes, and roots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May read single-syllable words effortlessly but have difficulty decoding longer multisyllabic words. • May lack knowledge of the ways in which sounds map to print. • Have difficulty breaking words into syllables. • Often do not use word analysis strategies to break words into syllables.

Adapted from Bhattacharya & Ehri, 2004; Nagy, Berninger, & Abbott, 2006.

Teaching Word Study

Word study practices cue students to the orthography of words, or the letter patterns and structural features associated with predictable speech sounds. Students learn how to identify and break words into syllable types (e.g., r-controlled vowels [-ar, ire], vowel-consonant-e) and to read by blending the parts together. For example in the word mumble, students learn to divide the word into the syllables mum- (closed syllable indicates a short vowel sound) and -ble (final stable syllable with consonant-le). Effective word study instruction also provides information about and strategies for analyzing words by the meaning and structure of their parts. Students are often taught the meanings of prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, roots, and important vocabulary. They learn to break difficult words apart into smaller known units. For example, in the word transplanted, students break the word into three segments: trans-plant-ed. They can associate the base word plant, with the prefix trans (across) and the suffix ed (happened in the past). Using word analysis strategies, students read unknown words part by part and use known meanings, or semantic features, of the smaller chunks to assist them in decoding the longer word. Recommended instructional practices:

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

- **Teach students to identify and break words into syllable types.**
- **Teach students when and how to read multisyllabic words by blending the parts together.**
- **Teach students to recognize irregular words that do not follow predictable patterns.**
- **Teach students the meanings of common prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, and roots. Instruction should include ways in which words relate to each other (e.g., trans: transfer, translate, transform, transition).**
- **Teach students how to break words into word parts and to combine word parts to create words based on their roots, bases, or other features.**
- **Teach students how and when to use structural analysis to decode unknown words.**



GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS GALORE

One of the most effective scaffolds for struggling readers is to use graphic organizers. They help focus the work of reading and comprehending, and enable students to use information gathered from texts in discussions and writings. Many graphic organizers are so simple that they can be replicated on scratch paper with each text the students read. Below are a few graphic organizers. A quick URL search will yield many, many more. You can check a catalog of free ones here: http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm.

ALPHABET SOUP

This reading strategy/graphic organizer can help students pull explicit information from a complex text. The students must identify an overall topic for a reading passage and create sentences that summarize key ideas in the text. The strategy can help students find main ideas and supporting details. It can be used to help them cite what a text says explicitly.

-Begin by picking letters for the first column of the graphic organizer. You could use letter die, scrabble tiles, or take student suggestions. You may want to eliminate x, y, and z. For each letter, the student will create a sentence that summarizes a key point about the topic from the text. The first word of each sentence should begin with the letter in the box. Students should be sure their sentences have enough details to help them remember the important ideas or concepts.

TOPIC : _____

(What is the broad topic of the article, chapter, passage, etc.?)

ENTER LETTERS HERE	WRITE YOUR SENTENCES HERE (For each letter, create a sentence that summarizes a key point about the topic. The first word of each sentence should begin with the letter in the box. Be sure your sentences have enough details to help you remember the important ideas or concepts.)
S	
T	
N	
O	

FQR-FACTS, QUESTIONS, RESPONSES

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

Synthesizing the information from the varied sources is a reading skill that students will need to have to do well on standardized assessments. “Synthesizing is the process whereby a student merges new information with prior knowledge to form a new idea, perspective, or opinion to generate insight” (Shannon Bumgarner). Therefore, synthesis is an ongoing process. As new knowledge is acquired, it is synthesized with prior knowledge to generate new ideas.

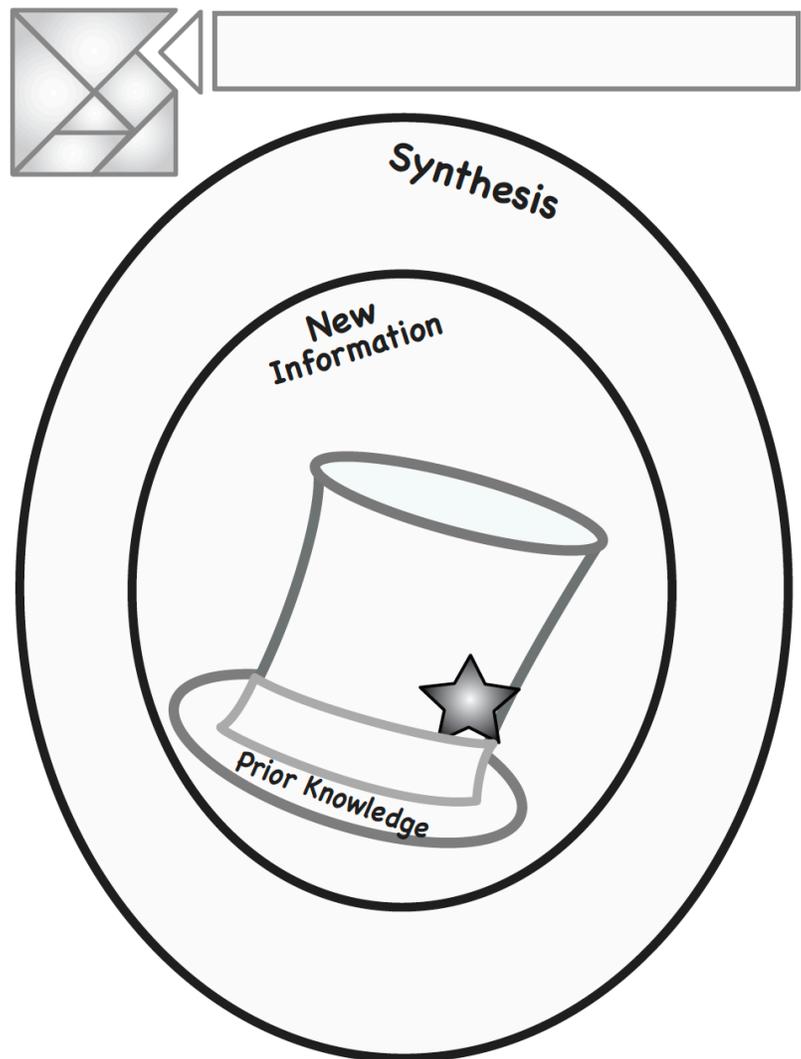
“Synthesis is the most complex of the reading strategies. Synthesizing lies on a continuum of evolving thinking. Synthesizing runs the gamut from taking stock of meaning while reading to achieving new insight” (Harvey and Goudvis). The skills needed to synthesize reading materials are the ability to summarize information, paraphrase it, and compare and contrast it. Other necessary skills are the ability to separate fact from opinion, draw inferences based on the facts presented, and evaluate that information to form your own conclusions. It is especially helpful tool when students are reading paired texts on the same topic.

First, have the students write the topic in the bar at the top of the Synthesis Hat graphic. Let the students know that the topic could be a prompt that they have to write about, an idea or concept they are studying, a debate topic, a process, a procedure, etc. Sometimes the topic will be given to them and other times the topic must be chosen by them.

-Begin to read Article #1. Pause when you encounter important information. Record this information inside the “Prior Knowledge” hat on the Synthesis Hat graphic page. Remind students that careful readers stop every so often and think about what they have read.

-Continue by reading Article #2. Encourage students to share when they hear new or important information that was not included in the first article. Record that information inside the “New Information” oval on the Synthesis Hat graphic.

-Note how the new information, combined with what you wrote in the hat from the first article begins to change your thinking to create new ideas. The new insights are the syntheses and are recorded in the “Synthesis” oval on the graphic page.





PREDICTING & INFERRING

PREDICTING

Help struggling readers prepare to approach the text by teaching them how to preview. Tell students about text features, show them examples, explain their purposes, and talk about how readers should use text features to better navigate a piece purposefully.

As a classroom routine, practice identifying text features in fiction and nonfiction texts, in visual texts, and on the Web. This process – previewing the text features to gather information – is a critical first step in predicting.

Once you have previewed the text with students, guide them through the initial prediction process. You could provide struggling readers with a couple templates to fill in.

- Based upon _____ (specific information gathered from text features), I predict _____ (students' specific prediction about what they will read).
- I predict _____ because _____.

Teach your students that **fictional text predictions should focus on plot, setting, characters, and theme**; **nonfiction predictions should be centered around the main points and author's purpose**. When making predictions, identifying an author's purpose for writing (to inform, persuade, argue, compare, entertain, etc.) helps students to make more educated guesses about the content.

The real benefit with predicting, however, is the part that often is forgotten. As students read, have them actively monitor their predictions. Pause to allow them to add to or alter their predictions as they reflect on new textual evidence.

INFERRING

Teachers need to anticipate places in complex texts where students will be confused if they don't make inferences about the author's intended meaning. Introduce different types of inferences students can make and study examples as you practice inferring together.

Because struggling readers can become extremely confused if they don't make required inferences with complex texts, don't ask them to read inference-heavy texts on their own (Think: "Masque of the Red Death," "The Scarlet Ibis," *To Kill a Mockingbird*). Scaffold their reading with guides that include inference questions, and use the word "infer" or "inference" in the question so that students begin to understand that's what they are doing as they read between the lines. For instance, What can we infer about Doodle after reading that he cried at the beauty of Old Woman Swamp?

Train struggling students to ask themselves whether they might be missing an inference when comprehension begins to falter and confusion settles in its place.



SUMMARIZING & QUESTIONING

SUMMARIZING

Summarizing is a go-to reading strategy. When working with students who are reading a difficult text, it's imperative. Using summarizing with struggling readers is even more important – if that's possible. When reading a text with your class, pause frequently to check for understanding. I rarely ask struggling readers to read anything in their zone of frustration independently. As you read together, teach them to reflect on short segments of the text. Pose questions to get them thinking.

- Why did everyone think that Doodle was going to die?
- Tell me the three most important things that have happened so far in chronological order.
- Why did Doodle cry when trying to train with Brother?

After reading a fictional text, reflect on the whole piece and write a five-sentence summary – one sentence for each part of the plot. When **summarizing nonfiction texts**, ask students to **pretend like they are reporters**. It gives them a specific process to follow, which reduces the guesswork and uncertainty.

QUESTIONING

Questioning is a strategy that struggling readers don't always understand. When teachers pose questions, they can respond, but asking students to pose their own is difficult. Still, it's valuable to teach students how to ask questions about what they are reading.

Tell your students:

- When you feel your mind beginning to wander from the text, draw yourself back in by pausing and asking clarification questions about what you just read.
- When you feel confused about what you are reading, ask questions out loud. Talk to a friend or to the teacher. If you are at home, write your questions down so that we can discuss them during class.
- When you think you understand the text, look for deeper layers of meaning. Ask yourself, What might the author be saying about theme, life, conflict, people, stereotypes, or culture?

Introduce your struggling readers to thick and thin questions, to “right-there” and “think and search” questions. Teach them the difference between a basic comprehension question and a discussion question. Also, make sure students understand when and why to use each type.

Teaching reading in middle/high school is a process of trial and error. Teachers have to find what works best for their own students' needs. Teaching students to be engaged, active readers is one of the keys to successful reading instruction. We can do that by explicitly teaching reading strategies they can add to their reading tool belts.



MOTIVATING STRUGGLING READERS

One of the best ways to get students hooked on books is to let them stand in front of, sit amidst, and touch the covers of well-cared-for, attractive books. There's just something special about standing in a library or bookstore and thumbing through the pages of a novel...pondering whether or not it's worth your time to read. If you're afraid your students might not know how to do this, model what it looks like for them beforehand. Here are some more ways to help motivate struggling readers.

GIVE THEM PLENTY OF TIME.

Reluctant readers need quite a bit of time to find a novel they might actually want to read. With struggling students, you may need to sometimes set aside a whole class period on the day they choose books which you begin with talking about some of the books. Then, let them pick up the books, read the back cover, explore the first pages. Monitor and help them when necessary.

DON'T MAKE THEM COMMIT.

Encourage students, and be empathetic. Think about their world. Have they seen examples of adults who commit to a task or a novel and finish it completely? Likely not. When we tell a student to finish a book by a certain deadline, many struggling readers panic. They automatically shut down.

Instead, teachers can make a daunting task more approachable by telling them it's okay if they get into the book and decide they want to choose a different one. Emphasize number of pages over number of books. We need to give students the freedom to understand that they have the right to change independent reading books if they just don't like their first choice.

WORK TOGETHER AS A GROUP.

Rather than focusing on how many pages or minutes a student has read individually, struggling readers are often more motivated by group efforts. Create book walls, book trees, or try using school-wide programs like the [million pages of books challenge](#) to encourage your reluctant students.

USE BOOK TALKS.

Nothing motivates struggling readers more than a really good book talk. You can try doing them yourself, invite the participation of the librarian or look for one-minute book reviews online. Consider inviting other students to create short book talk videos as class projects that you can use to build your digital book talk library and entice future students.

USE BOOK COMMERCIALS.

At the end of silent reading time each class period, you can use Book Commercials as a way to hold students accountable. Each day, randomly call on a student to give a quick book commercial. Basically, they sell us their book in a minute's time. Listen carefully and try to determine if the student is understanding his or her novel (and if he or she is even reading it). When students get stuck and aren't sure where to start, you can use book discussion cards to prompt them.

HAVE FREQUENT CONVERSATIONS.

One of the best ways to keep struggling students reading is to talk with them about their books frequently – one on one. You can do this in the hallway, before class, after class, during independent work time, and on days you go to the library to check out new books or renew current ones. When students know you're interested (or even better – when you tell them you've read it and can relate), they seem to be more invested.

The necessity of these conversations is imperative during the summer as well. If your school requires students to read at home and come back in the fall ready to write or complete a

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING STRUGGLING READERS ACCESS COMPLEX TEXTS

project about their book(s), you need to set up some way for teachers to discuss the texts with students (especially reluctant ones) over the long break – even if it's just an informal mingling. These conversations keep them motivated and provide accountability.

Book conversations are important between students as well. If one struggling reader finds he's one of the only people who hasn't read *The Hunger Games*, it naturally encourages him to give that book a try. Simply creating space in your curriculum to talk about literature can increase motivation.

BUILD CONFIDENCE.

Build your students' confidence with reading by giving them tasks they can handle. If you're assessing their ability to analyze a text, for instance, use graphic organizers to scaffold the process.

HELP THEM SEE IMPROVEMENT.

Students need to know their efforts are making a difference. They need to see a correlation between the effort they are putting in and the outcome of the work in order to stay motivated. If students are all reading different books, set goals together. Give them a menu of options for how they will demonstrate the mastery of their goals.

For instance, if the goal is to demonstrate the ability to make various types of inferences while reading, you could allow students to complete a presentation, an essay, an inference book, a poster, a mind map, or a one-pager to convey what they have learned. Make sure students succeed and see improvement by guiding them through whichever process they select. With struggling readers, the goal is to take your time. Don't move so quickly that they have no possible way to finish on time.

INCREASE INTEREST AND VALUE.

Conveying your own passion for reading can be contagious. Whenever possible:

- Let your students see you reading, hear you reading out loud with enthusiasm, and listen to you talking about what books you love.
- Encourage students to see the value in reading by helping them to extract information from the text that increases their intelligence.
- Teach students explicitly why reading matters.
- Use books as a reward. When students successfully complete a goal, reward them with a brand new book.
- Expose students to a variety of genres to help them understand themselves better as readers.
- Get to know what type of literature your students are interested in by having them fill out a reading interest inventory that you can refer back to throughout the year. As teachers, our job is to help students understand the value of being literate. It's our job to help them see reading as a safe haven instead of a stressor.



COMPREHENDING SENTENCES (SYNTAX)

In order to help struggling students comprehend complex texts, it is necessary to help them understand sentences. Reading requires more than an ability to make sense of word meanings. Comprehension also depends on one’s ability to make sense of syntax, too. Here are some protocols with examples to help students with sentences that are complex, i.e. those that are particularly long, have internal punctuation, have dependent clauses, contain multiple phrases, use parentheticals, overuse pronouns, or are in passive voice.

1. **Preview the reading and identify challenging sentences—the ones that will trip kids up.**
2. **Present one or more of the sentences to your students.**
3. **Ask students to divide the sentence by its punctuation.**

Sentence

“While filling out my certificate, Baba realized that he didn’t know my sex for sure but that didn’t matter; he’d always known I was a boy, had spoken to me as a boy while I was in Mama, and as he approached the box that contained the question, NAME OF CHILD, he wrote with a quivering hand and in his best English cursive, Nidal.”

Example

“While filling out my certificate,
 Baba realized that he didn’t know my sex for sure but that didn’t matter;
 he’d always known I was a boy,
 had spoken to me as a boy while I was in Mama,
 and as he approached the box that contained the question,
 NAME OF CHILD,
 he wrote with a quivering hand and in his best English cursive,
 Nidal.”

4. **Next, have them find the verbs.** *It has been proven by research that humans make sense of sentences from the verbs out.*

Example

“While **filling out** my certificate,
 Baba **realized** that he **didn’t know** my sex for sure but that **didn’t matter**;
 he’d always **known** I **was** a boy,
had spoken to me as a boy while I **was** in Mama,
 and as he **approached** the box that **contained** the question,
 NAME OF CHILD,
 he **wrote** with a quivering hand and in his best English cursive,
 Nidal.”

5. Then, make more divisions so only one verb/verbal on each line.

Example

“While **filling out** my certificate,
Baba **realized**
that he **didn’t know** my sex for sure
but that **didn’t matter**;
he’d always **known I was** a boy,
had spoken to me as a boy
while I **was** in Mama,
and as he **approached**
the box that **contained** the question,
NAME OF CHILD,
he **wrote** with a quivering hand and in his best English cursive,
Nidal.”

6. Finally, figure out the subject of each verb.

“While **[Baba was]** **filling out** my certificate,
Baba **realized**
that he **[Baba]** **didn’t know** my sex for sure
but that **[Baba not knowing my sex for sure]** **didn’t matter**;
he’d **[Baba’d]** always **known I was** a boy,
[Baba] **had spoken** to me as a boy
while I **was** in Mama,
and as he **[Baba]** **approached**
the box that **contained** the question,
NAME OF CHILD,
he **[Baba]** **wrote** with a quivering hand and in his best English cursive,
Nidal.”

Note: Feel free to add questioning to any of the steps in the protocol. You could ask about the who/what/when/where/and why of the sentence. Also, this activity can be done with highlighters/markings the text and does not require students to rewrite the sentences, which would be impractical.



COHESION SCAFFOLDING (SYNTAX)

In order to help struggling students comprehend complex texts, it is necessary to help them understand cohesion between ideas, words, pronouns/antecedents, etc. Reading requires more than an ability to make sense of word meanings. Comprehension also depends on one’s ability to understand how sentences or ideas in sentences fit together—what parts are aligned to what parts.

1. Preview the reading and identify challenging sentences/sections—the ones that will trip kids up.
2. Present one or more of the sentences to your students.
3. Ask students to identify repetitions, synonyms, pronouns and mark connections between them in the text.

Sentences/Section

“I didn’t know that Cheshire cats always grinned; in fact, I didn’t know that cats could grin.’
 ‘They all can,’ said the Duchess; ‘and most of ‘em do.’
 ‘I don’t know of any that do,’ Alice said very politely, feeling quite pleased to have got into a conversation.”

Example

“I didn’t know that **Cheshire cats** always **grinned**; in fact, I didn’t know that **cats** could **grin**.
 ‘**They** all **can**,’ said the Duchess; ‘and most of **‘em do**.’
 ‘I don’t know of **any** that **do**,’ Alice said very politely, feeling quite pleased to have got into a **conversation**.”

Cheshire cats/cats match with pronouns they, ‘em (them), and any.

Grinned/grin matches with can/do/do.

The “conversation” referred to at the end is the conversation that happens between the Duchess and Alice in the sentences above.

4. Ask students to identify the conjunctions and transition words.

Example

“I didn’t know that Cheshire cats always grinned; **in fact**, I didn’t know that cats could grin.’
 ‘They all can,’ said the Duchess; ‘**and** most of ‘em do.’
 ‘I don’t know of any that do,’ Alice said very politely, feeling quite pleased to have got into a conversation.”

5. Finally, have them identify opposites.

Example

“I didn’t know that Cheshire cats always grinned; **in fact**, I didn’t know that cats could grin.’

‘They all can,’ said the Duchess; ‘**and** most of ‘em do.’

‘I don’t know of any that do,’ Alice said very politely, feeling quite pleased to have got into a conversation.”

—Duchess and Alice are opposites in their knowledge of cats grinning.



IDENTIFYING TEXT STRUCTURE

In order to help struggling students comprehend complex texts, it can help to clue them into text structures. Students should realize that authors organize their ideas; some structures are used by many authors:

- Explanation/description
- Sequence/chronological order
- Comparison/contrast
- Problem/solution
- Cause/effect
- Argument.

Readers can use the author's structure to guide their understanding and recall. If the reader is able to recognize the organizational plan, then this can be used to remember the text. If the reader does not recognize a common organizational plan, it helps to impose one by briefly identifying the main point of each paragraph or section.

Step One: Write the purpose of each paragraph or what is it about under each paragraph?

“The horseless carriage was just arriving in San Francisco, and its debut was turning into one of those colorfully unmitigated disasters that bring misery to everyone but historians. Consumers were staying away from the “devilish contraptions” in droves. In San Francisco in 1903, the horse and buggy was not going the way of the horse and buggy.”

The “horseless carriage” was unpopular in San Francisco.

For good reason. The automobile, so sleekly efficient on paper, was in practice a civic menace, belching out exhaust, kicking up storms of dust, becoming hopelessly mired in the most innocuous-looking puddles, and tying up horse traffic. Incensed local lawmakers responded with monuments to legislative creativity. The laws of at least one town required automobile drivers to stop, get out, and fire off Roman candles every time horse-drawn vehicles came into view. Massachusetts tried and, fortunately, failed to mandate that cars be equipped with bells that would ring with each revolution of the wheels. In some towns police were authorized to disable passing cars with ropes, chains, and wires. San Francisco didn't escape the legislative wave. Bitter local officials pushed through an ordinance banning automobiles from all tourist areas, effectively exiling them from the city.

Laws across the country were passed against horseless carriages.

Nor were these the only obstacles. The asking price for the cheapest automobile amounted to twice the \$500 annual salary of the average citizen—some cost three times that much—and all that bought you was four wheels, a body, and an engine. “Accessories” like bumpers, carburetors, and headlights had to be

purchased separately. Navigation was a nightmare. The first of San Francisco's road signs were only just being erected, hammered up by an enterprising insurance underwriter who hoped to win clients by posting directions into the countryside, where drivers retreated for automobile "picnic parties" held out of the view of angry townsfolk.

Horseless carriages were expensive.

The first automobiles imported to San Francisco had so little power that they rarely made it up the hills. The grade of Nineteenth Avenue was so daunting for the engines of the day that watching automobiles straining for the top to become a local pastime.

Horseless carriages were not powerful enough to climb San Francisco's hills.

Step Two: Read through your purpose/summary statements. Decide the text structure (you can give students a list) and evaluate your purpose/summary statements to see if they fit the text structure.

The "horseless carriage" was unpopular in San Francisco.

Laws across the country were passed against horseless carriages.

Horseless carriages were expensive.

Horseless carriages were not powerful enough to climb San Francisco's hills.

This is an explanation of why cars were not immediately popular in San Francisco—it gives three reasons (paragraphs 2-4).

- **I don't think I summarized the second paragraph correctly. It could say that autos were a civic menace and laws were passed to limit the auto.**



COLD READ ORGANIZERS & NOTE TAKING IDEAS

When students read, comprehension is increased if they are asked to actively interact with the text. These graphic organizers and note-taking ideas are able to be used with any text.

Main Points/Details

Record main points in article (use your own words):	Record key details and phrases that illustrate the main points in the article
<i>For example: People remember emotional reading experiences from their childhoods.</i>	<i>"I began sobbing loudly enough to summon my mother from down the hallway."</i>
Question that the text invites you to consider: <i>For example: I wonder what the research might say about reading disturbing stories about violent or oppressive people. Do these kinds of stories also increase empathy?</i>	

Two-Column Notes

TOPICS	DETAILS
SENTENCES	

Example:

USA – Canal	- Pays France for work - Pays Panama for land
Avoided problems	- built hospitals - built water & sewage systems - fought mosquitoes
locks	- moved ships from level to level
	When the US decided to build the Panama Canal, the US made conditions better for the workers who built the locks.

Getting the Gist

1. Read the paragraph.
2. Name the who or what the paragraph is about in a brief phrase.
3. Identify two or three important details about the topic.
4. “Shrink” the paragraph by stating or writing the main idea.
(Say it in 10 to 15 words)

Example: Unfortunately, problems began as soon as construction started. It rained every day, causing the soil to become heavy and sloppy. Temperatures climbed as high as 130 degrees. Tropical diseases such as yellow fever and malaria caused illness or death to the majority of workers. These complications put a great deal of stress on the project. The money allotted to build the canal quickly ran out. In 1899, France abandoned the project.

Name the who or what the paragraph is about in a brief phrase.

Complications in building canal

Identify two or three important details about the topic.

Hot temperatures

Tropical diseases

Not enough money

“Shrink” the paragraph by stating or writing the main idea.

(Say it in 10 to 15 words)

Complications including hot temperatures, diseases, and inadequate funds forced the French to stop the project.



SYMBOLISM MADE EASY

One thing that readers can struggle with is symbols and abstract ideas in texts. This protocol can help students make sense of symbols.

Symbolism Made Easy!

1. A SYMBOL is an idea that is represented by an object or thing. In other words, it is something ABSTRACT represented by something CONCRETE.

-Universal symbols exist in multiple texts from diverse times and authors.
Examples of Universal Symbols: four-leaf clover = Luck, heart = Love, light bulb = bright idea

-Text-specific symbols only exist in one text.
Example of Text-specific Symbols: the apple in Snow White = death

2. Draw and label the important objects in a text.

Items repeated or emphasized are generally important.

3. Write down three sentences that show how the characters feel or react to the object.

HOWEVER THE CHARACTERS FEEL OR REACT TO THE OBJECT, IS HOW THEY FEEL OR REACT TO THE IDEA IT REPRESENTS.

Example from Cinderella:

The stepsisters desperately want the glass slipper to fit them.

The prince is searching everywhere for the owner of the glass slipper.

Cinderella loses her glass slipper in an attempt to leave before midnight.

4. Substitute an IDEA in for the object in each of the three sentences that fits the text.

Example from Cinderella: What does the glass slipper represent—what fits all three sentences? Power? Justice? Happy ending?

The stepsisters desperately want the happy ending to fit them.

The prince is searching everywhere for the owner of the happy ending.

Cinderella loses her happy ending in an attempt to leave before midnight.

-So, glass slipper is a symbol from Cinderella that represents happy ending.



FAST CHARACTERIZATION & TRAITS CHART

FAST CHARACTERIZATION

When readers of fiction get to know the characters in the text, they are more likely to comprehend the action of the text. Here is a graphic organizer that can help students get to know characters.

F-feelings the character has

A-actions the character does

S-sayings the character says

T-thoughts the character has

FAST Characterization Chart

Feelings the character has

Actions the character does

Sayings the character says

Character Name

Thoughts the character has

CHARACTER TRAITS CHART

Using this chart with fiction can help students bring the characters to life, which aids in comprehension.

EMOTIONS	TRAITS
Emotions describe how a character feels at a certain time.	Traits describe the character's personality.
Ask: How does the character feel right now?	Ask: How does the character usually behave?
<p>Examples:</p> <p>Scared</p> <p>Surprised</p> <p>Angry</p> <p>Upset</p> <p>Embarrassed</p> <p>Jealous</p> <p>Excited</p> <p>Impatient</p> <p>Calm</p> <p>Loved</p> <p>Abandoned</p> <p>Justified</p> <p>Inferior</p> <p>“Like a Boss”</p> <p>Appreciated</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>Kind</p> <p>Bossy</p> <p>Determined</p> <p>Shy</p> <p>Outgoing</p> <p>Mean</p> <p>Friendly</p> <p>Reckless</p> <p>Brave</p> <p>Generous</p> <p>Selfish</p> <p>Energetic</p> <p>Confident</p> <p>Compassionate</p> <p>Hardworking</p>