Critical Reading
Deep Reading Strategies
for Expository Texts

Teacher Guide 7–12

Developed by
Jonathan LeMaster
Author Acknowledgements

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To My Senior AVID Class,

“Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.”

-John Dewey

This has been an incredible learning experience for me. Together, we learned how to dream, how to work toward our goals, and how to believe in ourselves. You are graduating high school as AVID seniors, individuals who have achieved so much and who have learned how to be successful in college and the world of work. You now have the tools necessary to achieve greatness. Let your high school graduation mark a new dream—graduating from a college or university. Carry with you the same passion, enthusiasm, and curiosity that you brought to your high school education. Thank you for taking this journey with me. I am blessed to have known all of you.

This is a photo of Jonathan LeMaster’s AVID senior class from El Cajon Valley High School. Jonathan worked with these students as he developed this book. They were, as Jim Burke says, his petri dish.
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Student Handouts and Quick References at a Glance

Use this section to preview the usefulness of, and purpose for, each quick reference and student handout provided in Critical Reading. Note: The references and handouts have their own numbering system, so, for example, you will find both a Student Handout 2.1 and a Quick Reference 2.1 in chapter 2. For more about these resources, see “Organization of Critical Reading” in the Introduction.

Strategy 1: Planning for the Reading: A Teacher’s Guide

Quick Reference 1.1: Reading with Purpose: Using the Text to Create Purpose-Driven Reading . 6
Students can use this reference to establish their own purpose for reading. The strategies outlined on this reference can be used with texts in all content areas.

Quick Reference 1.2: Instructional Model for Reading Tasks ............... 9
This reference was designed specifically for teachers. It helps teachers develop a skill-based reading lesson. The model highlights key elements found in effective reading instruction.

Strategy 2: Prereading: Working Inside and Outside of a Text

Section 1: Working Inside of a Text

Student Handout 2.1: Prereading: Working Inside a Text ............... 16
This handout includes four prereading strategies: surveying the text, noting organizational signals, predicting the main idea, and predicting the genre. Teachers may want to use this handout after students have had some experience with Predicting the Main Idea and Previewing Reading Aids.

Student Handout 2.2: Predicting the Main Idea ..................... 17
This handout offers four steps that students should use while predicting the main idea of a text.

Student Handout 2.3: Previewing Reading Aids ..................... 18
This student handout should be used to teach students how to identify and utilize reading aids in textbooks and other print materials.

Student Handout 2.4: Connecting Visuals to the Surrounding Text .... 19
Use this handout with texts that offer visual support. The activity asks students to analyze visuals by connecting them to titles, key terms, and other reading aids.
Student Handout 2.5:
Vocabulary Awareness Chart .................. 20
Before reading a text, students should use this handout to identify key words and to assess their knowledge of those words.

Section 2: Working Outside of a Text

Quick Reference 2.1:
Studying the Historical and Rhetorical Contexts .................. 24
Use this reference to teach students about historical and rhetorical contexts. The information on this page could be used to guide students as they research a specific context.

Student Handout 2.6:
KWL.................................................. 26
This handout can be used for a traditional KWL activity, or a teacher can use it to ask students different types of questions about the reading. Refer to the section KWL Chart: Reinvented in the chapter introduction for sample questions that a teacher might ask.

Student Handout 2.7:
Quickwrite: What do I know about the content? .................. 27
This handout should be used for quick writing tasks that prepare students for a reading. Students should use the questions on this handout to guide their writing.

Student Handout 2.8:
30-Second Expert .............................. 28
Both a speaking and writing activity, 30-Second Expert should be used to engage students in collaborative learning exercises. Like the title suggests, the activity can be completed in 30 seconds.

Student Handout 2.9:
Before and After Reflection ...................... 28
This student handout guides students through two reflective writing activities: The first asks students to write about a topic or idea before reading, and the second asks students to reflect on their initial thoughts after a reading.

Strategy 3:
Learning and Retaining Academic Vocabulary

Quick Reference 3.1:
Learning and Retaining Academic Vocabulary . 36
This reference was specifically designed for teachers to use. It details an effective approach to teaching vocabulary. There are three distinct steps to this strategy: Step 1, selecting vocabulary to teach; Step 2, determining prior knowledge; and Step 3, teaching selected words. This final step offers a complete process to directly teaching vocabulary.

Student Handout 3.1:
Keeping Track of New Vocabulary ............ 40
Use this handout to support students’ development of new vocabulary. To complete this handout, students are asked to define new vocabulary, use it in an original sentence, and illustrate the words and/or concepts.

Student Handout 3.2:
Vocabulary Bookmarks ............................. 41
This student handout should be used to help students keep track of key words, terms, and concepts while reading novels, textbooks, and other full-length texts.

Strategy 4:
Rereading the Text

Quick Reference 4.1:
Purposes for Rereading .......................... 48
This reference outlines seven effective ways to reread texts. Teachers can use this reference to teach different ways to reread, or teachers can hand it out to students encouraging them to make their own choices about rereading.

Student Handout 4.1:
Rereading: Building Comprehension .......... 49
This handout should be used to teach students the value of rereading. As students reread selected passages, their comprehension will improve.
Student Handout 4.2: 
Rereading: Checking for Understanding ........50
This rereading handout models for students four key questions readers ask while they seek to understand a section of text.

Student Handout 4.3: 
Rereading: Clarifying and Summarizing ........51
Similar to Checking for Understanding, this exercise asks students to work through a challenging section of text. Students are asked to synthesize and summarize ideas in order to deepen their knowledge of the text.

Student Handout 4.4: 
Rereading: Connecting Visual Information to the Surrounding Text ............52
After students have read a text, have them go back to it and analyze the visuals. Making connections between the visual and the surrounding text will improve students' comprehension.

Strategy 5: 
Marking the Text

NOTE: Quick References 5.1–5.5 provide Marking the Text strategies for students in social science, science, mathematics, and English classes. Quick Reference 5.6 provides examples of how to mark an argument; Quick Reference 5.7 provides an example of how a student would mark the text by numbering the paragraphs, circling key terms, and underlining an author’s claims; and Quick Reference 5.8 provides three additional marks readers can use to isolate key information when the three original marks do not suffice.

Quick Reference 5.1: 
Marking the Text: Social Science .................. 58

Quick Reference 5.2: 
Marking the Text: Science ...................... 59

Quick Reference 5.3: 
Marking the Text: Mathematics (Word Problems) .................. 60

Quick Reference 5.4: 
Marking the Text: Fiction ......................... 61

Quick Reference 5.5: 
Marking the Text: Non-fiction (Argument) .... 62

Quick Reference 5.6: 
Marking Argument: Numbering Paragraphs and Circling Key Terms ............ 63

Quick Reference 5.7: 
Marking the Text: Numbering Paragraphs, Circling Key Terms, and Underlining Author’s Claims ...................... 64

Quick Reference 5.8: 
Marking the Text: Additional Ways to Isolate Key Information ............ 65

Strategy 6: 
Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text

Quick Reference 6.1: 
Pausing to Connect: Questions and Methods ........ 72
Use this reference when teaching students how to pause and connect. Teachers may choose to photocopy this reference sheet, teach from it directly, or make the information on this page available in some other way.

Quick Reference 6.2: 
Pausing to Connect Paragraphs .................... 73
The purpose of this reference is to show how readers pause to connect ideas between paragraphs. Teachers could make a copy of this reference for students, or use it to inform future instruction.

Quick Reference 6.3: 
Pausing to Connect Essential Words ................ 74
The purpose of this reference is to show how readers connect and build their understanding of the relationship among essential words in a text. Teachers could make a copy of this reference for students, or use it to inform future instruction.
Strategy 7: Writing in the Margins

NOTE: Use Quick References 7.2–7.7 to teach students six different ways to think about texts. Each of the six references includes guiding questions to help students think about a text, and authentic examples of writing in the margins.

Quick Reference 7.1: Writing in the Margins: Six Strategies at a Glance ......................................................... 80
This reference provides a snapshot of the six strategies highlighted in this chapter. It is recommended that teachers use this reference once students have had time to learn each of the Writing in the Margins strategies. This reference can be given to students as they become more familiar with the different strategies. When given all six strategies, students can begin to make their own choices about how to write in the margins.

Quick Reference 7.2: Writing in the Margins: Visualizing Ideas .......................................................... 81
Quick Reference 7.3: Writing in the Margins: Summarizing Ideas ......................................................... 83
Quick Reference 7.4: Writing in the Margins: Clarifying Ideas .......................................................... 85
Quick Reference 7.5: Writing in the Margins: Making Connections ................................................. 87
Quick Reference 7.6: Writing in the Margins: Responding to Ideas .................................................... 89
Quick Reference 7.7: Writing in the Margins: Questioning ............................................................. 91

Strategy 8: Charting the Text

Quick Reference 8.1: Charting the Text: Analyzing the Macro-Structure ........................................ 102
The five pages that make up this section begin with a how-to guide for charting the macro-structure of a text. The four remaining pages in the series provide authentic examples of charting the macro-structure.

Quick Reference 8.2: Charting the Text: Analyzing the Micro-Structure ......................................... 107
The three pages that make up this section include a how-to guide for charting the micro-structure and two examples of this strategy. The first example shows a reader using the margins of the text to write summary and charting statements. The second example shows a reader utilizing the Charting the Text Table: Analyzing the Micro-Structure (Student Handout 8.1) as he summarizes and charts individual paragraphs.

Student Handout 8.1: Charting the Text Table: Analyzing the Micro-Structure ......................................... 110
When learning how to chart the micro-structure of a text, students should use this table to help them organize their summary and charting statements. Having their summary and charting statements next to each other will help students learn the difference between what an author is saying (the message of the text) and what an author is doing (the rhetorical decisions that are made).

Student Handout 8.2: Charting Verbs List ............................................................. 112
This handout offers a list of verbs that students can refer to while charting texts. The Charting Verbs List has been divided into high-frequency and medium-frequency charting verbs. This is not a comprehensive list of verbs, so teachers may need to add to the list or build their own lists as they engage students in this deep-reading strategy.
Strategy 9: Responding to a Writing Task

Quick Reference 9.1: Analyzing a Writing Prompt ............... 118
Use this reference while analyzing writing prompts. This one-page resource offers eight essential questions that students should ask while working to understand a writing task.

Student Handout 9.1: Responding to a Writing Prompt .......... 119
This handout outlines the eight questions from Analyzing a Writing Prompt, and it provides space for students to answer the questions as they work through a prompt.

Student Handout 9.2: Focused Note-Taking for a Single Source ...... 123
Students should use this handout while taking notes on a single source. The first page asks students to record the title of the source, author’s name, publication information, and general information about the historical and rhetorical contexts surrounding the source. The second page offers a table for students to record and analyze source material. If students are asked to use multiple sources, it is recommended that they transfer the ideas from this handout into their Cornell notes. When used in this way, the handout becomes a template for students, allowing them to duplicate the information as needed.

Strategy 10: Summarizing the Text

Quick Reference 10.1: Strategies for Summarizing an Argument ...... 132
This reference lists reading strategies that will help students summarize an argument. It also describes what a typical summary covers and provides some general tips to consider when summarizing a text.

Student Handouts 10.1 and 10.2: Summarizing Sections of an Argument: Guided Practice and Independent Practice .......... 133, 134
These handouts ask students to summarize a section of text. When learning how to write effective summaries, students should work with a shorter passage of text. The Guided Practice handout (10.1) is different from the Independent Practice (10.2) in that it provides sentence starters to help frame students’ academic responses. As students develop their summary skills, they will be less dependent on sentence starters and templates. It is recommended that students use the Guided Practice handout as they learn summary writing.

Student Handout 10.3: Accounting for an Author’s Claims ........... 135
Use this handout to help students identify and synthesize claims made by an author. The second half of this activity asks students to account for an author’s main claim, which may require a synthesis of all given claims. Depending on the author, a main (or central) claim may be explicitly or implicitly stated. Students should use the processes outlined on this handout to help articulate an author’s main claim.

Student Handout 10.4: Analyzing an Author’s Evidence ............. 137
This handout helps students focus on and analyze an author’s use of evidence. Tables are provided to help students isolate key evidence, identify the type of evidence being presented, and analyze its value and impact on the argument.

Quick Reference 10.2: Summarizing an Author’s Use of Evidence ...... 139
Use this reference with students who have had some time to analyze an author’s evidence. Once they have examined the evidence, they can use this reference to help guide their summaries. This reference describes what writers should include when summarizing an author’s use of evidence.
Student Handout 10.5: Analyzing and Summarizing Evidence: Template ......................... 140
This handout offers a template that students could use to frame a complete academic response. The academic moves modeled here parallel the four parts outlined in Quick Reference 10.2: Summarizing an Author’s Use of Evidence.

Quick Reference 10.3: One-Page Report: Poster Activity ................. 141
Another summary activity provided in this chapter is the One-Page Report: Poster Activity. This reference details a summary activity that asks students to summarize an argument through visual and linguistic representations.

Quick Reference 10.4: Say, Do, Mean: What does the author say? What does the author do? And, what does it mean? ......................... 142
This reference defines three parts (say, do, mean) and describes what should be included for each of the parts. It also provides brief sample responses for each part of the summary activity.

Student Handout 10.6: Say, Do, Mean .................................... 143
This handout provides a place for students to complete all three parts of the summary activity, Say, Do, Mean.

Quick Reference 10.5: Say, Do, Mean: A Student Sample ................. 144
This reference provides authentic student samples for each of the three parts Say, Do, and Mean. Before completing their own Say, Do, Mean, students should read these sample responses so they know how to complete the summary activity.

Quick Reference 10.6: Sample Text: The Space-Taker Effect ............ 145
This reference is provided to give teachers and students access to the text that was used to create the authentic student samples for both the Say, Do, Mean and Rhetorical Précis summary activities.

Student Handout 10.7: Writing an Argument Summary: Rhetorical Précis ..................... 146
The purpose of this handout is to chunk a Rhetorical Précis writing exercise into five manageable parts. Each part of the Précis offers a description of what should be included, a sample response, and a template that offers students additional guidance.

Student Handout 10.8: Rhetorical Précis: Template ......................... 150
This handout provides a complete template for students who are familiar with Student Handout 10.7: Writing an Argument Summary: Rhetorical Précis and who do not need additional support beyond the template. Eventually, students should be able to write a rhetorical précis without any support.

Student Handout 10.9: List of Words to Describe an Author’s Tone .... 152
This reference provides a list of words that could be used to describe an author’s tone. Students will need this reference as they complete the fourth part of the rhetorical précis.

Quick Reference 10.7: Strategies for Summarizing Informational Texts .............. 153
This reference lists reading strategies that will help students summarize informational texts (e.g., textbooks, workplace documents, and various periodicals). It describes what a typical summary covers and provides some general tips to consider when summarizing a text.

Student Handout 10.10: Summarizing Sections of Informational Texts 154
This handout offers a process for summarizing informational texts. This handout asks students to concentrate on one section of text at a time, making it easier for students to isolate and account for essential information. As students learn how to summarize informational texts, they will require less support.
Quick Reference 10.8:
Sample Summary of an Expository Text ....... 155
This two-page reference provides an authentic summary of an expository text on the first page, and the template that was used to craft the summary on the second page. Teachers may want to reference these pages to see how templates could be used to strengthen students' writing or use it to show students how templates can help shape competent, academic responses.

Strategy 11:
Utilizing Sentence Starters and Templates

Quick Reference 11.1:
Sentence Starters .......................... 164
This reference focuses on a common rhetorical strategy in academic writing, metadiscourse. The reference outlines five types of metadiscourse and provides a variety of sentences starters for each type.

Quick Reference 11.2:
Providing Information About a Source ........ 167
Use this reference to explicitly teach students that writers will choose to introduce source material in various ways. This reference offers six different ways a writer may choose to introduce a source.

Quick Reference 11.3:
Citing Sources Directly: Using Quotation Marks and Parenthetical Citations .......................... 169
This reference provides a clear example of how to cite a source using Modern Language Association (MLA) standards.

Quick Reference 11.4:
3-Part Source Integration .......................... 170
Teaching students how to introduce source material is a never-ending battle. This reference demystifies this skill for students by breaking the process into three parts. The reference also offers a couple of examples of how to introduce and talk about a source.

Quick Reference 11.5:
Introducing the Source and the Author ......... 174
This reference provides three templates that students could use when introducing source material.

Quick Reference 11.6:
3-Part Source Integration: Chart ............... 171
Use this handout when teaching students how to introduce and talk about source material. The work produced from this handout could be incorporated into the papers students write.

Quick Reference 11.7:
3-Part Source Integration: Templates ............ 175
This handout offers two templates that students could use while learning how to introduce and analyze source material.

Strategy 12:
Investigating Writers’ Choices

Quick Reference 12.1:
Learning About Introductions in Expository Texts .......................... 184
This reference describes elements of effective introductory paragraphs. This information is useful for students as they learn to make their own decisions about the introductions they write.

Quick Reference 12.2:
Investigating Introductions in Expository Writing .......................... 185
As students learn how to write introductions, they should spend some time investigating how professional writers introduce their topics. This handout should be used to assist in the investigation and exploration of various introductions.

Quick Reference 12.3:
Learning About Body Paragraphs in Expository Writing .......................... 186
If we hope to move students beyond the five-paragraph essay, we must expose them to
high-quality writing that offers a wide range
of text structures. This reference explains that
paragraphs are designed to do very specific
work and that paragraphing is intentional and
not part of a formulaic process.

Student Handout 12.2:
Investigating How Writers Use Paragraphs . . . 187
Use this handout to help students investigate
body paragraphs. It offers a table that students
should complete as they analyze individual
paragraphs. When analyzing multiple
paragraphs, have students record their ideas in
their Cornell notes, using the information on
the handout as a template.

Student Handout 12.3:
Studying Conclusions in Expository Writing . . 188
Students struggle to write effective conclusions.
For this reason, we should have them
examine conclusions in professional writing,
studying what writers do at the end of their
texts. This handout provides questions that
engage students in the analysis of concluding
paragraphs.

Quick Reference 12.3:
Learning About Evidence ....................... 189
This reference offers a brief introduction to
evidence and how it is used and valued across the
disciplines. The reference proves useful for teachers
and students interested in studying and utilizing
evidence in a given discipline.

Student Handout 12.4:
Analyzing Evidence ............................. 190
This handout first appears in Strategy 10:
Summarizing the Text. In Strategy 10, this
handout is used to support students as
they work to summarize an author’s use of
evidence. For this chapter, the same handout
serves a different purpose. It should be used
to investigate a writers’ decision for using a
particular type of evidence. Studying a writers’
evidence will help students make their own
decisions about the evidence they use in the
papers they write.

Quick Reference 12.4:
Why Writers Use What Others Say ............. 192
This reference briefly explains why writers
incorporate the words of others into their texts.

Student Handout 12.5:
Analyzing How Writers Use What Others Say . . 193
This handout offers a table that students should
use while investigating the use of cited authors.

Student Handout 12.6:
Reading Pictures, Images, Graphs, and Other Visuals ............ 194
This handout asks students to analyze visuals
in texts. As part of their analysis, students
investigate the purpose of the visual and
evaluate its impact on the meaning of the text.

Quick Reference 12.5:
Learning About Rhetorical Devices ............ 195
This reference defines rhetorical devices and
offers a brief outline that students should follow
when writing (or speaking) about rhetorical
devices.

Student Handout 12.7:
Analyzing Rhetorical Devices ................... 196
This handout offers a template for students to
follow when analyzing rhetorical devices.

Student Handout 12.8:
Analyzing Metadiscourse ....................... 197
In Strategy 11: Utilizing Sentence Starters and
Templates, metadiscourse (a featured rhetorical
move in the chapter) is divided into five
categories: Framing Metadiscourse, Focusing
Metadiscourse, Connecting Metadiscourse,
Explaining Metadiscourse, and the fifth,
Attitudinal Metadiscourse. For this handout,
students are asked to identify metadiscourse
in a text, explain how the writer is using the
strategy, and evaluate its effectiveness.
Critical Reading: Deep Reading Strategies for Expository Texts Teacher Guide 7–12 is the product of both a specific kind of education and the experiences of an extraordinary teacher. Jonathan LeMaster’s graduate work in Rhetoric and Writing Studies at San Diego State University, especially his study with Professors Ellen Quandahl (a specialist in classical rhetoric and writing pedagogy) and Ann Johns (an expert in second/foreign language writing pedagogy and applied linguistics), was a career-changing experience that uniquely prepared him to write about reading instruction in the secondary schools. Through this training, Jonathan became highly skilled at breaking down a complex text into discrete units of discourse that have particular functions within the overall piece of writing. He learned to approach readings rhetorically—as deliberate arguments that perform specific work within a larger cultural context. Furthermore, he became familiar with key teachings of applied linguistics: that is, the use of vocabulary, syntax, and sentence-level grammar to achieve rhetorical goals. Most importantly, perhaps, he developed the ability to communicate plainly and accessibly about sophisticated ideas, to give names to things, and to describe important patterns clearly. Thus it is not surprising that Jonathan’s Master’s project, supervised largely by Professors Quandahl and Johns, forms the backbone of this book.

But as important as Jonathan’s graduate education has been to the formation of Critical Reading, the faculty at San Diego State cannot take credit for his extraordinary gifts as a teacher and for his remarkable ability to connect with colleagues from a wide variety of subject areas, from the language arts to the sciences and physical education. In fact, it is Jonathan’s formative experiences as a
practicing instructor who has reached out to many different kinds of students and teachers that have made Critical Reading such an important contribution to contemporary reading pedagogy. Those who have spoken with Jonathan about the teaching of reading and writing or who have attended one of his workshops understand this point clearly enough. A book pitched at this level of specificity and practicality must necessarily come from an educator such as Jonathan, who, through direct experience, truly understands the challenges of a twenty-first-century teacher.

As the title of this text suggests, the approach to reading instruction presented in the following pages emphasizes expository, or nonliterary, texts: articles, reports, opinion pieces, chapters, speeches, and other genres approached in terms of the specific work they accomplish in civic, educational, and public spheres. Like the curriculum at San Diego State University, Jonathan's approach to reading is not anchored in literature or literary aesthetics, yet it is by no means simplistic or anti-literary. Critical Reading, like other thoughtful pedagogies based on rhetorical principles, may be used in conjunction with literary texts to prepare middle and high school students for college reading and writing because, ultimately, literature is not truly a unique or isolated collection of genres but yet another context of writing designed to perform specific kinds of work with respect to identifiable audiences. I mention this point not to degrade the poems, novels, short stories, and plays many reading and writing instructors love and have been trained to teach, but to help us avoid false dilemmas and restrictive either/or binaries in our instruction. With respect to rhetorically based pedagogy, we are limited only by our own imaginations, our experiences, and the texts and contexts we choose to study.

Critical Reading is particularly significant at this time in the history of education because it contributes to a noteworthy effort to improve college readiness among our nation's secondary school students. In twenty-first-century California, the context I know best, the 23-campus California State University has partnered with many school districts across the state in a series of initiatives designed to reshape the way middle and high school students acquire language arts and prepare for college. A key component of this work has been the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC), a twelfth-grade curriculum designed by a special task force of representative CSU and high school faculty. Adapting the innovations produced by previous programs, the ERWC task force produced a series of teaching units or modules that comprise a coherent, rhetorically based pedagogy intended to prepare high school seniors to succeed in college-level reading and writing courses. The ERWC course, which is recognized as college preparation by both the CSU and the University of California, constitutes some of the best collaborative pedagogy currently available. Jonathan's work parallels, supports, and extends—but is not derivative of—the ERWC and its sister initiatives: All have similar intellectual roots in the CSU and the California public school system.

And, in fact, those roots are deep. As I reflect on the pedagogy developed in Critical Reading and similar rhetorically based efforts, I discern links not only to wider twenty-first-century pedagogical trends throughout the country, but to the rhetorical tradition of teaching about language and public discourse that extends back at least as far as Aristotle's Rhetoric. As a historian of rhetoric, I am always pleased to discover contemporary pedagogy that is grounded in the wisdom of the ages, pedagogy that modernizes and updates ancient knowledge for today's teachers and students. This book delivers such an approach.

It is no exaggeration to conclude that for middle and high school teachers across the United States, the stakes have never been higher. Continuous budget crises, increasingly centralized oversight, and the extensive battery of tests and assessments required in today's schools combine to place great pressure on our instructors. They are expected not simply to survive, but to exceed ever-advancing standards of success. At this time, when our teachers need all the support they can get, books such as Critical Reading are particularly welcome. I urge every 7–12 teacher concerned about the relationship between reading and student success—whatever the content area—to consider carefully the pedagogical approach presented in this volume.

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Critical Reading marks the second phase of AVID’s college readiness pathway. The first phase of the project was AVID College Readiness: Working with Sources, Grades 11–12 (ACR), a teaching resource designed to better prepare junior and senior AVID students for the rigors of college-level writing tasks. Whereas ACR focuses on preparing students for prompt analysis and academic writing, Critical Reading aims to improve the literacy of students by providing teachers across the disciplines with the practices they need to teach students effective reading skills. Teachers of the humanities, arts, and sciences, in grades 7–12, will find practical reading strategies in each chapter of this book to prepare their students for success in the secondary classroom and in college.

Why Critical Reading?

Critical Reading was motivated by and is responding to the need for academic literacy instruction. According to the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senate (ICAS)—a committee made up of California’s higher education institutions—there has been a gradual decline for the past two decades in the ability of students to read and write effectively. ACT (2007) released a report that claims literacy instruction is still not systematically taught in many secondary classrooms, despite considerable research about the importance of selective and purpose-driven reading of expository texts.

The lack of explicit instruction in reading strategies has resulted in students moving through secondary education deficient in reading. The gap that exists between what students are learning in high school and what they are expected to know in college is only one consequence of not teaching reading. In their text Teaching and Researching Reading, Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 1) identify a second (and perhaps more troubling) consequence: “As we enter a new century, productive and educated citizens will require even stronger literacy abilities (including both reading and writing) in increasingly larger number of societal settings” (p. 1).

We know that merely attending class and being exposed to the content does not lead to effective student reading practices. ACT research indicates that it is not the number of courses that students take in a subject that makes a difference, but what they are asked to do in these courses. Not surprisingly, then, ACT (2007, p. 7) advocates for the study of complex (expository) texts in all of the content areas, “texts that require students to work at unlocking meaning by calling upon sophisticated reading comprehension skills and strategies” (p. 7).

When teaching from a text, teachers should make transparent what good readers do while reading. The skills needed to make meaning from a text are complex and at times subtle. Critical Reading demystifies this complex process by making available deep reading strategies that should be taught across the disciplines and throughout the school day. In addition to the individual strategies, Critical Reading offers strategic instructional practices designed to promote high-quality literacy instruction.

Although there has been much discussion about adolescent literacy, the majority of scholarly work contributing to academic literacy remains in the form of a discussion, yielding valuable conversations on methodology and pedagogy but producing few curricular resources that teachers can use in the classroom. It is this need for practical, academic literacy resources that creates a space for this project.
What will students learn about their reading?

Reading is a process. This volume expects students to be able to ask and answer several questions about the texts they read:

- What do I already know about the reading?
- What do I need to know before I read?
- How should I approach the reading of the text?
- What can I do with what I read?
- How can I use what I have just read in my writing or speaking?

Note: Teachers should acknowledge that the type of scholastic work outlined in this book is difficult and it will take time to master, and encourage their students as they struggle to learn new ways of thinking and writing about the texts they read.

Organization of Critical Reading

*Critical Reading* has been divided into twelve distinct strategies. The first chapter, “Planning for the Reading: A Teacher’s Guide,” was designed to provide support and guidance for teachers as they develop reading tasks for their students. Unlike the chapters that follow it, the first chapter does not offer reading strategies for students. The other eleven chapters, or strategies as they are called in this book, were developed with students in mind. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the strategy and explanations for “How,” “When,” and “Why” students should learn the strategy discussed in that specific chapter. Each chapter ends with suggestions for deepening understanding of the strategy and for extending the strategy schoolwide.

Following the introduction in each chapter, “Quick References” have been provided for teacher and student use, and teachers can decide if they want to teach from the reference and/or distribute the reference to students. “Student Handouts” have been provided for students to practice the critical reading strategies presented in each chapter. To clarify the purposes for and usefulness of each resource throughout *Critical Reading*, a “Student Handouts and Quick References at a Glance” section has been provided for teachers directly after the Table of Contents.

References


This first strategy is unique in that it speaks directly to the teacher using this book and does not offer reading strategies for students. The strategies and approaches discussed here, however, provide support and guidance for teachers as they develop reading tasks for their students. Effective literacy instruction begins with a purpose for reading and writing. If we hope to improve our students’ academic literacy, we must give more consideration to the types of texts we ask them to read and have a plan for the reading. We must read the text first to see what it has to offer, and then develop skill-based lessons that teach students how to access the information we want them to know.
Selecting Texts for Instructional Purposes

When selecting texts for our students to read, it is important to consider more than just the content or topic. What else is there to consider? We should select texts that lend themselves to the teaching of specific reading strategies or other academic skills. Because texts present a variety of linguistic and structural challenges, we need to expose students to a wide range of texts and teach them critical reading skills that will help them comprehend these difficult texts.

Effective literacy instruction begins with the teacher’s knowledge of the text. We must take time to read and understand the texts we use in the classroom. Once we have read the text, we can decide on how to best teach it (or if we want to teach it).

While reading a potential text for your students, you should…

• Read, and when necessary, reread the text in order to gain a deep understanding of what the author says and/or argues.
• Mark the text (number the paragraphs and underline essential information) in the same way you will want your students to mark it.
• Chart and summarize sections of the text in order to gain insight into what the author is doing in the text. You want to be very familiar with the text before reading it with your students. Write your comments or analyses in the margins.
• Identify elements or sections of the text that are challenging. Decide on strategies that will support students through these difficult sections.

When selecting a text for instructional purposes, choose a text that…

• can be read for multiple purposes (for example, analyzing arguments and structure).
• presents various types of evidence and support.
• offers ideas that could be represented in a visual or graphical way.
• develops or extends course concepts or objectives.
• models effective, sophisticated writing.
• challenges students linguistically or cognitively.
• develops students’ cultural literacy.
• presents visual arguments.
• develops students’ academic literacy in some other way.

Questions to ask after selecting a text…

• Why am I having my students read this text?
• What reading strategies can I explicitly teach with this text?
• What prereading activities should my students complete before reading the text?
• What will I have my students do while they read?
• How should I support my students as they read this text?
• How can I get my students to see what the text has to offer?
• What can I effectively teach in the time that I have?
• What will my students be able to know or do once they complete the reading?
• How will my students demonstrate that they have comprehended the ideas in the text?
Establishing a Purpose for the Reading

Purpose-Driven Reading (Teacher-Driven)

Every reading task should begin with a purpose, or a prompt, that is articulated either verbally or in writing. Prompts are useful! They communicate to students our expectations for the reading, define what students should be thinking about and doing while reading, and they also help students make decisions about the types of reading strategies they will need to employ.

Before creating a prompt, consider…

- What do you want your students to understand?
- What do you want your students to do while reading?
- What will you have your students do with what they have read?
- What will you have your students summarize, analyze, or evaluate?
- What will the writing exercise look like? Is there a model? A template? A rubric?

It is important to remember that purposefully selecting texts and crafting prompts for individual reading (and writing) tasks is the teacher’s responsibility. Students depend on our guidance and support, and we must give it to them.

The following samples offer a few ways prompts can be used to create a purpose for reading.

Sample Prompt 1
Social Behavioral Sciences

Is modern technology a social experiment? Has instant communication (email, text messages, and instant messages) negatively impacted our ability to communicate well? These questions and others like these are raised in Donna St. George’s article “Texting Changes Life for Teens, Families.” While reading St. George’s text, circle the names of people and underline what they say. Who are these people? And how does St. George use cited authors to explore the phenomenon of text messaging?

Sample Prompt 2
Biology

Read the section on “Nutrition and Energy Flow” in your biology textbook. This section is broken into four subsections. What are these sections about? In your Cornell notes, briefly summarize each section. Summaries should include the definitions of key vocabulary, main ideas, and other essential information like descriptions and examples. Turn titles and subtitles into questions to help focus your summaries.
Sample Prompt 3
World History

In the section “The French Revolution Begins,” we learn that social inequality and economic problems contributed to the French Revolution. To better understand this section, let’s investigate how the ideas are organized. For example, are there cause and effect relationships? Is something being compared and contrasted? In your Cornell notes, create a graphic organizer that will help you analyze the structure of this text. A Venn Diagram, for instance, could be used to organize comparisons in the text. Use your graphic organizer to account for main ideas, key vocabulary, concepts, and important people, places, and things.

Sample Prompt 4
Humanities

In the selection “The Achievement of Desire,” Richard Rodriguez shares his personal experience as he struggles to “move between environments, his home and the classroom, which are at cultural extremes, opposed.” While you read, underline what Rodriguez says about these two worlds and circle words he uses to describe each. Where in the text do we see Rodriguez’s education colliding with his family, his culture, and his own identity?

Sample Prompt 5
English

Martin Luther King, Jr., in his speech “I See the Promise Land” utilizes rhetorical devices to move, interest, and persuade his audience. Using the Marking the Text strategy, circle the names of people, places, and things, and analyze why King makes these references. As you read and mark the text, write brief statements in the margins that describe what Martin Luther King, Jr. is doing in his speech (for instance, telling a story, making historical allusions, or drawing comparisons).

Purpose-Driven Reading (Student-Driven)

When students are given a purpose for reading, they benefit from knowing what they should be doing or thinking about while reading. Unfortunately, not all reading assignments come with a clear purpose. For instance, a student enrolled in a science class may notice a homework assignment scribbled on the whiteboard: For homework read chapter 2, section 3. The directions are clear, but they don’t include a purpose. Students usually don’t think to ask,

“What is the most important topic or concept you would like us to understand from our reading?”

“What reading strategy do you recommend for this section so that we can increase our comprehension of the material?”

Having an answer to these questions would clarify the reading task for the students, increasing their opportunity to succeed.

Too often, teachers mistakenly assume that students know how to identify useful information in a text. Since students may fail to see what is and what is not important, they give up; there is too much information to know. So what should a student do if a teacher has not communicated a purpose for reading? Imagine an English class that has begun a controversial issue unit. The teacher has asked students
to read three articles on a controversial issue. Students understand that they have to locate and read three articles, but they don’t know how to think about the texts or how to use them in a paper. Student performance, as well as task completion, may be poor if a reading purpose has not been established.

Helping Students Establish a Purpose for Reading

One way we can help students establish a purpose for reading is to teach them how to talk to their teachers. A student in social science who is asked to read a section of a chapter should know how to talk to the teacher about the reading task without sounding like he or she is challenging the teacher. Teachers are not used to students asking clarifying questions about reading assignments. The questions we hear sound more like, “When is it due?” “How much is it worth?” And the favorite: “Will there be a quiz?”

Students should learn how to ask purposeful questions. Consider the following questions students might ask to better understand the reading task:

- “What would you like us to know and understand?”
- “How would you like us to read this text?”
- “Do you want us to take notes, create an outline, or mark the text?”
- “What strategies should we use to help us identify the information relevant to the reading task?”

Questions like these need to be explicitly taught and modeled for students. As their knowledge of reading strategies deepens, students will begin to ask useful questions about their reading. They will know what to ask and how to ask it.

Another way we can help students read successfully when no reading purpose is available is to teach them how to create their own purposes for reading. Think back to the English students working on the controversial research project. The students were asked to locate and read three articles but were not given a purpose. Students can create a purpose by asking the text:

- “Why is this topic a controversial issue?”
- “Which side of the issue is the author on?”
- “What does the author say?”
- “What is the author’s purpose for writing this article?”
- “How does the author challenge my personal viewpoint?”

Asking these types of questions will provide a focus for the reading.
Reading with Purpose: 
*Using the Text to Create Purpose-Driven Reading*

While reading a text, students should also use titles, subtitles, review questions, and various other reading aids to establish a series of purpose-driven questions. Consider the following ways texts can be used to create purposes for reading.

**Titles and Subtitles**
- How can I rewrite the title into a question?
- How can I use words from the title to create new questions?
- How can I use subtitles to guide my reading?
- How can I use the titles to ask larger, more thematic questions?

**Focus/Review Questions**
- Are there focus questions at the beginning or end of the chapter, section, or article?
- How can I use these focus or review questions to guide/focus my reading?
- What new questions can I ask based on the focus questions?
- What words or phrases do I need to understand before I read?
- What do I need to know in order to answer these questions?

**Key Concepts**
- Does the text provide key concepts at the beginning or end of the selection?
- How can I use the themes or key concepts to guide my reading?
- How can I rewrite the key concepts into focus questions?

**Previews and Summaries**
- Does the text provide previews or summaries?
- How can I rewrite the previews or summaries into focus questions?
- What key information is discussed in these summaries? What will I need to know?
- What words or phrases will be essential to my reading?

**Connecting to Class Themes/Concepts**
- How are these key concepts connected to what I am learning in class?
- How do the titles or subtitles relate to what I am learning in class?
- What will I need to be thinking about while I read this text?
- How do the review questions relate to the topics/ideas discussed in class?
- How can I connect what I am learning in class to what I am reading?
Developing Assessments for Reading

When planning for a reading, teachers should assess whether or not students met the learning outcomes established for the reading task. Frequent, formative assessments will hold students accountable for the reading, and the assessments will provide timely feedback that teachers should use to inform future curricular decisions. There are many ways teachers can assess students’ comprehension and knowledge of reading strategies. Consider using one of the following assessment strategies when planning for a reading task.

While assessing students’ comprehension…

• create a multiple-choice or short answer quiz that assesses students’ ability to read for a particular purpose. The purpose should be articulated in the reading task.

• assign short writing activities, such as, “Say, Do, Mean,” “Rhetorical Précis,” or the “One-Page Report,” that assess students’ comprehension (see Strategy 10).

• design template exercises to assess students’ comprehension of various ideas, such as the main ideas, processes or steps, author’s claims, and the author’s use of evidence. Strategies 10 and 11 offer sample template exercises and support for creating original templates.

• use less formal assessments like verbal comprehension checks and pair-shares to assess students’ comprehension. For example, a teacher might ask students to point to something in the text that is essential to the reading task. While walking around to determine if the students have located the essential information, a teacher might say, “Where is the main idea in paragraph eight? Please locate the main idea in paragraph eight and place your finger at the beginning of the sentence. I am going to check if you successfully located the main idea.” Do not indicate if individual students are right or wrong. A simple “Thank-you” or “Okay” will work best. Once students have had an opportunity to share their answers, the teacher can give the right answer. There are many variations to this type of formative assessment that would provide useful information.

While assessing students’ knowledge of a reading strategy…

• have students define the purpose of a given strategy and explain why a reader would use it. For example, a teacher might ask, “How do readers chart texts?” Students can answer this question on a piece of paper or they can share their answers verbally. Then, a teacher could ask, “When do readers chart texts? Do they chart every paragraph?” The last question is the most important: “Why do readers chart texts? What is the purpose of this strategy?”

• collect student work and assess how the students are employing a particular reading strategy. Are they consistently using the strategy? Is it being used effectively? You may want to develop a rubric for this type of assessment. The rubric should measure the students’ overall knowledge of the strategy and the accuracy and frequency in which it is used.
- direct students to utilize a specific strategy—like “Marking the Text”—and have them record the key terms and claims in their Cornell notes. What did they understand the key terms to be? What did they say were the author’s claims? This exercise will assess if the students were able to use the strategy effectively, circling and underlining information essential to the reading task.

- walk around the room while students are employing a strategy like “Writing in the Margins,” and assess how individual students are using the strategy. Take a moment to read what students are writing. This type of assessment provides immediate feedback, making it easier for a teacher to identify and support struggling students.

- check in with the students. Ask a question about the strategy they are using. Give students time to respond. Students can respond verbally or in writing.
### Instructional Model for Reading Tasks

The following outlines an instructional model for developing, implementing, and supporting skill-based reading instruction.

#### Selecting a Text and Defining a Reading Purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a content-based and skill-based learning outcome.</td>
<td>Purposefully select a text that can be used to teach specific academic literacy skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purposefully select a text that can be used to teach specific academic literacy skills.</td>
<td>Establish a purpose for reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a purpose for reading.</td>
<td>Craft a prompt to help communicate the purpose for reading.</td>
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#### Establishing the Learning Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set the context for the assignment.</td>
<td>Encourage students as they engage in rigorous academic course work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage students as they engage in rigorous academic course work.</td>
<td>Maintain high expectations for reading and writing exercises.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain high expectations for reading and writing exercises.</td>
<td>Increase opportunities for students to discuss texts.</td>
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#### Preparing for the Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage students in prereading activities.</td>
<td>Study the author’s personal, professional, and/or academic experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study the author’s personal, professional, and/or academic experiences.</td>
<td>Review important words.</td>
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<td>Review important words.</td>
<td>Examine the historical and rhetorical contexts.</td>
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#### Selecting Active Reading Strategies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rereading the text</td>
<td>Marking the Text</td>
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<td>Marking the Text</td>
<td>• Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text</td>
<td>• Writing in the Margins</td>
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<td>• Writing in the Margins</td>
<td>• Charting the Text</td>
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<td>• Charting the Text</td>
<td>• Summarizing the Text</td>
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<td>• Summarizing the Text</td>
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#### Supporting and Assessing the Reading Task

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach specific reading strategies that help students understand the text.</td>
<td>Model active reading strategies using an overhead projector or document camera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model active reading strategies using an overhead projector or document camera.</td>
<td>Assign group work as part of the reading activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign group work as part of the reading activities.</td>
<td>Assess students’ ability to actively read and comprehend the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess students’ ability to actively read and comprehend the text.</td>
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</table>
Most high school classes do not fully prepare their students for college. Most teachers accept late work, allow extra credit to those whose are failing, and give exceptional grades to papers that are done the night before. AVID sets higher expectations for their students. AVID educates its students on college requirements and exposes them to the rigors of university-level work. The students are treated as college students and are taught from the beginning to live up to their full potential. My AVID teacher knows what colleges expect and prepares us for the challenging reading and writing assignments that we will surely face. My AVID teacher does not accept average work, and has taken the time to show us how to write with sophistication and read with a critical eye. As I enter college, I will be more prepared for the rigorous courses and aware of the opportunities that college offers me.

Mary Naoom, 
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Prereading: Working Inside and Outside of a Text

Most educators are familiar with such prereading activities as scanning the text or previewing vocabulary. Although this chapter provides some of these familiar activities, it presents new ways of thinking about prereading. For example, most strategies involve students working inside of a text. Students are asked to scan titles, visuals, and other reading aids within the text, making predictions as they go. These are sound practices. But prereading should also include strategies that get students working outside of a text. Conducting surveys or interviews or investigating the author are all prereading strategies that engage students outside of a text. Watching the news or researching a historical context can also help prepare students for a reading task. This chapter on “Prereading” is divided into two sections: “Working Inside of a Text” and “Working Outside of a Text.” You will find various strategies to help students prepare for the reading.
**How should students Preread?**

Students should utilize a variety of prereading strategies to better understand the texts they read. Good readers preread a text by surveying and evaluating the organization and length of it, by noting the organizational signals within it, by predicting the main idea and genre, by previewing the reading aids, and by connecting visuals to the surrounding text.

**When should students Preread?**

Prereading need not take a whole class period. Working inside and outside of a text can be done quickly. What can you realistically do in a few minutes? Plenty! Before class, prepare a few questions that will get students talking about the ideas in the text. Then, in class, give students three to four minutes to discuss the questions in small groups. After a few minutes of good discussion, ask volunteers to share their thoughts with the whole class. Hand out the reading and ask students to read the title, publication information, and any other introductory material. If a description of the author is provided, have the students read that as well. Ask them to make some predictions, such as, “What do you think this text will be about?” Let them share some ideas before asking them to read the first and last paragraph. Now that they have more information, have them make new predictions. Ask them to share their new predictions with a neighbor. This approach to prereading should take no more than ten minutes. This is time well spent because students’ comprehension will increase and their ability to talk about the ideas in the text—days after the reading—will improve.

**Why should students Preread?**

Well-planned prereading activities can turn a difficult (even dry) text into a rich reading experience—one that students will enjoy and remember. Prereading should be used to create interest and to build prior knowledge. Have fun and be creative. Prereading can be used to scaffold learning and motivate adolescent readers.
Prereading

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Prereading” as a critical reading strategy.

Introducing Prereading

- Define prereading and explain why readers engage in this type of work.
- Ask students to share what they know about prereading.
- Model for students how to scan a text. While scanning titles, subtitles, visuals, and other aids, think out loud so that students can hear how new information shapes a reader’s predictions. Use a document camera or overhead projector when modeling this strategy.
- Create opportunities for students to make their own predictions about texts.
- Select texts that have titles and reading aids that give clues about the topic of the text. (Early success with this strategy will motivate students to try it again.)
- Engage students in prereading activities that ask them to do some kind of work outside of the text, like writing reflections, conducting interviews, or watching a debate on television.
- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should we mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in English or biology?”
- Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
Prereading: Working Inside of a Text

We know that competent readers engage in various “Prereading” strategies before they completely enter a text. Some of the strategies include surveying the text, noting organizational signals, and making predictions about the topic and the genre. Most of our students do not approach reading in this way. An inexperienced reader typically picks up a text and begins reading it from top to bottom, left to right. This makes reading very difficult. Prereading can help a student engage and enjoy the text.

This section will teach students to work within a text, that is, to use text features such as titles, visuals, and other various reading aids to help them develop a basic understanding of a text. Depending on the strategy being taught, a teacher might want to use an overhead projector or document camera to model the activities in this section.

**Surveying the Text**  
Ask students to survey the text. Have them report on what they see. Are there subtitles? What is the length of individual paragraphs? Have them scan the whole text in order to get an idea of its overall length.

**Noting Organizational Signals**  
While previewing the text, have students note the layout of the text, observing titles, subtitles, sections, and page breaks. Noting organizational signals will help students build a mental road map, providing an idea as to how the author has structured the text.

**Predicting the Main Idea**  
Have students make predictions before they read. They can read the title and make predictions about the main idea. Ask students, “What will this text be about?” Then, have your students read the first and last paragraphs. They should make new predictions based on the new information. Ask, “What do we know about the text that we didn’t know before?”

**Predicting the Genre**  
While students are surveying a text and making predictions about the main idea, ask them to predict the genre. To some degree, texts can be predictable. For instance, mature readers know that an editorial is a non-fiction text that contains an opinion about a particular subject. Experienced readers may not be able to predict exactly what an author might say, but based on the type of text, the source, or even the author, mature readers should be able to predict the purpose of the text and make some guesses as to how the text will proceed. If students are able to say some things about the genre, they will be able to make some predictions about how the text is shaped and developed. If students can anticipate that a short story will follow a particular structure, or that an op-ed piece will offer an argument, they have one more piece of information they can use to help them make sense of what they are reading.
Previewing Reading Aids

Textbooks, anthologies, and other print materials provide reading aids such as chapter reviews, vocabulary words, visuals, and background information to help students comprehend the reading. Students should learn to preview reading aids before they begin reading because they help build prior knowledge while providing some insight into what the text will be about.

Connecting Visuals to the Surrounding Text

Sometimes it is not enough to simply skim over the visuals in a text. Some visuals require examination and analysis. What is this visual illustrating? How does it connect to the surrounding text? Readers should connect visuals to the surrounding text before and during their reading in order to deepen their understanding of the reading material.

Assessing Prior Knowledge Through Familiar Words

A quick way to assess students’ understanding of words is to offer an informal evaluation in the form of a competency matrix. Allow students to scan the title, subtitles, captions, reading aids, and first and last paragraphs. Then, as a class, decide on ten words that might cause young readers some difficulty. Write these words on the board and ask students to copy them down on their “Vocabulary Awareness Chart” (Student Handout 2.5). Once they have copied all ten words, have them assess their own knowledge of each word. Have students use a dictionary to look up the words they don’t know.

Selecting an Appropriate Strategy for the Reading

After spending some time looking over the text, students should ask questions that will further prepare them for the reading.

- What am I being asked to do?
- What is my reading purpose?
- Can I write on my text?
- Should I use sticky notes or Cornell notes?
- How much time do I have to read?
- How many pages will I need to read?
- What type of text will I be reading?
- What do I know about the content?
- Is the text divided into clear sections?
- Is the language challenging?
- How can the reading aids help me understand the text?
- Who can I talk to about this text?

The answers to these questions will help guide students’ decisions as they read, providing insight into how to best approach the reading task.
Prereading: *Working Inside a Text*

Use the questions and/or instruction in the left column to guide your prereading. Record your responses in the right column.

**Surveying the Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the title of the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is the author?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe any visuals in the section you have been asked to read.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide some comments about the text (e.g., length, number of paragraphs, layout, visuals, etc.).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Noting Organizational Signals**

| Briefly describe the layout of the text, observing titles, subtitles, sections, and page breaks. |          |

**Predicting the Main Idea**

| Read the title of the text and make predictions about the main idea. What will this text be about? |          |
| Now, read the first and last paragraphs. What do we know about the text that we didn’t know before? |          |

**Predicting the Genre**

| What do you know about this genre?                                      |          |
| How will the text be shaped and developed?                             |          |
## Predicting the Main Idea

Good readers scan the text and make predictions before they read in order to get a sense of what the reading is about. The table below makes transparent the types of decisions a reader will make while predicting the main idea. Each step asks readers to make a new prediction as they learn new information about the text. By the fourth step, readers are ready to make a final prediction. During this process of discovering the main idea, cross out predictions that are not accurate and transfer your accurate ideas to the next step.

Title of the Text: _____________________________________________________________

Author: ___________________________________________________________________

What are the key words or phrases in the title and subtitles?
_____________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read the title and make some predictions about the main idea.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scan the text, reading titles, visuals, vocabulary words, and other aids, and make a few more predictions about the main idea.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 3:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read the first and last paragraphs, and make some new predictions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 4:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your prediction? What is this text probably going to be about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Previewing Reading Aids

Use the questions in the left column to guide your prereading. Record your responses in the right column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Reading Aids</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What types of reading aids are provided in the text? For example, are there chapter summaries, visuals, review questions, learning outcomes, and/or other various reading aids to help you comprehend the text?</td>
<td>definitions of content vocabulary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzing Reading Aids</th>
<th>Sample Starter Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why are these reading aids provided? How might they help readers understand the reading material?</td>
<td>The reading aids in this text… The reading aids helped me… The chapter summary identified… The review questions could be used…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Prior Knowledge</th>
<th>Sample Starter Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What information did you learn after previewing the reading aids?</td>
<td>I learned that… The reading aids introduced… The visuals illustrated… The main idea of this section…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Connecting Visuals to the Surrounding Text

Before reading, scan the text for visual support. For each visual, complete the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draw or describe the visual in the space below.</th>
<th>Read the labels and the caption. What is the visual illustrating?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write a sentence or two that identifies the purpose of the visual, and how the visual connects to the surrounding text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draw or describe the visual in the space below.</th>
<th>Read the labels and the caption. What is the visual illustrating?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write a sentence or two that identifies the purpose of the visual, and how the visual connects to the surrounding text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Vocabulary Awareness Chart

Scan the title, subtitles, captions, reading aids, and first and last paragraphs. Identify ten words that seem important (for instance, words that are essential to the topic, content vocabulary, or key concepts). Once you have identified these words, write them in the “Word” column. Assess your own knowledge of each word by placing a check mark in the column that best represents your understanding of each word. Use a dictionary to look up the words you don’t know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Know it</th>
<th>Seen it; don’t know it</th>
<th>No idea</th>
<th>Definitions or notes for those words you do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which of the above words were the most challenging? Why?

---

Prereading: Working Outside of a Text

The previous section offered “Prereading” strategies that ask students to work inside of a text. This section will engage students in activities that ask them to work outside of a text. The strategies that make up this section will engage students in the exploration, reflection, and examination of ideas presented in texts. Getting students to think about and interact with ideas, issues, and concepts outside of the text will help them make deeper connections to the text and engage them at a higher level. Depending on the strategy being taught, a teacher might want to use an overhead projector or document camera to model the activities in this section.

KWL Chart: Reinvented

The “KWL Chart: Reinvented” is a useful prereading tool. Not only does this graphic organizer ask students to reflect on what they know about a particular subject, it gives them an opportunity to think about their reading in new ways. The KWL activity takes students through a reflective process where they question their own knowledge of a text and its content. The table below offers a few ways you can use the KWL chart (provided on Student Handout 2.6) with your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What I KNOW</strong></td>
<td><strong>What I WANT to know</strong></td>
<td><strong>What I LEARNED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I know about the text? The genre?</td>
<td>Why am I reading this text?</td>
<td>What strategies will help me learn the important information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I know about the subject, the passage, or the context?</td>
<td>Where did I learn this information?</td>
<td>How will my knowledge or beliefs assist or bias my learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I know about my reading purpose?</td>
<td>What reading aids will help me understand the text?</td>
<td>What did I learn after previewing the text?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quickwrites

A quick, effective way for students to recall and understand what they know is to have them engage in a five-minute writing exercise called a quickwrite. Quickwrites help students access their prior knowledge and discover what they already know about the text they are about to read.

Making Connections Through Language

“Making Connections Through Language” is a prereading strategy that asks students to use their prior knowledge to make connections among words. Asking students to think about key words in the text or about key concepts, themes, or historical events surrounding the text will help them build the mental framework necessary to understand the text.

How does it work? Write ten key words on the board. Place the words randomly across the board so the students don’t think there is a right or wrong way to think about the ten words. Have students write sentences that contain two or more words from the list. Instruct the students to find connections among the words.

The example below could be used for Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspiration</th>
<th>Washington D.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are sample sentences. Notice how these sentences include words from the list. These sentences demonstrate what the students know and/or understand about the relationship of these words to a specific context, in this case the Civil-Rights Movement.

• African-Americans peacefully protested against segregation.

• Martin Luther King, Jr., an African-American leader who delivered the famous “I Have a Dream” speech, fought for freedom for every American.

• Sometimes the road to freedom is not peaceful.

30-Second Expert

Similar to a think-pair-share activity, the “30-Second Expert” engages students in a brief collaborative learning experience. To complete this activity, students form pairs and take turns sharing what they know about a particular subject. Each student shares for thirty seconds. This activity could be used to introduce material or to review a text that has already been read. This quick, collaborative exercise gets students thinking and sharing about texts in a non-threatening way. Student Handout 2.8: “30-Second Expert” provides more information about how to implement the strategy.
“Before and After Reflection” is a prereading strategy that first asks students to reflect on their own thoughts about a particular issue. You may use a prompt to guide students’ reflections. Once students have had time to explore their thoughts, they should read the text. After the reading, students should complete the “Before and After Reflection” template provided on Student Handout 2.9. The “Before and After Reflection” activity leads students to examine and challenge their own thoughts in light of new information.

A great way to get students connected to the reading is to have them conduct their own interviews, develop original surveys, or do some other research. For example, let’s say you want students to read Richard Rodriguez’s “Achievement of Desire.” In this text, Rodriguez shows his experiences with education as a Mexican-American youth. Before they read the text, you might have students interview one of their parents. The purpose of the interview is to learn about other people’s experiences with education.

If a teacher were planning to read an article about a controversial issue, he or she should consider assigning a survey project. As a class, students develop a survey and go out to collect data. These data will become relevant when they start reading about the controversial issue. You could also ask students to watch the news if you know of a report that would help students prepare (build prior knowledge) for the reading.
Studying the Historical and Rhetorical Contexts

Texts are not written in a vacuum; they require the reader to adequately understand the historical and rhetorical context for the reading. To fully understand a text, a reader must consider who the author is, what he or she is responding to, and what is going on during the time in which the text was written. Consider the following questions when studying the historical and rhetorical contexts.

**Historical Context:**
What is happening during the time the text is written?

- Social (What are the human issues? How are individuals being treated? Is there inequality?)
- Political (Who’s in power? How are the people governed? Is the country at war?)
- Cultural (What is seen as morally right? Who or what dictates what is and is not right?)
- Religious (What is the dominant religion? What are the traditional beliefs?)
- Economic (Is there a class system? Is there financial stability? What is the economy like?)

**Rhetorical Context:**
Who is the author and what is he or she responding to?

**Identifying the Written Context**

- Who is the author’s intended audience?
- When was the text published?
- Who does the author reference or quote?
- What research method does the author use?
- What is the author responding to?
- How does the author come to know what he or she knows?
- Which conversation is the author joining?
- Who is the publishing company?
Analyzing Publication Information

Publication information (e.g., author, publishing date, publishing company) can offer some insight into the author's purpose or viewpoint. The publication date locates the discussion during a certain time that can be questioned and evaluated. The publishing company can provide some useful information about the author's views, beliefs, education, and even his or her relationship to the work. Evaluating publication information is not an easy skill and sometimes requires extended research, but after some practice and support, students will be able to use source information to help them better understand the purpose of a text.

Studying an Author

When readers study an author, they are generally interested in the author's personal, professional, and educational experiences and how these experiences influence the author's work. They want to know who the author is and what the author has done. Knowing about the author provides insight into the genre, the purpose of the text, the intended audience, and the stance of the author. The following questions should be used when studying an author:

- When, where, and in what content areas (disciplines) was the author educated?
  
  *What effect did, or might, this education have upon the author? How does his or her education relate to the work he or she is currently doing?*

- What are the author's personal and/or professional experiences?

  *How have the author's experiences influenced the type of work that he or she is doing?*

- Who does the author appear to be writing to?

  *Given the author's background, how well might the author understand the audiences?*

- What is the author doing?

  *What would he or she like to have happen to the readers as a result of what has been written?*

- What (or who) is the author responding to?

  *What is motivating the author to write this text? Authors will situate their arguments in a variety of contexts. Our job as readers is to identify and analyze the context in which the writer is writing in order to gain deeper understanding of the relationship between the author and his or her work. When analyzing context, consider the time and place in which the work was published, the audience for which the work was written, and the scholarship to which the work relates.*
Know Want Learn

Your teacher will provide you with three questions. Use them to fill in this chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1:</th>
<th>Question 2:</th>
<th>Question 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quickwrite: *What do I know about the content?*

Write the topic (or prompt) on the line below. Then use the following questions to guide your response.

**Topic or prompt:** ________________________________________________________________

**Questions to consider:**
- What personal experiences have I had with the topic?
- What personal observations can I connect to the topic?
- Where have I read or heard about the topic?
- What television shows or movies relate to the topic?
- What questions do I have about this topic?
- How can I personally relate to the topic?
- How do others feel about this topic?
30-Second Expert

To complete this activity, take a few minutes to fill in the left column, “What do I know about this topic?” Once you have written all that you know about the topic, follow the steps below.

**STEP 1:** Stand and find a partner. Stay standing.

**STEP 2:** One person shares his or her thoughts while the other listens. You have 30 seconds to share. Begin by saying, “I am an expert on this topic because I know…”

**STEP 3:** The listener will summarize what he or she has heard. Begin your summary with “According to” (insert name) and summarize what you heard. After your summary, ask, “Did I get that right?”

**STEP 4:** Reverse roles. Speaker becomes listener and listener now speaks.

**STEP 5:** Be sure to thank your partner when you are finished.

**STEP 6:** Record any new knowledge in the right column.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do I know about this topic?</th>
<th>What new knowledge or understanding have I gained from listening to my partner?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
Before and After Reflection

Use the first half of this template to guide a “before reading” reflection. Once you have completed the reading, use the second half to talk about how your beliefs or opinions have changed or stayed the same.

**Before reading**  ___________________________________________ , I should reflect on how I feel about ___________________________________________ .

I believe that ___________________________________________.

_____________________________________________________________________________________.

I have come to believe this because ___________________________________________.

_____________________________________________________________________________________.

Although ___________________________________________ , I feel that ___________________________________________.

_____________________________________________________________________________________.

**After reading** the text, my view of ___________________________________________ has (or has not) changed for the following reasons: first, ___________________________________________; and second, ___________________________________________.

_____________________________________________________________________________________.

This affirms (challenges) my belief that ___________________________________________.

_____________________________________________________________________________________.

The most significant question this text raises for me is ___________________________________________.

_____________________________________________________________________________________. Overall, this text taught me ___________________________________________.

---

Prereading

Deepening Understanding of Prereading

- Distribute a text to students and ask them how they might preread the text.
- Have students engage in a self-selected prereading strategy (inside or outside), and ask them to write about why they have selected the strategy and how it helps them to prepare for the reading.
- Have students self-select an outside prereading strategy that helps them deepen their understanding of a particular topic. For example, if the students were reading about the dangers of text messaging, they could create surveys asking their peers about texting practices.

Extending Prereading Schoolwide

- Students should learn how to preread the types of texts commonly used in state and local exams.
- Teachers of science, social science, and mathematics could teach prereading strategies for textbooks.
- Teachers may engage students in interdisciplinary activities where they learn about or experiment with a subject, topic, or idea that they will then read about in another class. For example, students who are assigned an article about body mass in their English class could benefit from measuring their own body mass in their biology or physical education classes.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
The AVID curriculum has significantly strengthened my ability to analyze the texts I read.

Stephani Mitchell, Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
In the previous chapter we learned about prereading strategies such as assessing students’ prior knowledge of essential vocabulary. “Learning and Retaining Academic Vocabulary” broadens the scope of vocabulary development beyond prereading. Although there are a number of strategies for learning vocabulary, such as guessing meanings from context or circling unfamiliar words in the text, what is offered here is a step-by-step direct teaching approach adapted from work by three respected academic reading and vocabulary specialists: Robert J. Marzano, Kate Kinsella, and Paul Nation. This is a principled, research-based method for initiating the study of vocabulary among your students, one that has been found to be highly motivating and effective.
How should students Learn and Retain Academic Vocabulary?

Students learn and retain academic vocabulary through regular practice and immersion. Word games make learning new vocabulary a pleasurable experience for students, rather than a chore. Suggestions for word immersion and fun word games are provided below.

Word Immersion

Create several word walls around the classroom, each of which is devoted to a word category, such as citation terms (claims, argues, suggests…) or central concepts from the content area you are teaching. As words in these categories come up in the reading, ask students to print them on large cards and post them on the appropriate wall. Review the words frequently by using them in sentences, pointing them out in a reading, or including them in games and quizzes.

Word Fun

Learning and using new words should be motivating and pleasurable for your students. Here are some ideas:

You can give credit to students for going online and taking vocabulary quizzes. Quizlet.com is a great website where students can take vocabulary quizzes that are not too difficult.

Studying SAT vocabulary can also be fun for students.

The Longman Vocabulary Website is an online tool that challenges and increases students’ vocabulary knowledge.

Ask students to bring to class the new academic words they encounter in readings, online, or elsewhere. These words can be written out and dropped into a box. During class, draw out one of the words and discuss it. An option is to put it on a word wall, giving the student who brought it extra credit.

When should students Learn and Retain Academic Vocabulary?

The short answer: Every time students read a text, they should record unknown vocabulary words in their notes, or on Student Handout 3.1: “Keeping Track of New Vocabulary.” Learning vocabulary is an ongoing process, and it is likely that students will come across unknown words in most of their academic texts.

When selecting a text for students to read, preview the text for potential vocabulary words. Identify the words students should learn and retain. Rather than making a list of (the many) words students might not know (a common practice in textbooks), make well-considered decisions about which words to focus on.
Why should students Learn and Retain Academic Vocabulary?

Vocabulary is the core of much academic and social learning. In her article “Understanding Vocabulary,” Alexander (n.d.) argues that there are three major reasons why vocabulary is critical for reading, as well as for academic success: ¹

1. Comprehension improves when you know what the words mean. Since comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, we cannot overestimate the importance of vocabulary development.

2. Words are the currency of communication. A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

3. How many times have you told students to “use your own words”? When students improve their vocabulary and use new words, their academic and social confidence as well as their competence will improve.

These points aren’t new; we all know that vocabulary is important. However, we often have difficulty deciding which words to teach, how to teach them, and what we can do to assist students to retain and enjoy using words they have studied. The approaches and strategies discussed in this chapter are designed to support teachers as they work to improve students’ vocabulary knowledge.

Learning and Retaining Academic Vocabulary

Introduction to the Direct Teaching Strategy

We all know how important vocabulary is to successful reading. So, how do you develop vocabulary activities for a specific reading? The following offers instructions for a step-by-step direct teaching approach.

Step 1: Selecting Vocabulary

Select only a few words (4–6) to teach from a text. What will determine which words you select? Here are some possibilities:

- **Title words**: These are essential to understanding the title of the reading and the ideas presented in the text. Thus, they and their synonyms are central to comprehension of the reading.

- **Subject area concepts, ideas, and processes**: These refer specifically to concepts, ideas, or processes that you are studying in your content class, terms that will appear a number of times in readings or are required to understand the content you are teaching. A website called “Curriculum Roadmap” is useful here, for it lists common high school academic vocabulary in a number of content areas.¹

- **Common cross-disciplinary words**: They are typical academic words. See, for example, the University Word List compiled through the analysis of thousands of texts provided on the Auburn University website.² Similarly the AWL (the Academic Word List) provided on the University of Nottingham website offers common vocabulary across the disciplines.³

- **Metadiscourse words or phrases**: Some words help readers to understand the structure of the reading or the author’s purpose. Vocabulary of this type include metadiscourse words or phrases that lead the readers through the text. Transition words like “however” and “in addition” are metadiscourse, but so are phrases like “so far, I have discussed x; now, I will discuss y.” More examples of metadiscourse words can be found in chapter 11, under “Sentence Starters.” (Note: The strategy “Charting the Text” asks students to divide the text into what it is “saying” and “doing.” Much of this metadiscursive language can tell readers what the author is doing.)


Step 2: Determining Student Prior Knowledge

Once you have carefully selected 4–6 words from a short reading you will assign (or additional words for a longer reading), ask students to complete “Keeping Track of New Vocabulary” (found on Student Handout 3.1). Students can continue to use this chart as they study other texts critically, adding vocabulary or completing definitions in the process.

Step 3: Teaching Selected Words

Once you have decided upon the word to teach, follow these steps for each of the selected words.

Step 1: Oral learning

Once you have decided what to teach and raised students’ awareness, allow time for students to practice saying the word:

• Pronounce the word and use it in an original sentence.
• Pronounce it again, emphasizing the stressed syllables. Let’s say you are teaching “compromise.” You would say “COM-pro-mise” several times, making clear which syllable(s) is stressed.
• Ask the students to repeat the word chorally, pounding out the syllables on their desks. (Students love this!)
• When the class has the pronunciation down, ask individual students to pronounce the word, again pounding out the stressed syllables.

Step 2: Sentence use

Then, after posting the target word on a word wall chart so that students can see how it is spelled, dictate to students (for listening practice) or write on the board (and ask students to copy) at least two sentences in which the focus word is used as the same part of speech as it appears in the reading. They should write the sentences in their Cornell notes or in a vocabulary journal. You might write:

• The teacher refused to compromise when the students tried to negotiate for less homework.
• Please don’t compromise when you are completing this assignment.

Step 3: Scanning the reading/copying the sentence

Students can then scan the reading to find the sentence (or title) in which this target word is used. That sentence, or one that you have given them, can be written in the sentence section of “Keeping Track of New Vocabulary.” (Note: Don’t ask students to make their own sentences until you are very sure that they can get them right.)
Step 3: Teaching Selected Words (continued)

Step 4: Defining the word

Only after this much study should students work on what the word means. Give the students a list of possibilities for a definition, and have them decide, in pairs, which one is appropriate for the word as it is used in the reading. For “compromise” (as a verb), you might give them these choices for definitions:

- cooperate
- bargain
- give in
- do a deal

Remind them that a word may have one meaning in one reading and another meaning in another reading. However, most of the meanings are related. Ask them to record the correct definition in their “Keeping Track of New Vocabulary.”

Step 5: Breaking the word into component parts

If the word being studied has common prefixes or suffixes, assist students in identifying these, thus helping them to understand how the word is formed.

Step 6: Encouraging independent use of the word

Now, it’s time for students to form their own sentences. Ask groups of students to come up with a sentence about the class or their experiences in which the word is used correctly. (Note: If, like “compromise,” the word can be used as either a noun or verb, indicate which part of speech they will be using in their sentences.) Give credit for the most amusing (and correct) sentence.
Keeping Track of New or Unfamiliar Words in the Text

In addition to the “Direct Teaching Strategy,” teachers should teach students strategies for learning vocabulary on their own.

• Create footnotes for new and unfamiliar words in the text. This strategy teaches students how to keep track of new words while teaching them how to appropriately use footnoting. How does it work? Similar to MLA footnoting style guidelines, students insert numbers next to words that they do not know. (You might need to teach them how to write superscript numbers.) At the bottom of the page, they write the corresponding number and a definition of the word. For example, if the word is “exonerate,” they are to write a number at the top right corner of the word. If it is the first unfamiliar word, then they would write a number one next to “exonerate” (like this, exonerate¹). At the bottom of the page, they would write a number one (1) followed by the definition (example: 1 vb. to declare officially that somebody is not to blame, or is not guilty of a crime). Students can create footnotes for every page that they are asked to read. Footnotes are unobtrusive and relatively easy to create.

• As students learn the meanings of new words, try having students write the words and their definitions on a strip of card stock paper. The card stock strips should be cut to 2½ inches wide. This support tool is easy to create and doubles as a bookmark.

• Have students draw images of words and concepts in their Cornell notes. This is a common strategy used in science and social science. Students’ comprehension and retention of new words increases dramatically when they are given time to create non-linguistic representations of vocabulary.

• Have students record and define new words in a language journal. Using a simple spiral notebook, students can keep track of new words and concepts learned in the class. The journal pages can be used for definitions and drawings.

• Encourage students to translate new words and definitions into their primary language. For instance, a native speaker of Spanish would translate the new words into Spanish.
# Keeping Track of New Vocabulary

Use the tables on this handout or create similar tables in your Cornell notes to help keep track of new vocabulary. To complete the table, write the word, its definition, and its part of speech in the appropriate boxes. In the box titled “Original Sentence,” copy the sentence that contains the vocabulary word. Then, draw an image that best represents the word in the box titled “Illustration.”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word:</th>
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<th>Original Sentence:</th>
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Vocabulary Bookmarks

Use the following templates to create vocabulary bookmarks. (Note: It is recommended to copy these templates onto card stock paper.) The bookmarks can be used to keep track of unfamiliar words. They can also be used to record descriptive language, vivid verbs, or other words being examined. Cut the bookmarks out and use them before, during, and after reading.

| Your name: | Your name: |
| Teacher’s name: | Teacher’s name: |
| Title of text: | Title of text: |
| Author’s name: | Author’s name: |
| Purpose of the bookmark: | Purpose of the bookmark: |
Learning and Retaining Academic Vocabulary

Deepening Understanding of Vocabulary Words

After teaching each of the words, you can deepen students’ understanding of the words taught by using the following strategies:

- Tell students (in pairs) to go through the text they are reading and find any synonyms for the target word that the author uses. Give points for this. (Be sure that the synonyms are there!)
- Ask students to draw or portray the word visually.
- If you have an active class, ask specific students to role-play or pantomime the word.
- Teach other forms of the word. For example, “compromise” is also used as a noun, so you might reformulate the sentences they’ve already heard:
  - “A compromise about the homework between the teacher and students could not be reached.”
  - “The teacher would not accept a compromise when the students were completing the assignment.”
- Ensure that students do not forget the words they have learned. You could use the new words in prompts for writing, instructional sentences, and quizzes.

Extending the Vocabulary Learning Schoolwide

- Give students credit for discovering their target/word wall words in their other classes. Ask them to bring in the sentence where the word was found.
- Share the step-by-step direct teaching approach presented here with other teachers.
- Organize a teacher round table to discuss a variety of ways to approach the teaching of vocabulary.
- Provide other teachers with lists of your students’ words and discuss how you might collaborate on teaching some of the same words (or word categories, such as metadiscourse or citation words) to reinforce student learning.
- Initiate an all-school “Vocabulary Bee,” with students from all classes (or all AVID Elective classes), competing to a) identify mystery words, b) use word wall words correctly in sentences, c) match words with definitions, d) role-play word wall words, or e) write a composition in which five of the word wall terms appear correctly.
- And, of course, encourage independent learning of vocabulary through approaches such as guessing meanings from context.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
Strategy 3: Learning and Retaining Academic Vocabulary
I can understand much more than I ever thought I could after learning how to read and analyze at a higher level.

Jeffrey Bermudes,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
“Rereading the Text” begins the series of strategies that ask students to actively engage a text. Rereading is a habit as much as it is a skill. For students, rereading becomes a literacy strategy that must be explicitly learned and practiced. Rereading provides multiple opportunities for readers to see what the text has to offer and to comprehend essential information in the text.

For mature readers, the decision to reread is automatic and often subconscious. Students must learn the value of rereading; they must also develop the patience, stamina, and focus needed to reread effectively. When teaching this strategy, pre-identify sections of the text that might need rereading and purposefully select reading strategies that students should employ while rereading. It is important to remember that the skill of rereading requires practice.

Over time, students will begin to make decisions on their own, deliberately selecting strategies that will assist in their understanding of the reading. A well-practiced student will become more independent and flexible, rereading when necessary and making decisions about how best to reread the text.
How should students Reread?

Rereading can be done with one section of a larger work, or you might want your students to reread a complete text that is shorter in length. You could even have your students reread visuals, terms, or titles in order to make deeper connections to the surrounding information. There are many uses for rereading, and as long as there is a well-defined purpose, students will benefit from this exercise. Since our goal is to get students to learn content from the texts we ask them to read, we must dedicate class time to helping students understand these texts.

When should students Reread?

With every reading assignment, teachers should find ways for students to practice rereading. Having enough time to develop this skill can present a real challenge for teachers, but if we want our students to learn from the texts we ask them to read and retain information for class discussions, class papers, and exams, we must dedicate time to rereading. Asking students to simply reread an article or section of a textbook will not suffice. Students need a purpose for rereading, and they need time to think about and discuss how their rereading improved their knowledge of the subject. At first this process will be slow, but after a few weeks of purposeful rereading, students will be able to reread with greater speed and proficiency.

Why should students Reread?

Some texts present great challenges for readers and cannot be fully understood in one reading. Therefore, students must develop the habit of rereading in order to clarify sophisticated ideas presented in texts. Another reason for rereading is to see what the text has to offer. Since most readers gain a limited understanding of a text during their first read, it becomes important for them to reread sections of the text, or the entire piece, in order to gain deeper insight into the author’s message.
Rereading the Text

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Rereading the Text” as a critical reading strategy.

**Introducing Rereading the Text**

- Define for students the purposes for rereading and explain how and why mature readers reread texts.
- Purposefully assign short passages for students to reread. As students develop patience and endurance, assign lengthier rereading tasks.
- Select specific paragraphs or sections of text for students to reread. Explain to students why a particular section of text ought to be reread.
- Model for students how to reread. Students need to learn that rereading is more than just going over the words on the page a second time.
- Establish reasons for rereading. Students should reread to clarify information, summarize ideas, chart paragraphs, or do some other type of work.
- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions like, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should we, for instance, mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in another class like English or biology?”
- Teach students how to scan a text that has already been read. Scanning is a form of rereading.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
### Purposes for Rereading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Clarifying Information** | Go back to a section of the text that you didn't understand and work to clarify what has been said.  
- What is the author saying?  
- What do you understand?  
- What don’t you understand?  
- How does this section connect with surrounding information? |
| **Connecting Visual Information to Surrounding Text** | Go back to the text and analyze how the visual information connects to the surrounding text.  
- What new information did you learn from reading the visuals?  
- What purpose do they serve? |
| **Summarizing Information** | Go back to the text and summarize information that is relevant to your reading task.  
- What are the key points, terms, claims, and/or ideas?  
- What is the purpose of this section?  
- What is the author doing in this section? |
| **Categorizing and/or Organizing Information** | Go back to the text and determine how the information is being presented.  
- How are ideas being compared?  
- How are the ideas organized? (Chronologically? Categorically?)  
- What is the best way to organize the essential information? |
| **Pausing to Connect Ideas Within the Text** | Go back and evaluate the information you marked.  
- How does this idea relate to other ideas in the text?  
- What is the author attempting to communicate by using these terms?  
- Based on my markings, what do I understand? |
| **Charting the Text** | Go back to the text and determine what the author is doing (as opposed to saying) in each paragraph.  
- How does the author construct the paragraph or section?  
- What is the author doing? |
| **Visualizing Ideas Presented in the Text** | Go back to sections of the text where complex ideas are being discussed and draw the ideas in the margins or in your notes in order to help you visualize such ideas. |
Rereading: Building Comprehension

Read a text provided by the teacher and complete this handout.

Title of Text: _____________________________________________________________

Author: ________________________________________________________________

Other Publication Information: _____________________________________________

First Reading

What is my reading purpose? What should I do while I read this text for the first time?

________________________________________________________________________

What is the text about? What does the text say?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Second Reading

What is my reading purpose? What should I do while I read this text a second time?

________________________________________________________________________

What did I get from the text this time that I didn’t get during the first read?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Rereading: Checking for Understanding

Read a text provided by the teacher and fill in this handout.

Title of Text: ____________________________________________

Author: _________________________________________________

Other Publication Information: ______________________________

1. What do I understand about this section or paragraph?

2. How does this section connect with the surrounding information?

3. What questions do I have? What do I need to know?

4. Talk about the reading with a classmate. What did you learn about the text from your discussion?
Rereading: Clarifying and Summarizing

Read the text. Then identify places in the text that require clarification or additional analysis. Once you have identified sections of the text that are challenging, use the table below to assist with your comprehension of those ideas.

Title of Text: ____________________________________________________________
Author: ________________________________________________________________
Other Publication Information: _____________________________________________

Section or paragraph that needs clarification or analysis: ________________________

1. What does the text say? What are the main ideas?

2. What does it mean? Clarify or explain these ideas.

3. Summarize the ideas presented in this section/paragraph to demonstrate comprehension.

Proven Achievement. Lifelong Advantage.
Rereading: Connecting Visual Information to the Surrounding Text¹

Read a text provided by the teacher and fill in this handout.

Title of Text: __________________________________________________________

Author: ________________________________________________________________

Other Publication Information: __________________________________________

Draw or describe a visual/image that is in the text.

What information is provided to help you understand the visual? Where did you find the information?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

How does the visual connect to what is being discussed in the text? What is its purpose?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Rereading the Text

Deepening Understanding of Rereading

• Increase opportunities for students to reread texts; they must have time to develop this habit.

• Create opportunities for students to reread a variety of different texts. Reading assignments should vary in length, sophistication, and purpose.

• Ask students to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategy. You might ask students: How does this strategy help you understand the texts you read? Why is it important to reread? How does rereading help with comprehension and retention of ideas presented in texts?

Extending Rereading Schoolwide

• Rereading is not limited to one discipline or one type of text. This skill is transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use this strategy, ask them to think about how the strategy could be used while reading texts in other classes.

• Encourage students to reread texts in other classes. Rereading will increase students’ understanding of the material they are assigned to read.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
This is the first time I feel as though I am in a college class. I not only get exposed to college work, I learn how to think critically and professionally like a college student.

Reading has always been my weakness, but after reading college-level articles and learning how to analyze them, I believe that my reading skills have improved dramatically.

Fibronia Abdulmaseh,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Strategy 5: Marking the Text

“Marking the Text” is an active reading strategy used by the Rhetoric and Writing Studies department at San Diego State University that asks students to think critically about their reading. While reading the text, students analyze ideas, evaluate ideas, and circle and underline essential information. This strategy has three distinct marks: numbering paragraphs, circling key terms, and underlining information relevant to one’s reading purpose. With pencil in hand, students focus on what is being said in the text, leading to increases in comprehension and retention of textual material.

1Designed for teacher assistants (TAs) and lecturers in the San Diego State University Lower Division Writing Program, this strategy is modeled and practiced in a series of weekly meetings called “Issues in Teaching Composition” during the first semester of teaching.
How should students Mark the Text?

The key to this strategy (and all other strategies in this guide) is support. Help your students learn by modeling how to mark texts. Take it slowly. Teach them how to number paragraphs before moving into circling and underlining. Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy and allow time for rehearsal. Students will benefit from lots of practice. When introducing the strategy, have students first number the paragraphs and then read the text with their pencils down. Then, have them reread all or parts of the text, marking essential information as they reread. As students gain a deeper understanding of this skill, they will be able to mark essential information while reading a text for the first time.

Young readers will need a purpose for marking. In the beginning, they will need to be shown how to mark the text. As they mature into capable readers, they will be able to mark texts with less guidance. Mastery of this skill is achieved through consistency and repetition.

When should students Mark the Text?

Since marking the text is a fundamental skill, it ought to be used whenever students are asked to read. When students are reading copies of articles, newspapers, or other consumables, they should be given a reading purpose and encouraged (if not expected) to mark the text. Textbooks, novels, and other non-consumables are harder to mark. Sometimes it is valuable to photocopy sections of a textbook or novel, especially those passages that students must understand for tests, papers, or another assessment. Sticky notes work as a nice substitute for directly marking on the text. Whether working with consumables or non-consumables, it is necessary to find ways for students to actively mark the texts they read.

Why should students Mark the Text?

Students need to focus on the texts they read, and they need tools that will help them understand the complex ideas on the page. Marking the text gives students a way to isolate essential information that can be referenced quickly during writing tasks or class discussions. Students might also use their markings to assist in summary writing; to connect sections of the text; to investigate claims or evidence; or to engage in other types of analysis. Numbering paragraphs is also essential for class discussions. Once paragraphs are numbered, students can easily direct others to those places where they have found relevant information. Marking the text is a fundamental strategy that students must learn to do well.
Marking the Text

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Marking the Text” as a critical reading strategy.

Introducing Marking the Text

- Define the “Marking the Text” strategy and explain why it is important for readers to learn this skill. You will want to make copies of the Quick Reference you select or make the ideas on the handout available to students in some other way.

- Explicitly teach how to identify and number paragraphs. Try to have fun with this activity. You might ask students to call out paragraph numbers as you number them as a class. Or you can have students check each other’s numbers to ensure they are numbering each paragraph accurately.

- Explicitly teach students how to identify essential information in the text. Students will need support as they learn how to identify claims, evidence, and other relevant information.

- Model for students how to mark the text using a document camera or overhead projector. Mark a section of the text, and verbally explain what you are doing and why you are doing it. Your decisions should be transparent and your explanations clear. Ask questions as you model this skill. Students should have a copy of the text so that they can imitate your markings.

- Select specific paragraphs or sections of text for students to analyze and evaluate in order to reduce the amount of text they have to read at one time.

- Ask students to read the text once without marking it. Then, have them reread the text, marking information relevant to the reading purpose.

- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should we, for instance, mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in English or biology?”

- Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students can mark texts together, or they can discuss how and why they marked a particular section of a text.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
Marking the Text: Social Science

This Strategy has three distinct marks:

1. **Number the paragraphs.** Before you read, take a moment and number the paragraphs in the section you are planning to read. Start with the number one and continue numbering sequentially until you reach the end of the text or reading assignment. Write the number near the paragraph indentation and circle the number; write it small enough so that you have room to write in the margin.

2. **As with page numbers, paragraph numbers will act as a reference so you can easily refer to specific sections of the text.**

3. **Circle key terms, cited authors, and other essential words or numbers.**

   You might circle…
   - key concepts
   - lesson-based content vocabulary
   - concept-based vocabulary
   - words that signal relationships (e.g. *This led to… or As a result…*)
   - names of people
   - names of historical events
   - dates
   - numbers

3. **Underline the author’s claims and other information relevant to the reading purpose.**

   While reading informational texts (i.e. textbooks, reference books, articles, or journals), read carefully to identify information that is relevant to the reading task. Relevant information might include:
   - central claims
   - evidence
   - details relating to a theology, philosophy, or ideology
   - facts about a person, place, thing, or idea
   - descriptions of a person, place, thing, or idea
   - cause and effect relationships

Here are some strategies to help students identify essential information in the reading:

- Read the introduction to the primary or secondary source.
- Scan the text for visuals, vocabulary, comprehension questions, or other reading aids.
- Review your notes for key concepts.
- Preview chapter or unit reviews.

*Note: If you are not working with consumables, consider photocopying sections of a text that are essential to writing assignments, course content, exams, or other class activities.*
Marking the Text: Science

This Strategy has three distinct marks:

1. **Number the paragraphs.** Before you read, take a moment and number the paragraphs in the section you are planning to read. Start with the number one and continue numbering sequentially until you reach the end of the text or reading assignment. Write the number near the paragraph indentation and circle the number; write it small enough so that you have room to write in the margin.

2. **Circle key terms, cited authors, and other essential words or numbers.** You might circle:
   - key concepts
   - content-based vocabulary
   - lesson-based vocabulary
   - names of people, theories, and/or experiments
   - properties
   - elements
   - formulas
   - units of measure
   - variables
   - values
   - percentages

3. **Underline the author’s claims and other information relevant to the reading purpose.** While reading informational texts (i.e. textbooks, reference books, articles, or journals), read carefully to identify information that is relevant to the reading task. Relevant information might include:
   - concerns
   - claims
   - data
   - definitions
   - descriptions
   - evidence
   - examples
   - explanations
   - guiding language
   - hypotheses
   - “if-then” statements
   - main ideas
   - methods
   - processes

Here are some strategies to help students identify essential information in the reading:
   - Read the introduction to the chapter, lab, or article.
   - Scan the text for visuals, vocabulary, comprehension questions, or other reading aids.
   - Review your notes for key concepts.
   - Preview chapter or unit reviews.

Note: If you are not working with consumables, consider photocopying sections of a text that are essential to labs, course content, exams, or other class activities.
Marking the Text: *Mathematics* (Word Problems)

This Strategy has four distinct marks:

1. **Number the paragraphs.**
   - When reading a word problem that is only one paragraph, number each sentence.
   - For longer word problems, start with 1 and count by fives (1, 5, 10).

2. **Circle key terms, cited authors, and other essential words or numbers.**
   - You might circle…
     - action words
     - sum, add, more than
     - multiply
     - simplify
     - divide
     - difference, subtract
     - units
     - amounts
     - values
     - percentages
     - variables
     - formulas
     - solve

3. **Underline verbal models.**
   - You might also underline…
     - a process
     - definitions
     - descriptions
     - explanations

4. **Box the question.**
   - In a word problem or multiple choice question, draw a box around the question.

---

1A verbal model is an expression or equation that uses words to represent a real-life situation.
Marking the Text: Fiction

This Strategy has three distinct marks:

1. **Number the paragraphs.** Before you read, take a moment and number the paragraphs in the section you are planning to read. Start with the number one and continue numbering sequentially until you reach the end of the text or reading assignment. Write the number near the paragraph indentation and circle the number; write it small enough so that you have room to write in the margin.

   As with page numbers, paragraph numbers will act as a reference so you can easily refer to specific sections of the text.

2. **Circle descriptive words** and names of people, places, and things. You might circle:
   - vivid language
   - concrete nouns
   - names of characters
   - names of places
   - vocabulary
   - diction

3. **Underline descriptions, figurative language, or other information relevant to the reading purpose.** While reading informational texts (i.e., textbooks, reference books, articles, or journals), read carefully to identify information that is relevant to the reading task. Relevant information might include:
   - analogies
   - literary devices
   - characterization
   - dialogue
   - imagery
   - context clues
   - descriptions

Note: If you are not working with consumables, consider photocopying passages of texts that are essential to class discussions or closing activities. For example, if you want students to write an essay where they examine the monologues of a certain character, you might consider photocopying those places in the text where the monologues take place. What other passages would you like to have available for students to mark?
Marking the Text: Non-fiction (Argument)

This Strategy has three distinct marks:

1. **Number the paragraphs.** Before you read, take a moment and number the paragraphs in the section you are planning to read. Start with the number one and continue numbering sequentially until you reach the end of the text or reading assignment. Write the number near the paragraph indentation and circle the number; write it small enough so that you have room to write in the margin.

2. As with page numbers, paragraph numbers will act as a reference so you can easily refer to specific sections of the text.

2. **Circle key terms, cited authors, and other essential words or numbers.**

   In order to identify a key term, consider if the word or phrase is...
   - repeated
   - defined by the author
   - used to explain or represent an idea
   - used in an original or unique way
   - a central concept or idea
   - relevant to one’s reading purpose

3. **Underline the author’s claims and other information relevant to the reading purpose.**

   A claim is an arguable statement or assertion made by the author. Data, facts, or other backing should support an author’s assertion. Consider the following statements:
   - A claim may appear anywhere in the text (beginning, middle, or end).
   - A claim may not appear explicitly in the argument, so the reader must infer it from the evidence presented in the text.
   - Often, an author will make several claims throughout his or her argument.
   - An author may signal his or her claim, letting you know that this is his or her position.

Ultimately, what you underline and circle will depend on your reading purpose. In addition to marking key terms and claims, you might be asked to mark other essential information such as the author’s evidence, descriptions, stylistic elements, or language in the text that provides some insight into the author’s values and beliefs.

---

Marking Argument: 
*Numbering Paragraphs and Circling Key Terms*

The following excerpt offers sample markings and brief descriptions of those markings. Notice the reading purpose for the excerpt. Without a reading purpose, young readers—especially those new to this strategy—will not know what to circle.

**READING PURPOSE:**
Number the paragraphs and circle key terms in the text.

---

**In this passage, Bryan Liang introduces “Biologics” and “follow-on biologics.” The reader circled these terms because they are repeated and defined.**

---

**Don’t Compromise the Safety of Biotech Drugs**
*By Bryan A. Liang*

1. The comparison is worth keeping in mind as the debate heats up over “follow-on” biologics. Biologics are today’s most advanced medicines, fully tested biotechnology protein drugs that provide targeted therapy to victims of cancer and other diseases. Follow-on biologics are the second or subsequent versions, but they are not identical.

2. U.S. spending on them reflects the importance of these drugs in medicine’s arsenal. Biologics represent the fastest-growing sector in the medicines market, with more than $30 billion spent each year. Indeed, the top five drugs in terms of Medicare expenditures administered in physicians’ offices are biologics.

Liang is executive director of the Institute of Health Law Studies, California Western School of Law, and co-director of San Diego Center for Patient Safety at the University of California, San Diego's School of Medicine. LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST--04-29-08 1252ET
Marking Argument:
Numbering Paragraphs, Circling Key Terms,
and Underlining Author’s Claims

The following excerpt offers sample markings and brief descriptions of those markings. Notice the reading
purpose for the excerpt. Without a reading purpose, young readers—especially those new to this strategy—
will not know what to circle.

1

The willingness to try, fail and try again is the essence of scientific progress. The same
sometimes holds true for public policy. It is in this spirit that we call upon Congress to revisit recently enacted federal mandates requiring the diversion of foodstuffs for production of biofuels. These “food-to-fuel” mandates were meant to move America toward energy independence and mitigate global climate change. But the evidence irrefutably demonstrates that this policy is not delivering on either goal. In fact, it is causing environmental harm and contributing to a growing global food crisis.

“Ethanol’s Failed Promise,” by Lester Brown and Jonathan Lewis. LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST -- 04-22-08 ©2008 Special to the Washington Post

Although words like “foodstuffs” and “biofuels” are not repeated, they are key terms because they directly relate to food-to-fuel mandates. In addition to the key terms, Brown and Lewis make a claim at the end of the paragraph.
Marking the Text: Additional Ways to Isolate Key Information

As students learn how to read and mark texts with greater proficiency, they will develop the need to expand their thinking about what to mark and how to mark it. As reading and writing assignments become more sophisticated, they will need to read a text for various purposes. The three original marks—numbering, circling, and underlining—may not offer enough flexibility for students who are reading for various purposes. For this reason, students should learn a few additional markings that will help them differentiate between one type of information and another. There are three new marks to consider:

1. **Bracket** information when underlining has been used for another purpose. Students should use brackets to isolate relevant information that has not already been underlined. In fictional texts, students might underline descriptions of characters and bracket figurative language. While reading arguments, students might underline claims and bracket evidence. And in science, students might underline definitions and bracket data.

2. **Write labels in the margins**. Writing labels in the margins is a strategy used by readers who mark the text and write in the margins. Labels are often double underlined so that they stand out from other marginalia (i.e. notes, comments, analysis, or drawings). When writing labels in the margins, draw a vertical line along the edge of the text in order to isolate the section of text being labeled. Readers will also use labels when charting the macrostructure of the text or when keeping track of shifts—places in the text where the author takes readers in a new direction or presents a new focus.

3. **Box words** when circling has been used for another purpose. Sometimes readers need to keep track of two different types of words or ideas. For example, a reader might choose to circle key terms and keep track of an author’s use of descriptive language. Having two distinct marks will make it easier to reference the material later.
Marking the Text

Deepening Understanding of Marking the Text

- Remind students that active reading becomes increasingly important as texts become more difficult. “Marking the Text” is a literacy skill that is used in high school and in college. It is a strategy designed to help readers gain greater comprehension of challenging texts.

- Increase opportunities for students to talk about marking the text. Students should discuss their markings as often as possible.

- Provide time for rehearsal; students must have time to practice this skill.

- Create opportunities for students to read and mark a variety of different texts. Reading assignments should vary in length, sophistication, and purpose.

- Ask students to share their markings with the entire class. You can have them stand at the front of the room and talk about one or two paragraphs or you can have them place their texts under a document camera and have them discuss their markings. This activity builds confidence and validates the work happening in the classroom.

- Call on volunteers to lead a marking the text exercise. Using either an overhead projector or a document camera, have one student at a time mark a section of the text while the rest of the students in the class watch and mark their texts.

- Collect texts that have been marked and write comments in the margins, explaining to the students what they are doing well and pointing to places in the text that they have overlooked or misunderstood.

- As students master this skill, they will need less guidance. Provide a reading purpose, but do not provide specific directions on how to mark the text. Eventually, students will need to learn how to effectively mark the text based on a given prompt provided by the teacher. Once students have completed the reading, ask questions such as: How should you (or did you) mark this text? What did you circle/underline? Why did you make this decision?
Extending Marking the Text Schoolwide

• “Marking the Text” is not limited to one discipline or one type of text. This skill is transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use this strategy, ask them to think about how “Marking the Text” could be used while reading texts in other classes.

• Photocopy sections of a novel, short story, textbook, or other print materials that students could mark while reading. Students should experience applying this strategy to a variety of texts.

• Practice marking on sample state and local exams in order to teach students the value of active reading during testing situations. On the day of the exam, instruct your students to mark the text. The questions will provide a reading purpose for each passage that the students are asked to read.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
I believe that this is the only honest work we do in high school. No other work prepares us for college like this.

Mary Naoom,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Strategy 6
Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text

Similar to the “Prereading” Strategy, “Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text” is a cognitive strategy that is difficult to observe. Unlike “Marking the Text” where you can see a reader making decisions about the ideas in the text, “Pausing to Connect” is less concrete and must be made visible for our students. Readers will often pause their reading in order to connect ideas within the text, seeking to understand what the author is saying and how he or she says it. Competent readers read top to bottom, left to right, but also bottom to top and right to left; they stop mid-sentence to reread important ideas, consult reading aids while working through a difficult passage, find connections among words, and consider various other textual details while reading. “Pausing to Connect,” therefore, is an active reading strategy that asks students to pause at different times throughout the reading and think critically about the relationships between language and meaning.
How should students Pause to Connect?

When we ask our students to pause and connect, we want them to take a moment to connect ideas within the text. Students may reflect on what they just read, synthesize ideas from one or more paragraphs, connect the reading aids to ideas presented in the text, or relate ideas that have been circled or underlined to the surrounding information. Once students have made connections within the text, they should document their connections in the margins or in their notes. For example, if a student works to synthesize a series of claims that an author has made in order to gain insight into an author’s overall argument, the student should write down his or her thoughts either in the text (if allowable) or on a page of notes.

When should students Pause to Connect?

As with all reading strategies, teachers should model this strategy until students learn what it means to connect ideas within a text. Demonstrate for students how long one might take to pause and connect, and then explicitly show how this strategy improves comprehension. Students should pause and connect ideas while reading all types of texts.

Why should students Pause to Connect?

A critical reader will often pause to make connections to what he or she is reading. Mature readers will pause to clarify ideas, question the meaning of an idea, or investigate a relationship between ideas. Mastering the ability to pause and connect will prove to be an essential skill for students as they experience increasingly sophisticated reading material.
Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Pausing to Connect” as a critical reading strategy.

**Introducing Pausing to Connect**

- Explicitly teach how to identify essential information and connect it to the surrounding text.

- Model for students how to pause and connect using a document camera, overhead projector, or PowerPoint® slide. While reading a text, point to ideas that need some investigation. Show how readers make sense of ideas by rereading sections of text or by connecting words or sentences to surrounding information. Write connections in the margins and verbally explain what you are doing and why you are doing it. Your decisions should be transparent and your explanations clear. Ask questions as you model this skill. Students should have a copy of the text so that they can participate in this activity.

- Teach students how to visually connect ideas through the use of arrows, lines, or other symbols that represent relationships.

- Select specific paragraphs or sections of text for students to analyze and evaluate in order to reduce the amount of text they have to read at one time.

- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should we mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in another class, such as history or science?”

- Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students can pause and connect ideas in texts together, or they can read a selection on their own and then come together to discuss the connections they made.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
Pausing to Connect: Questions and Methods

“Pausing to Connect” is a reading strategy that helps readers gain deeper understandings of the texts they read. Skilled readers will often pause to make connections within a text. They will ask questions such as:

- What do I understand so far? What don’t I understand?
- What information does the author need to clarify?
- Why has the author repeated this word?
- How does this term or phrase connect to what the author is arguing?
- How does what I just read connect to the above paragraph or section?
- What is the author trying to get me to think about here, and here?
- What is the author doing in this paragraph?
- What is the author’s purpose?
- How has this section or paragraph helped my understanding of the text as a whole?

Readers pause to connect ideas within different types of texts for different reasons. The following section describes some of the reasons why readers pause to connect ideas within textbooks, nonfiction, and fiction.

Textbooks
Readers pause to connect ideas within textbooks to:
- clarify information.
- connect the visual aids to the words on the page.
- summarize ideas that have been presented.
- investigate how titles and subtitles relate to the surrounding text.
- make various other connections while reading.

Non-fiction
Readers pause to connect ideas within non-fiction to:
- clarify information.
- explore how words or terms are being used.
- investigate relationships between language and meaning.
- analyze how one paragraph is related to another.
- read images, charts, graphs, and other visual aids being offered.
- synthesize an author’s claims.
- investigate the types of evidence being used to advance the argument.
- make various other connections while reading.

Fiction
Readers pause to connect ideas within fiction to:
- clarify plot points, character motivation, relationships, and/or setting.
- explore literary devices and features.
- trace the actions of one character or review the actions of many characters.
- analyze author’s use of diction and its effect on tone and mood.
- identify repetitions, metrical feet, or rhyme schemes in poetry.
- make various other connections while reading.
Pausing to Connect Paragraphs

The following text offers an analogy that the reader must understand in order to comprehend the discussion on biologics. Bryan A. Liang has decided to begin with the analogy and asks his readers to keep the comparison in mind while reading his text. The reader response at the bottom of the page offers one way a reader might pause to connect the ideas in paragraphs 1–8.

Don’t Compromise the Safety of Biotech Drugs

By Bryan A. Liang

A toy plane has a handful of parts. A Boeing 747 has several million. This makes sense. Toy planes are small, simple models, while 747s are large high-performance aircraft that travel more than 500 mph with thousands of component systems acting together. The model costs a few dollars because it’s easy to manufacture. The 747 costs about $225 million because of its complex nature, testing and the need to ensure safety.

The comparison is worth keeping in mind as the debate heats up over “follow-on” biologics. Biologics are today’s most advanced medicines, fully tested biotechnology protein drugs that provide targeted therapy to victims of cancer and other diseases. Follow-on biologics are the second or subsequent versions, but they are not identical.

But many drugs we’re familiar with, like the pills we get from the pharmacy, are “small-molecule” drugs—simple chemical compounds. They can be easily manufactured and identically copied.

Identical to the brand-name version, these generics can “piggyback” on a brand-name company’s testing. That’s reasonable. These small-molecule drugs—which typically are made up of a total of 20 to 100 atoms—can be copied perfectly. So they don’t need independent safety testing, cost less to make and are cheaper—allowing more patients to obtain the medical benefits.

But biologics are far more complex. The brand-name drug Herceptin, a biologic that’s widely used to treat cancer, is made up of a total of roughly 25,000 atoms. Large biologics can have millions of atoms.

Liang is executive director of the Institute of Health Law Studies, California Western School of Law, and co-director of San Diego Center for Patient Safety at the University of California, San Diego’s School of Medicine. LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST–04-29-08 1252ET

Reader Response (Example of “Pausing to Connect”)

So far Liang has introduced two types of drugs: biologics and small-molecule drugs. What do toy planes and 747 jets have to do with large- and small-molecule drugs? I get it. Liang is using an analogy. The toy plane, which has only a “handful of parts,” is like the small-molecule drugs. The 747, a complex aircraft, is like the biologic drugs.
Pausing to Connect Essential Words

In this excerpt, Lester Brown and Jonathan Lewis discuss “food-to-fuel” mandates. The reader response at the bottom of the page offers one way a reader might pause to connect ideas within a text.

**Ethanol’s Failed Promise**

*By Lester Brown and Jonathan Lewis*

1. The willingness to try, fail and try again is the essence of scientific progress.

   The same sometimes holds true for public policy. It is in this spirit that we call upon Congress to revisit recently enacted federal mandates requiring the diversion of foodstuffs for production of biofuels. These “food-to-fuel” mandates were meant to move America toward energy independence and mitigate global climate change.

   But the evidence irrefutably demonstrates that this policy is not delivering on either goal. In fact, it is causing environmental harm and contributing to a growing global food crisis.

   “Ethanol’s Failed Promise,” by Lester Brown and Jonathan Lewis. LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST -- 04-22-08 ©2008 Special to the Washington Post

**Reader Response (Example of “Pausing to Connect”)**

What is the relationship between “foodstuffs,” “food-to-fuel,” and “biofuels”? I think I understand the relationship. “Foodstuffs” like corn are used to create “biofuels.” The food-to-fuel mandates require an unknown percentage of crops (or foodstuffs) to be converted into fuel (or ethanol). So why do Brown and Lewis begin their article talking about “scientific progress”? They say, “The willingness to try, fail, and try again is the essence of scientific progress.” Then, they say this process holds true for public policy. Toward the middle of the paragraph, Brown and Lewis state that the “food-to-fuel” mandates have failed to deliver on either objective: the mandates have not “move(d) America toward energy independence” nor have they “mitigate(ed) global climate change.” Maybe it is the spirit of trying and failing and then trying again that Brown and Lewis want their readers thinking about. If “food-to-fuel” mandates have failed, America should try something else. This makes sense. America tried to develop alternative fuels, but it did not work. So in the spirit of scientific progress, we should move on and experiment with another energy source.
Pausing to Connect Ideas Within a Text

Deepening Understanding of Pausing to Connect

- Remind students that active reading becomes increasingly important as texts become more difficult. Pausing and connecting ideas within the text is a literacy skill that mature readers utilize while reading challenging texts.

- Increase opportunities for students to talk about the in-text connections they make while reading.

- Create opportunities for students to pause and connect ideas in a variety of different texts. Reading assignments should vary in length, sophistication, and purpose.

- Ask students to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategy. You might ask students: How does this strategy help you understand the texts you read? What kinds of questions are you asking while reading? What information did you find essential? How does this information relate to other ideas in the text?

- Increase the level of difficulty by asking students to make connections among larger passages or sections of texts.

Extending Pausing to Connect Schoolwide

- “Pausing to Connect” is not limited to one discipline or one type of text. This skill is transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use this strategy, ask them to think about how this strategy could be used while reading texts in other classes.

- Photocopy sections of a novel, short story, textbook, or other print materials that students can write on while reading.

- Encourage students to use sticky notes while pausing and connecting. The connections students make within the text can be written down on a sticky note and posted on the page. After the reading, students should remove the sticky notes from the text and place them in their notes.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
AVID Critical Reading strategies have dramatically improved my writing skills.

Albert Namo,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Strategy 7: Writing in the Margins

The previous chapters offered reading preparation strategies, rereading strategies, and marking the text strategies. This chapter provides additional strategies for active reading.

Good readers will think about texts in very specific ways as they read. "Writing in the Margins," then, identifies and defines six common ways highly proficient readers think about the texts they read. We know that comprehension of a text improves when readers:

- visualize ideas
- summarize ideas
- clarify information
- make connections
- respond to ideas
- ask questions

Where is this cognitive work done? Readers will use the margins of their texts to record their thoughts, and for non-consumables, students can create temporary margins with sticky notes or record their ideas in their Cornell notes. The strategy outlined in this chapter could be used as a first-read strategy, or it could be the focus of a purposeful rereading.
How should students Write in the Margins?

The strategy you choose to teach will depend on the text itself. For example, passages containing descriptions, analogies, or complex concepts may need to be drawn or illustrated in order to conceptualize the ideas. Other texts might require a different strategy.

Avoid teaching all six strategies at once. Select one or two strategies (for instance, clarifying and summarizing information) and practice using these strategies before introducing others. Eventually, students will be able to strategically select strategies—or ways of thinking—that will help them understand the text.

When should students Write in the Margins?

Students should be expected to use one or more of the writing in the margins strategies while reading academic texts. As indicated in the introduction, when (and how often) students write in the margins will depend on the reading task and the students’ knowledge of the strategy. For example, if I am introducing this strategy to my class, I will want them to write in the margins as a purposeful rereading, applying only one or two of the strategies as they reread sections of the text. However, students who are familiar with writing in the margins could employ this strategy while reading a text for the first time. Whether we are teaching this strategy for the first time or for the tenth time, we want to guide and support our students until they have learned how to use it independently. This independence is gained through constant use of the strategy with various types of texts.

Why should students Write in the Margins?

When readers write and draw in the margins of text, they become actively engaged in what the text is saying. Clarifying, summarizing, questioning, as well as other strategies listed here, will increase students’ comprehension of textual material while providing ways for students to make their own meaning.
Writing in the Margins

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce writing and drawing in margins as a critical reading strategy.

Introducing Writing in the Margins

- Define the “Writing in the Margins” strategy and explain why it is important for readers to learn this skill. You will want to make copies of the Quick Reference or make the ideas on this handout available to students in some other way.

- Define each of the six ways of thinking: connecting, summarizing, visualizing, clarifying, responding, and questioning. It is recommended that students learn one strategy at a time. Teaching students how to use all six strategies at once might be overwhelming.

- Model for students how to write in the margins using a document camera or overhead projector. Begin with one of the six ways of thinking (for instance, clarifying information). Read a section of text and verbalize your thinking while you read. You will want to show your students how a reader clarifies ideas in the text. You might ask, “What did this passage say?” or “What do I not understand?” After you spend some time talking about the passage, write down some clarifying statements in the margins. Students should have a copy of the text so that they can imitate your marginalia.

- Assign specific paragraphs or sections of text that you would like your students to clarify or think about in some other way. When learning a new strategy, isolate parts of the text that require deeper analysis, thereby reducing the amount of text students have to read at one time.

- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should we mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in another class like science or geography?”

- Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students can work in pairs as they learn how to write in the margins. They can then share their marginalia with others in the class.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
## Writing in the Margins: *Six Strategies at a Glance*

This table provides six strategies that help readers understand texts. While making connections, clarifying information, or doing other work defined on this page, write down your thoughts in the margins of the text, on sticky notes, or in your Cornell notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visualize</th>
<th>Summarize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Visualize what the author is saying and draw an illustration in the margin. Visualizing what authors say will help you clarify complex concepts and ideas. When visualizing, ask:  
• What does this look like?  
• How can I draw this concept/idea?  
• What visual and/or symbol best represents this idea? | Briefly summarize paragraphs or sections of a text. Summarizing is a good way to keep track of essential information while gaining control of lengthier passages. Summaries will:  
• state what the paragraph is about  
• describe what the author is doing  
• account for key terms and/or ideas |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarify</th>
<th>Connect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Clarify complex ideas presented in the text. Readers clarify ideas through a process of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Pausing to clarify ideas will increase your understanding of the ideas in the text. In order to clarify information, you might:  
• define key terms  
• reread sections of the text  
• analyze or connect ideas in the text  
• paraphrase or summarize ideas | Make connections within the reading to your own life and to the world. Making connections will improve your comprehension of the text. While reading, you might ask:  
• How does this relate to me?  
• How does this idea relate to other ideas in the text?  
• How does this relate to the world? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respond</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Respond to ideas in the text as you read. Your responses can be personal or analytical in nature. Thoughtful responses will increase engagement and comprehension. Readers will often respond to:  
• interesting ideas  
• emotional arguments  
• provocative statements  
• author’s claims  
• facts, data, and other support | Question both the ideas in the text and your own understanding of the text. Asking good questions while reading will help you become a more critical reader. While reading, you might ask:  
• What is the author saying here?  
• What is the author doing?  
• What do I understand so far?  
• What is the purpose of this section?  
• What do I agree/disagree with? |
Clean Air or Clean Hair?

By Glenn Hurowitz

While showering a few weeks ago, I realized I had run out of conditioner. So I reached up and grabbed my wife’s bottle—Clairol Herbal Essences Rainforest Flowers, “with essences of nourishing palm.”

The label caught me slightly by surprise. As an environmental journalist, I’ve been writing about the ecologically destructive effect of palm oil for some time now.

Whether it’s used as an additive in soap, cosmetics or food, or processed into a biofuel, palm oil is one of the worst culprits in the climate crisis. Most of it comes from the disappearing, ultra-carbon-rich rain forests of Indonesia and Malaysia, of which 25,000 square miles have been cleared and burned to make way for palm oil plantations.

That burning releases enough carbon dioxide into the air to rank Indonesia as the No. 3 such polluter in the world. It also destroys the last remaining habitat for orangutans, Sumatran rhinos, tigers and other endangered wildlife. So what was this deadly oil doing in our otherwise ecologically friendly apartment?

I started to inspect other items on our shelves. Despite our efforts to keep our family green, we had admitted into our home several products

(continued next page)
containing palm oil: Burt’s Bees soap, chocolate truffles from Trader Joe’s, Kashi breakfast bars, Whole Foods water crackers and many others.

Probably the worst offenders were Entenmann’s chocolate-covered doughnuts, which actually list palm oil as the first ingredient—and palm kernel oil as the second. Lots of other products, some of them marketed as “green,” contain this rhino-killer too: Oreo, Chewy Chips Ahoy!, Orville Redenbacher’s popcorn, Hershey’s Kisses “Hugs,” Twix and many other processed foods. Even some Girl Scout cookies have it, which is why this spring, 12-year-old Girl Scouts Madison Vorva and Rhiannon Tomtishen of Ann Arbor, Mich., refused to sell the cookies and have encouraged the organization to drop the ingredient.

The great tragedy of all this palm oil use (about 30 million tons globally every year) is that it’s so easily replaced by healthier vegetable oils, like canola, that come from significantly less ecologically sensitive areas. Indeed, every single product I examined had either a variant or a competitor that didn’t contain palm oil—with no discernible effect on price or quality. Sitting next to those Whole Foods-brand water crackers were Haute Cuisine water crackers made with canola oil. Down the aisle from palm-oil laden Ivory soap was palm-oil-free Lever 2000.

Unfortunately, most of the food and cosmetics conglomerates are more interested in covering up the environmental destruction than replacing the problem ingredient. Kellogg’s, Kraft Foods, Unilever, Nestle, Procter & Gamble and others (including the Girl Scouts) assure the public that such environmental concerns don’t apply to them because they (or their suppliers) are members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, an industry group (with a handful of environmental members) that sets guidelines on growing and selling palm oil.

Unfortunately, as a recent Greenpeace report revealed, the Roundtable’s standards are almost meaningless because they don’t include inspections of the palm oil tree plantations. The Roundtable plans to address this problem in the next few months by certifying a small amount of oil that it says has been verifiably produced according to some sustainable standards. But even Roundtable Vice President Darrel Webber acknowledges that the process “isn’t perfect,” in part because liquid oils are easy to mix and nearly impossible to track.

So how can we keep dead orangutans out of our hair, out of our food and out of our gas tanks? Consumers should scan ingredient labels for palm oil and palm kernel oil (and derivatives such as palmitic acid) and choose brands that don’t contain them. Wall Street should divest from this ecologically subprime market, not only because it’s the right thing to do but because its high carbon footprint means that palm oil producers and buyers are likely to be penalized in any scheme to reduce global warming.

But governments must act too. The European Union, for instance, is considering a ban on palm oil and other tropical biofuels. But as my hair conditioner shows, targeting biofuels alone isn’t enough: Any ban must extend to food and cosmetics as well. That might slightly inconvenience the food and cosmetics companies, but at least we’ll know that no orangutans died to make our Thin Mints.

Hurowitz writes about the environment for Grist Magazine and is the author of “Fear and Courage in the Democratic Party.”
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Probably the worst offenders were Entenmann’s chocolate-covered doughnuts, which actually list palm oil as the first ingredient—and palm kernel oil as the second. Lots of other products, some of them marketed as “green,” contain this rhino-killer too: Oreos, Chewy Chips Ahoy!, Orville Redenbacher’s popcorn, Hershey’s Kisses “Hugs,” Twix and many other processed foods. Even some Girl Scout cookies have it, which is why this spring, 12-year-old Girl Scouts Madison Vorva and Rhiannon Tomtishen of Ann Arbor, Mich., refused to sell the cookies and have encouraged the organization to drop the ingredient.

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Writing in the Margins: **Clarifying Ideas**

**Clarifying Ideas in the Text**

This strategy should be used to clarify complex ideas in the text. Mature readers will reread and analyze difficult passages in an effort to improve their understanding of the text.

When clarifying information, you will want to...

- reread sections of the text,
- define key terms in the text,
- make connections among ideas in the text,
- analyze the decisions the author is making,
- ask clarifying questions such as, “What does this mean?” or “Why is this important?”
- analyze and evaluate ideas in the text, and
- paraphrase or summarize ideas in the text.

Look over the different clarifying statements a student wrote while reading “Clean Air or Clean Hair?”

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**Clean Air or Clean Hair?**  
*By Glenn Hurowitz*

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So how can we keep dead orangutans out of our hair, out of our food and out of our gas tanks? Consumers should scan ingredient labels for palm oil and palm kernel oil (and derivatives such as palmitic acid) and choose brands that don’t contain them. Wall Street should divest from this ecologically subprime market, not only because it’s the right thing to do but because its high carbon footprint means that palm oil producers and buyers are likely to be penalized in any scheme to reduce global warming.

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Hurowitz writes about the environment for Grist Magazine and is the author of “Fear and Courage in the Democratic Party." LA TIMESWASHINGTON POST -- 05-20-08 ©2008 Special to the Los Angeles Times
Writing in the Margins: *Making Connections*

**Making Connections Inside and Outside the Text**

While reading, students can make connections within the text to their own lives, to other texts, and/or to the world in which they live. Making connections increases comprehension and leads to greater insight into ideas discussed in the text, in the classroom, and beyond.

In order to make connections, a reader will ask:

- What do I know about this subject?
- What is my experience with the topic/idea?
- What do I believe?
- Where have I heard or read this idea before?
- How does this idea relate to other ideas in the text?
- How does this relate to the world?

Look over the different connections a student made while reading “Clean Air or Clean Hair?”

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**Clean Air or Clean Hair?**  
*By Glenn Hurowitz*

While showering a few weeks ago, I realized I had run out of conditioner. So I reached up and grabbed my wife’s bottle—Clairol Herbal Essences Rainforest Flowers, “with essences of nourishing palm.”

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That burning releases enough carbon dioxide into the air to rank Indonesia as the No. 3 such polluter in the world. It also destroys the last remaining habitat for orangutans, Sumatran rhinos, tigers and other endangered wildlife. So what was this deadly oil doing in our otherwise ecologically friendly apartment?

I started to inspect other items on our shelves. Despite our efforts to keep our family green, we had admitted into our home several products

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Writing in Margins: Responding to Ideas

Responding to Ideas in the Text

Mature readers respond to ideas in the text as they read. Student responses can be personal or analytical in nature. Thoughtful responses will increase engagement and comprehension of the ideas in the text.

Readers will respond to...

- interesting ideas;
- familiar experiences;
- emotional arguments;
- provocative statements;
- author’s claims; and
- facts, data, and other support.

Look over the different ways a student has responded to the ideas in “Clean Air or Clean Hair?”

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Writing in the Margins: Questioning

Questioning the Reading

Students can learn to question both the ideas in the text and their own understanding of the text. Asking good questions while reading will help them become more critical readers.

While reading, students might ask:

- What is the author saying here?
- What is the author doing?
- What do I understand so far?
- What is important about this paragraph/section?
- What is the purpose of this section?
- Do I agree/disagree with what the author is saying?

Look over the different ways a student has questioned the ideas in “Clean Air or Clean Hair?”

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Writing in the Margins

Deepening Understanding of Writing in the Margins

• Remind students that active reading becomes increasingly important as texts become more difficult. “Writing in the Margins” is a literacy skill that is used in middle and high school, as well as college. It is a strategy designed to help readers gain deeper insight into the texts they read.

• Assign reading tasks that vary in length, sophistication, and purpose. Provide time for rehearsal; students need time to practice this skill.

• Create opportunities for students to practice all six ways of thinking. As students become more comfortable with this strategy, ask them to use several ways of thinking with one text. For example, you might ask students to question, clarify, and summarize ideas while reading. Students need to learn how to strategically think about the texts they read. For this to happen, they need to practice selecting strategies from a shorter list. Eventually, they will be able to select the most effective way to think about a particular passage with little support or guidance.

• Increase opportunities for students to talk about what they are writing in the margins. Students should discuss their marginalia as often as possible.

• Call on volunteers to lead a “Writing in the Margins” exercise. Using either an overhead projector or a document camera, have one student at a time work through a paragraph or two while the rest of the students in the class listen and assess their own decisions for writing in the margins. This activity builds confidence and validates the work happening in the classroom.

• Evaluate what students are writing in the margins and offer constructive feedback.
Writing in the Margins

Extending Writing in the Margins Schoolwide

- As students master this skill, they will need less guidance. Although you will want to provide a purpose for reading, you may not have to support the different ways students think about their reading.

- “Writing in the Margins” is not limited to one discipline or one type of text. This skill is transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use this strategy, ask them to think about how “Writing in the Margins” could be used while reading texts in other classes.

- Photocopy sections of a novel, short story, textbook, or other print materials that students could write on while reading. Students should experience applying this strategy to a variety of different types of texts.

- Practice writing in the margins on sample state and local exams in order to teach students the value of active reading during testing situations. On the day of the exam, instruct your students to write in the margins as they read the different passages.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
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Wall Street should divest from this ecologically subprime market, not only because it's the right thing to do but because its high carbon footprint...
In my AVID class I learned how to chart the text and organize my thoughts. Critical reading and writing has helped me be successful in high school.

Nour Hanna, Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Experts in reading tell us that one of the most important skills students need to develop is to identify the structure of a text—that is, how it is organized. Writers organize their texts in different ways depending upon a number of factors, including the text genre (an op-ed piece, a letter, a memo, an essay); the writer’s style; the ideology or point of view of the author; the writer’s placement of the claim and reasons; the selected methods for development (narrative, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, definition, examples and/or statistical data); the audience; the prestige of the audience; and how much the audience will object to the author’s argument.

When analyzing the structure of a text, students can examine either the macro-structure (or the larger structure of a text) or individual paragraphs, known as the micro-structure of a text. When analyzing either the macro- or micro-structure, students should examine what an author is doing. This means students should focus their analysis on the deliberate choices an author makes while constructing paragraphs or whole sections of text. For example, an author might provide an anecdote, interpret data, summarize research, quote an authority, give an example, or do some other work in order to construct meaning.
How should students Chart the Text?

While charting the macro-structure of a text, chunk the text into large sections, drawing a line across the page in order to group paragraphs or ideas together. Then, in the right-hand margin, students should write a concise statement describing what the author is doing in that section.

Analyzing the micro-structure of a text is slightly different in that students examine individual paragraphs and articulate what each paragraph is doing. In the right-hand margin, directly next to the paragraph, students should briefly describe what the author is doing in the paragraph. Begin with a verb like illustrating, comparing, interpreting, providing, or some other verb that best describes the overall work the paragraph is doing.

This strategy contains a list of charting verbs to help you teach this strategy. Although the list is limited in the amount of verbs provided for students, it remains a useful resource when learning how to select an accurate verb that describes what a paragraph is doing. There is also a “Charting the Text Table: Analyzing the Micro-Structure” (Student Handout 8.1) that is designed to help students organize their charting sentences. The table will help students see the difference between what an author is saying, and what an author is doing, in a particular section or paragraph. Eventually, you will want to move away from the table and teach your students how to chart in the margins of a text.

As students learn to chart, they will write descriptions that sound more like summaries and less like analyses of what the author is doing. Some students will be able to see clearly what the author is doing. There will be those that do a little bit of both as well. The following image illustrates the range of descriptions that students will write in their margins. As students learn this skill, they should move toward the middle right of the Charting Continuum (shown on the next page). Their statements should describe what the author is doing and give some idea of what the paragraph is about.
Charting the Text: The Charting Continuum

When should students Chart the Text?

Students should use this charting strategy when they are expected to engage in a deep reading of a text. A careful reading of a text takes time. In the beginning, select a few paragraphs for your students to chart. Students will struggle with selecting the appropriate verb that best describes what the author is doing in a particular section or paragraph, and they will find it difficult to articulate the choices the author is making. Students will need support as they learn this new way of reading.

Why should students Chart the Text?

When readers examine the macro- and micro-structures of texts, they gain insight into how authors construct meaning. And analyzing the choices authors make will help them understand the types of choices they can make in the papers they write. Since charting a text moves students beyond the simple comprehension of what the author is saying, they will be able to discuss and write about texts with originality and sophistication.
Charting the Text

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Charting the Text” as a critical reading strategy.

Introducing Charting the Text

• Define the “Charting the Text” strategy and explain why it is important for readers to learn this skill. You will want to make copies of the Quick Reference or make the ideas on this handout available to students in some other way.

• Bring in models of different types of writing from various disciplines to show how genre, style, methods for development, and audience influence decisions about text structure and organization. Analyzing text structure will be foreign to middle and high school students because they have not had a lot of experience examining how professional writers organize their texts to construct meaning.

• Select a variety of different texts in order to expose students to the various ways writers organize their ideas. Bring in texts such as editorials, op-ed pieces, research papers, essays, and various other texts that offer unique text structures.

• Create opportunities for students to learn the differences between what the author is saying in a paragraph (or in a number of paragraphs) and what the author is doing.

• Model for students how to chart the macro- or micro-structure of a text using either a document camera or overhead projector.

• While charting the micro-structure, use Student Handout 8.1: “Charting the Text Table: Analyzing the Micro-Structure” to support this work. Start by summarizing what the paragraphs say. Summary is more familiar to students; it will build confidence and help them prepare for the next step: charting what the author is doing. Students should have a copy of the text and the charting table for this activity. Students are expected to analyze paragraphs with others while completing the table.

• Assign specific paragraphs or sections of text that you would like your students to chart; it is too overwhelming to chart every paragraph. When learning how to chart the macro- or micro-structure of a text, select sections of the text that offer clear shifts from one idea to the next, or paragraphs that offer choices that are transparent.

• Prepare an abbreviated list of verbs that could work with the paragraphs being charted. Without a verb list, students struggle to produce verbs and will settle for general verbs that are often inaccurate. Depending on the list, some verbs might need to be defined for students. Verb lists could be written on the board, photocopied, or made available to students in some other way.
• Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should we mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in another class such as history or biology?”

• Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students could work in pairs as they learn how to effectively chart texts. Students should share with others their charting statements. Have students explain why they chose a particular verb.

• Increase opportunities for students to talk about verbs. Learning how to select and use verbs accurately is key to students’ academic literacy development.

• Select volunteers to share the verbs they used to describe what the author is doing in a particular paragraph.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
Charting the Text: Analyzing the Macro-Structure

When charting the macro-structure, read the text first to get the major ideas and some sense of how the text is organized. Then, block out the text in functional sections. For example, two or three paragraphs might be devoted to telling a story, presenting the claim, defining an important word or concept, contrasting two different views, or challenging other people’s arguments. As you identify these different sections, examine what the author is doing in each section and analyze how the organization of the text influences its meaning. Write concise statements in the margins that explain what the author is doing in each section. Use the following questions to help guide your analysis of the macro-structure:

- What does the author do first, second, and third?
- How does the author construct his or her argument?
- Where in the text does the author shift from one idea or argument to the next?
- Where in the text does the author introduce the topic or argument?
- Where in the text does the author provide evidence?
- Where in the text does the author provide examples?
- What is the author doing in this section?
- How is the author using titles and subtitles?
- How is the author moving from one idea to the next?

Use the following templates to help write concise statements in the margins that describe what the different sections in the text are doing.

In this section ______________________   __________________________________________________________

(name of author),                                  (presents, defines, contrasts, or does some other work)…

This section ___________________________________________________________________________________

(describes, challenges, illustrates, provides, or does some other work)…

__________________________________________________________________________________________

(Author’s last name)                                  (followed by a brief description of what the author is doing.)

The following pages offer examples of how readers might chart the macro-structure of a text. In Example 1, the reader identified shifts in the discussion and drew lines to group paragraphs containing similar ideas. This is known as chunking or mapping the text. In Example 2, the text discusses five myths about college. The author has used each of the five myths to create subsections. In this second example, authors Feaver and Crossman have chosen an obvious structure. Chunking this text does not present a challenge (students will actually see the different sections), but getting students to notice this transparent structure—and articulating why these authors make this decision—might cause them some trouble.
Don’t Compromise the Safety of Biotech Drugs

By Bryan A. Liang

1. A toy plane has a handful of parts. A Boeing 747 has several million. This makes sense. Toy planes are small, simple models, while 747s are large high-performance aircraft that travel more than 500 mph with thousands of component systems acting together. The model costs a few dollars because it’s easy to manufacture. The 747 costs about $225 million because of its complex nature, testing and the need to ensure safety.

2. The comparison is worth keeping in mind as the debate heats up over “follow-on” biologics. Biologics are today’s most advanced medicines, fully tested biotechnology protein drugs that provide targeted therapy to victims of cancer and other diseases. Follow-on biologics are the second or subsequent versions, but they are not identical.

3. U.S. spending on them reflects the importance of these drugs in medicine’s arsenal. Biologics represent the fastest-growing sector in the medicines market, with more than $30 billion spent each year. Indeed, the top five drugs in terms of Medicare expenditures administered in physicians’ offices are biologics.

4. By 2010, worldwide spending on biologics is estimated to grow to $105 billion, and biologics will make up nearly half of all newly approved medicines. Hence, many policymakers are focused on reducing the costs associated with these drugs.

5. Congressional legislation is pending that would allow the sale of follow-on biologics without requiring extensive testing—essentially following the same model used for approval of generic versions of traditional prescription drugs.

6. But many drugs we’re familiar with, like the pills we get from the pharmacy, are “small-molecule” drugs—simple chemical compounds. They can be easily manufactured and identically copied.

7. Identical to the brand-name version, these generics can “piggyback” on a brand-name company’s testing. That’s reasonable. These small-molecule drugs—which typically are made up of a total of 20 to 100 atoms—can be copied perfectly. So they don’t need independent safety testing, cost less to make and are cheaper—allowing more patients to obtain the medical benefits.

(continued next page)
But biologics are far more complex. The brand-name drug Herceptin, a biologic that’s widely used to treat cancer, is made up of a total of roughly 25,000 atoms. Large biologics can have millions of atoms.

Biologics are not made by combining chemicals in a flask. They’re made by life forms such as cells, yeast and bacteria. Like humans, these life forms exhibit diversity in metabolism and composition, making the final product a unique, heterogeneous mix that cannot be copied exactly. So follow-on biologic forms of a drug can only be similar to the original, not identical.

Because of the complexity of biologics, there’s more regulation. In comparison with common chemical drugs that can have generic versions—such as penicillin—which only require 50 to 60 manufacturing tests for safety and quality, biologics require at least four times that number.

So the policy challenge is to provide incentives for innovation while also ensuring that any follow-on forms of biologics that enter the market are safe.
5 Myths About College
By Peter Feaver and Anne Crossman

1. Your major determines your career success.

The unemployed graduate with a bachelor's degree in philosophy is a popular cliché, and we won't kid you: An electrical engineer who graduates with a second major in accounting has, at least at first, more lucrative options than, say, a history major vying for a coveted (and unpaid) internship on Capitol Hill. But many excellent opportunities are still available for graduates with seemingly "useless" degrees, as long as you can show potential employers that you know how to learn and will continue to do so as your field evolves. Many companies don't care whether you majored in medieval literature or international business; they want to know that you're passionate about succeeding and are probably hoping that you'll apply the keen eye you used on "The Canterbury Tales" to their long-standing clients' portfolios. That said, if all your courses have "Canterbury Tales" in their titles, it's best to hedge your bets by tossing in a few accounting or economics courses to demonstrate your readiness for the marketplace.

2. You should check off graduation requirements as quickly as possible.

What a waste of tuition, especially when you consider that most college lectures cost about as much as a ticket to "Monty Python's Spamalot" (but are not, we are sorry to say, nearly so entertaining). Every semester, students rush through general-education requirements as if college were a game of beat-the-clock bingo. Far better to treat those requirements as invitations to explore subjects outside your comfort zone, such as Legal Linguistics, History of Strata or Ancient Egyptian Mythology.

You should pick courses based on the professor's reputation, the course's reputation, your interest in the topic, graduation requirements and convenience—in that order. A great professor can make an obscure area of study come alive, and a lousy one can make even the most titillating topic tedious. And should you be lucky enough to land a class that feels like Monty Python's views on statistics, who cares if it meets at 8 a.m. on Fridays?

Example 2

Feaver and Crossman use this section to catch the attention of college-bound seniors and high school teachers, counselors, and administrators alike. They contend that there are some common myths about college worth exploring.

This section challenges the idea that one college degree is more valuable (or better) than another.

This section offers two contrasting scenarios: one where students rush through general education courses to fulfill graduation requirements and another where students explore different subjects and enrich their studies.
3. The more extracurriculars, the better.

Only if you want to be a fifth-year senior. If everyone around you is smiling, giving you freebies and telling you how swell you are, you’re either at your bar mitzvah or your college’s annual activity fair. If you aren’t careful, by the end of the hour you’ll have signed up to sing in an a cappella choir, read to the blind, coach soccer for inner-city youth and write for the campus newspaper. Oh, and try your hand at intramural wrestling.

Resist! You can’t do it all, and you’re asking for a nervous breakdown if you try to juggle as many activities in college as you did in high school. When it comes to extracurriculars, less is more; you already have dozens of papers and lab reports and hundreds of pages of reading to keep you busy. Picking a few diverse activities and engaging in them deeply is better than being a superficial (and overstressed) participant in lots.

4. You should study all the time.

You won’t, and you shouldn’t. But perhaps you are wary of Myth 3 and have forsaken all earthly pleasures (including extracurriculars) to focus on academics. You may have spent 40 hours a week locked in classrooms back in high school, but you’ll be in the university lecture hall more like 15. You’ll find that it’s tough to fill that vacuum with studying alone, especially when deep, imponderable questions are crying out to you: If I watch another edition of SportsCenter, will it have new scores to report? (Answer: Yes.) If I party on Tuesday like it’s Saturday, what does that make Wednesday? (Answer: Painful.) Is it possible to play “Guitar Hero III” for 24 hours straight without getting carpal tunnel syndrome? (Answer: We were too scared to try.) The discipline that a well-chosen mix of courses and extracurriculars imposes is better than a routine devoid of fun.

5. If your roommate is a dud, your social life will be too.

You will be thrilled to know that this is also a no. We consistently find that students tend to underemphasize what they should take seriously—such as selecting the best professors and classes—and overemphasize what they should take as it comes—such as roommates. We have known roomies who forged lifelong friendships (and billion-dollar partnerships) and others who were undone by the polka music blaring from one side of the room or the dirty boxers piling up on the other. (Our favorite was the smoker who requested a nonsmoking roommate because “two smokers in one room would be too much.”) Your safest bet is to lower your expectations about roomie-bonding and seek out other avenues for fun. The two of you may not agree on bunk beds, matching bedspreads or the use of snooze buttons, but it will all be over in a year.

Peter Feaver is a professor at Duke University. Anne Crossman, a Duke graduate, is a freelance writer in Seattle. They are co-authors, with Sue Wasiolo, of “Getting the Best Out of College.” contact@gettingthebestoutofcollege.com LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST—05-05-08 1555ET
Charting the Text: Analyzing the Micro-Structure

At first, this strategy proves to be a difficult activity for most readers, but with practice students will be able to distinguish between what an author is saying in a particular paragraph and what an author is doing in that same paragraph. When we refer to what an author is saying, we are generally concerned with the “What.” And when we refer to what an author is doing, we are interested in the author’s actions. That is, when we chart what an author is saying, we focus on the actual content of a paragraph and when we chart what an author is doing, we focus on the deliberate choices authors make when constructing meaningful paragraphs. Over time, students will become more adept at distinguishing between what an author is saying and what an author is doing.

Below are some questions you should ask while analyzing what an author is saying in a paragraph.

- What is this section about?
- What is the author saying?
- What is the content?
- What did I learn from this paragraph?
- What information is being presented?

Here are some examples of what authors do in paragraphs. When articulating what an author is doing, begin with a verb.

- Giving an example…
- Interpreting data…
- Sharing an anecdote…
- Summarizing research…
- Reflecting on a process…
- Contrasting one idea to another…
- Listing data…

Student Handout 8.1: “Charting the Text Table: Analyzing the Micro-Structure” provides a table that students should use while learning how to chart the micro-structure of a text. The first table provides support for readers as they learn how to craft summary and charting statements. The second table offers more space for students to chart sections of a text. Student Handout 8.2: “Charting Verbs List” provides a list of verbs for students to help them be more successful when using the strategy.
Charting the Text: *Using the Margins*

As students become more comfortable with “Charting the Micro-Structure,” ask them to write their summary and charting statements in the margins of the text. This is where students will eventually want to chart the text. A table works well for students who are learning how to chart, but as the strategy becomes more familiar, students should be able (and encouraged) to write directly in the margins. The following offers an authentic example of how a reader charted a section of text. Notice how the reader wrote summary statements on the left and charting statements on the right.

**What does the author say in this paragraph?**

Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in America and parents may outlive their children.

Research from various sources point to an increase in childhood obesity. The average weight among children ages 6–11 has increased.

These young people are at risk for diabetes, gall bladder disease, asthma, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

**What does the author do in this paragraph?**

1. Of all the sobering facts in The Post’s series on childhood obesity, this one stood out: “For the first time in history, American children could have a shorter life span than their parents.” In just two decades, obesity has become an epidemic touching every stratum of society.

2. According to acting Surgeon General Steven Galson, the prevalence of obesity has tripled among children ages 6 to 11 since 1980. A 2004 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that the average weight for 10-year-old boys and girls is 11 pounds more than it was in 1963. As Post writers Susan Levine and Rob Stein reported, almost a quarter of children through age 17 in Prince George’s County, Md., and more than a third of 2- to 5-year-olds in Loudoun County, Va., are considered obese. In Washington D.C., 40 percent of schoolchildren and pre-adolescents are at least overweight.

3. The extra weight devastates health. Type 2 diabetes has increased tenfold among children and teens, and gallbladder disease has tripled in children ages 6 to 17. That’s on top of the increased risk of asthma, high blood pressure and heart disease.

**An excerpt from A Big Problem**

*By The Washington Post*

1. Of all the sobering facts in The Post’s series on childhood obesity, this one stood out: “For the first time in history, American children could have a shorter life span than their parents.” In just two decades, obesity has become an epidemic touching every stratum of society.

2. According to acting Surgeon General Steven Galson, the prevalence of obesity has tripled among children ages 6 to 11 since 1980. A 2004 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that the average weight for 10-year-old boys and girls is 11 pounds more than it was in 1963. As Post writers Susan Levine and Rob Stein reported, almost a quarter of children through age 17 in Prince George’s County, Md., and more than a third of 2- to 5-year-olds in Loudoun County, Va., are considered obese. In Washington D.C., 40 percent of schoolchildren and pre-adolescents are at least overweight.

3. The extra weight devastates health. Type 2 diabetes has increased tenfold among children and teens, and gallbladder disease has tripled in children ages 6 to 17. That’s on top of the increased risk of asthma, high blood pressure and heart disease.

**What does the author do in this paragraph?**

- Providing a direct quotation from a research project on childhood obesity
- Citing research from individuals and groups who have studied obesity in America
- Listing diseases and health concerns associated with obesity
Charting the Text: Sample Table

This page offers an example of the “Charting the Text” strategy. In this example, the reader has utilized the table provided on Student Handout 8.1 “Charting the Text: Analyzing the Micro-Structure.” This example offers statements that describe what the author says and what the author does in each of the three paragraphs.

An excerpt from

A Big Problem

By The Washington Post

1. Of all the sobering facts in The Post’s series on childhood obesity, this one stood out: “For the first time in history, American children could have a shorter life span than their parents.” In just two decades, obesity has become an epidemic touching every stratum of society.

2. According to acting Surgeon General Steven Galson, the prevalence of obesity has tripled among children ages 6 to 11 since 1980. A 2004 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that the average weight for 10-year-old boys and girls is 11 pounds more than it was in 1963. As Post writers Susan Levine and Rob Stein reported, almost a quarter of children through age 17 in Prince George’s County, Md., and more than a third of 2- to 5-year-olds in Loudoun County, Va., are considered obese. In Washington D.C., 40 percent of schoolchildren and pre-adolescents are at least overweight.

3. The extra weight devastates health. Type 2 diabetes has increased tenfold among children and teens, and gallbladder disease has tripled in children ages 6 to 17. That’s on top of the increased risk of asthma, high blood pressure and heart disease.

LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST — 05-24-08

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does the author say in the paragraph?</th>
<th>What does the author do in the paragraph?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in America and parents may outlive their children.</td>
<td>Providing a direct quotation from a research project on childhood obesity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research from various sources point to an increase in childhood obesity. The average weight among children ages 6–11 has increased.</td>
<td>Citing research from individuals and groups who have studied obesity in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Obesity leads to poor health; specifically, overweight children could develop Type 2 diabetes, suffer from gallbladder disease, or develop asthma, high blood pressure, and heart disease.</td>
<td>Listing diseases and health concerns associated with obesity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Charting the Text Table: 
*Analyzing the Micro-Structure*

Use the table below or recreate this table to help organize your charting statements. Even though charting is most effective when done in the margins of texts, a table can be useful when distinguishing between what an author is saying and what an author is doing. It is also a good idea to use this table to chart texts that cannot be marked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¶(s)</th>
<th>What is the author <em>saying</em> in the text?</th>
<th>What is the author <em>doing</em> in the text?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Here are some questions you should ask:</em></td>
<td><em>Here are some examples of what authors do:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is this section about?</td>
<td>Giving an example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the content?</td>
<td>Interpreting data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What did I learn from this?</td>
<td>Sharing an anecdote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summarizing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflecting on a process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1This handout reflects the structure of Micah Jendian’s “Charting the Text” table.
Given a text to read, write in the left and right margins, showing what the author is saying (left) and doing (right).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>¶(s)</th>
<th>Saying</th>
<th>Doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Charting Verbs List

While charting, use this verbs list to help you accurately select a verb that best explains what an author is doing in a paragraph. Use the spaces next to the verbs to write brief definitions or synonyms to help you select the most appropriate verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Frequency Charting Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguing:______________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asserting:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasting:_________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting:__________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining:____________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debating:____________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing:___________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium-Frequency Charting Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledging:_______________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Challenging:_______________________________   | Incorporating:_____________________
| Compiling:__________________________________| Justifying:________________________|
| Differentiating:_____________________________| Predicting:_______________________|
| Distinguishing:______________________________| Qualifying:_______________________|
| Establishing:_______________________________  | Substantiating:____________________|

**Use this space to add charting verbs that are not listed above.**
Charting the Text

Deepening Understanding of Charting the Text

- Remind students that active reading becomes increasingly important as texts become more difficult. “Charting the Text” is a literacy skill that is used in middle and high school, as well as college; it is a strategy designed to help readers gain deeper insight into the texts they read.

- Assign reading tasks that vary in length, sophistication, and purpose. And provide time for rehearsal; students need time to practice this skill.

- Create opportunities for students to practice charting the text. As students become more proficient at this strategy, they will be able to chart more paragraphs in a shorter amount of time. Advanced students will be able to make decisions about what to chart and when it is appropriate.

- Increase opportunities for students to talk about what they are charting.

- Have students reflect on how charting the text improves their understanding of the text and how it is constructed.

- Evaluate students’ ability to chart a text and offer constructive feedback. As students master this skill, they will need less guidance. Although a purpose for reading is always necessary, students may not need a verb list or a charting table to successfully do this work.

Extending Charting the Text Schoolwide

- “Charting the Text” is not limited to one discipline or to one type of text. This skill is transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use this strategy, ask them to think about how charting the text could be used while reading texts in other classes.

- Photocopy sections of a novel, short story, textbook, or other print materials that students could write on while reading. Students should experience applying this strategy to a variety of different types of texts.

- Although the act of charting the text would not be advisable during a state or local exam, the ability to analyze what an author is doing in any given section of a text will dramatically improve students’ understanding of the reading material.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
Critical writing is the key to open a door in our minds. It is a stage of thinking that takes us to the next level and challenges us to explore questions, solutions, and come up with new possibilities.

Sara Bahnam,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Strategy 9

Responding to a Writing Task

This ninth strategy signals the movement away from reading to learn strategies toward investigating, analyzing, and summarizing the choices writers make in academic writing. These remaining chapters will deepen students’ knowledge of the reading strategies provided in this book while teaching them how to write effectively for an academic audience.

It is appropriate to begin this final series of strategies with “Responding to a Writing Task” because students must learn how to analyze and respond appropriately to a prompt before they begin writing (and at times, reading). As students move through high school and into college, they will be faced with complex prompts—questions that ask students to consider a number of ideas and respond in very specific ways. This chapter highlights two essential skills from the AVID College Readiness (ACR) curriculum: “Analyzing a Writing Prompt,” and “Focused Note-Taking.”
How should students Respond to a Writing Task?

Quick Reference 9.1: “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” provides a series of questions that students should ask while reading a prompt. Teachers can either copy the reference, or they can present the questions in some other way. Practice analyzing prompts from different disciplines, from state and local exams, and from college entrance tests such as the SAT and ACT. Along with the sample prompts provided in this chapter, teachers could visit College Board, ACT, and state websites like California Department of Education for additional sample prompts.

“Focused Note-Taking”—the second strategy highlighted in this chapter—should be used when students are asked to work with sources. This note-taking system helps students with researching and organizing source material. Note: To better prepare students for college-level writing assignments, teachers should develop writing tasks that (1) expose students to a wide range of texts and (2) engage students in the analysis and synthesis of ideas written or spoken.

When should students Respond to a Writing Task?

Students should be encouraged to use the “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” strategy whenever they are given a writing assignment. The “Focused Note-Taking” strategy should be used when the prompt asks students to read and write about a text.

Why should students Respond to a Writing Task?

The ability to read a prompt carefully is one of the most important skills college-bound students can develop. As students advance through their education, writing tasks shift from having students write about themselves (for instance, narratives, personal journals, and reflections) to having students write about what others have said or done (for example, analyzing arguments, synthesizing ideas from multiple sources, and applying theories). This shift can cause many students to struggle if they are not given the tools to analyze writing tasks. Understanding a prompt is the first step to writing a successful paper.
Responding to a Writing Task

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Responding to a Writing Task” as a critical reading strategy.

**Introducing Responding to a Writing Task**

- Define “Responding to a Writing Task” and explain why it is important for readers (and writers) to learn this skill. Communicate to students how this strategy will be used to help them analyze and respond to prompts.

- Ask students to write down what they know about analyzing a prompt. What types of questions do writers ask while reading a prompt? Have students share their answers in groups or with the whole class.

- Hand out copies of Quick Reference 9.1: “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” and discuss the information. Teachers may decide to project the information using a document camera, overhead projector, or PowerPoint presentation.

- Select a prompt to analyze. Read the prompt to the class. Have students read it a second time on their own. Then, go through each question on Quick Reference 9.1 and have students write their responses in their Cornell notes.

- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as “Why might a student want to use this strategy?” and “How can this strategy help writers be more successful?”

- If the prompt asks students to work with a source, introduce Student Handout 9.2: “Focused Note-Taking for a Single Source.” Define the strategy and explain why it is valuable.

- Read and analyze a prompt that asks students to work with a source. Once the source has been read, marked, and (perhaps) charted, model for students how to complete Student Handout 9.2. Refer to the prompt, the source, and Quick Reference 9.1 while completing the handout.

- Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students can work in pairs as they learn how to analyze a prompt, or they can work in groups of four or five. Expect students to share their work with others in the class.

- Craft prompts that ask students to work with texts. It is also a good idea to ask them to write from different perspectives such as a doctor’s or a congressperson’s. Ask them to write business letters, op-ed pieces, or data analyses. Students need to learn how to analyze and respond to these types of prompts.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Analyzing a Writing Prompt

Students should develop the habit of asking critical questions that will help them understand and prepare for a formal writing assignment. Even though prompts provide language that help, direct students’ thinking, students must analyze the prompt in order to respond accurately and effectively. The following questions will help students work through and respond to complex writing prompts.

1. **What am I supposed to do as a writer when I respond to this prompt?**
   Does the prompt ask me to make an argument, inform my readers about a particular issue, or describe an event? Do I have to explain the significance of a particular topic? If you don’t understand what you’re being asked to do, seek clarification.

2. **What am I expected to cover in this paper?**
   What content should I include?

3. **From which perspective or persona am I being asked to write this paper?**
   Does the prompt ask me to speak from a particular perspective? Should I write this paper as an ordinary student or someone else? Some prompts will ask young writers to take on the persona of celebrities, leaders, government officials, and so on.

4. **Who is my audience?**
   To whom am I writing this paper (an organization, the mayor, a city council member, or some other individual or group)? What language is most appropriate for my audience? What does my audience know and/or believe?

5. **What type of text am I being asked to write? What do I know about this genre?**
   Am I being asked to write a business letter or a personal statement? How about a book review? You might want to ask your teacher about the writing type expected and specifically how to organize the content.

6. **Does the prompt ask me to use sources? If so, what sources should I use?**
   Does the prompt specify whether the sources should be primary (e.g., speeches, interviews, autobiographies, etc.) or secondary (e.g., biographies, analyses, or commentaries on events, ideas, people, etc.)? What types of sources are appropriate? They may be magazines or journal articles, films, or other source material. How many different types of sources should I use?

7. **Does the prompt tell me to focus on a specific text?**
   What does the prompt ask me to consider? How should I focus my analysis? How many elements and/or strategies am I being asked to analyze?

8. **Are there clues in the prompt that will help me organize my paper?**
   Does the prompt use transition words? Is there a series of questions to consider? Does it make sense to discuss a specific portion of the prompt first, second, and third?

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Responding to a Writing Prompt

Use the following questions to help you work through and respond to complex writing prompts.

1. What am I being asked to do?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What am I expected to cover in this paper?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

3. From which perspective or persona am I being asked to write this paper?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Who is my audience?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

5. What type of text am I being asked to write? What do I know about this genre?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Does the prompt ask me to use sources? If so, what sources should I use?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________

7. Does the prompt tell me to focus on a specific text?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

8. Are there clues in the prompt that will help me organize my paper?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

---

Authentic Academic Writing Prompts

These writing prompts are taken from university classrooms in a number of disciplines. Teachers could use the prompts listed here to inform their writing tasks or they could use them to teach students how to analyze complex prompts. What do these prompts ask students to do? Are high school students ready for this work? Use these prompts as models to develop prompts for your students.

From Philosophy 329 (Ethics: General Education)

Consider the following questions: What purpose should the Supreme Court serve? Should it simply strike down laws that violate specific constitutional provisions? Or is its purpose to strike down laws that are based on a notion of morality found objectionable to the majority? Should the focus of the Court be simply procedural, or does the Court have a role in narrowing the gap between the nation’s constitutional ideals and the truths of everyday existence?

*Your essay should draw on the Gobitis and Barnette law cases.*

*Your essay should draw a distinction between procedural and substantive justice and explain the importance of that distinction.*

From Geography 101 (General Education)

Illegal international migration between Mexico and the United States has commanded a great deal of attention from policy makers in both countries. A sound policy needs to be grounded in an understanding of the magnitude of the flows as well as the forces that generate this form of migration. In your memo, you are to assume the role of a policy analyst who is responsible for providing this information and a discussion of the impacts of this migration on both countries. Additionally you are to suggest a plan of action for the United States government to shape its immigration policy towards Mexico as well as justification for the policy that you suggest. In addition to lectures and the textbook, draw upon at least two web-based sources for your text.

*Use sources that will convince your audience!*

From Exercise and Nutritional Sciences 441C: Field Games

(Group assignment): Using the Sport Education text and other sources, type a plan to be implemented in class for a two-day, end-of-season culminating competition. Describe all of the games and mini-games that will be played, any special rules, playing field considerations (equipment, dimensions, and organization), player numbers, duration of each contest, and outcome and process points/rewards. Each group will also implement this plan by presenting and organizing the selected sport’s culminating tournament’s activities.

(Individual assignment): Observe an entire soccer or softball game at the youth, interscholastic, collegiate, or professional level. Take complete notes during your observation so that you can prepare a typed report in which you FULLY describe five primary features of the sport context that are diagramed in Figure 1.1. of the textbook. Using material from Chapter One and your observation notes, describe how three of your observations/features of sport could be implemented in a secondary physical education setting.
From History 110 (American History)

The paper assignment for this course involves researching a particular historical event or episode in the 20th century through contemporary newspapers and/or popular magazines. First, choose a topic from the list below (60 were listed, e.g., the 1948 Truman election, Jackie Robinson’s first game) and find at least six to eight articles or editorials on your topic in newspapers or magazines from the period you are researching. From these, you are to analyze and discuss the attitudes, beliefs, or responses of Americans during that period to the event. Depending upon your topic, you should try to explore it for several days after the initial episode. Be sure to use ideas or quotes from the articles to support your claims about writer perspectives. Rather than simply describing the responses or attitudes you find, try to construct some form of argument which will help your paper take a coherent direction.

Your paper is to be at least five pages in length, double spaced with normal font and margins and is due April 23rd. You must also provide proper footnotes to document your evidence. You must allot the bulk of your paper to examining and analyzing sources, allowing no more than one page for the background and introduction.

Possible sources found in the SDSU library include: San Diego Union, L.A. Times, Life Magazine, Saturday Evening Post, and Newsweek. In the UCSD Library, you can find…

If you have any difficulties, consult the reference librarian. The Internet, however, is not an acceptable resource for this assignment.

From Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200

Kilbourne and Devor argue that certain social behaviors and identities are learned from our observations of male and female relationships. Although Kilbourne is concerned with the connection between advertising and the objectification of women, her position is similar to Devor’s in that our own relationship to others and our own sense of self is shaped by what we see. Using either Kilbourne or Devor’s argument, write a paper where you use your contemporary, current life as a context for analysis. Using examples from our modern context, locate and incorporate into your paper images that extend, clarify, or illustrate one of the two arguments that we have read and discussed. This paper will require a bit of research as you explore and analyze contemporary images. As part of the assignment, draw from either Cofer or Hadar’s narratives in an attempt to demonstrate how these stories illuminate Kilbourne’s and/or Devor’s argument.

Evaluation Criteria

Successful papers will
• introduce the topic and the project, and give some indication how the paper will proceed;
• describe the author’s project and give an account of the author’s argument;
• strategically incorporate images into the text that accurately depict elements of the author’s argument;
• smoothly integrate relevant phrases and passages from source material into the paper, signaling why the source is being used;
• include a concluding statement, noting the value of situating an argument in a contemporary, current life context;
• use correct citation format and include a works cited page;
• be thoroughly edited so that sentences are readable and appropriate for an academic paper.
From Religious Studies 305: New Testament

An Exegetical Paper

Text:
Select from one of the following: 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Corinthians

Format:
While you can write in almost any format you like (as long as it’s narrative, and not poetry!), your paper should include the following elements, and not be longer than two pages.
Sources: at least one Biblical commentary and two different translations

Introductory paragraph which sets the stage
The historical context, perhaps including the “occasion” on which Paul wrote a letter; the setting in which the gospel was written; the audience for whom the letter or gospel was written; and any historical details that will put the passage in the proper historical context

Literary context
Put the passage in the context of the bigger picture. Where does it occur in the book you are studying? How does it advance the plot or argument of the writer? How and where does it fit in the narrative? How do the versions (translations) differ?

Textual context
Are any words problematic? Why? Are there translation difficulties? Do your Bible and commentary indicate any issues or questions? Provide your analysis of what the passage means, given the context mentioned above. I want your analysis, not the biblical commentators’! The paper should give credit to any sources you quote or use. It should be written in proper English style and grammar. Use Spell-Check and then READ your paper out loud. You will catch grammar errors when you read your paper.

Focused Note-Taking for a Single Source

We know that college-level writing tasks expect students to engage in wide reading and to use those readings to invent new texts. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein assert in They Say/I Say, “Academic writing… calls upon writers not simply to express their own ideas, but to do so as a response to what others have said” (IX). As we prepare students for the rigors of academic reading and writing, we should craft writing tasks that require students to consider what others have said about a particular subject. According to Graff and Birkenstein, “Students discover what they want to say not by thinking about a subject in an isolation booth, but by reading texts, listening closely to what other writers say, and looking for an opening in which they can enter the conversation. In other words, listening closely to others and summarizing what they have to say can help writers generate their own ideas” (XII). The types of writing tasks we assign should determine what our students do with what they read. Student Handout 9.2: “Focused Note-Taking for a Single Source” will help students focus on and organize the essential information in the text. This handout should be completed after students have studied their prompts using Quick Reference 9.1: “Analyzing a Writing Prompt.”
**Focused Note-Taking for a Single Source**

Title of the text: __________________________________________

Use the following table to research background information about your source. Answer all of the questions in the table before taking notes on your source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is my reading purpose or prompt?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Background Information for the Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the title of my source?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the author’s name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other bibliographic information is available?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ask your teacher for proper citation format or refer to your writer’s handbook.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is my source a primary or secondary source?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the historical context?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*What is happening at the time the text is written? What is going on socially/politically?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the rhetorical context?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Who is the author? What are his or her professional and academic experiences? What is the author responding to? What have others said about this topic?*

---

1A version of this handout is available in *AVID College Readiness* (Johns, 2008).
**Note-Taking Guide: One Source, Multiple Topics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the question or topic?</th>
<th>Directly quote, paraphrase, or summarize source material.</th>
<th>Offer analysis that relates to the prompt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The prompt is asking me to…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The prompt is asking me to…</td>
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<tr>
<td>The prompt is asking me to…</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Responding to a Writing Task

Deepening Understanding of Responding to a Writing Task

- Remind students that “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” and “Focused Note-Taking” are literacy skills that become increasingly important as writing assignments become more complex.

- Craft writing tasks that mirror the samples described in the “Authentic Academic Writing Prompts” section. Assign writing tasks that vary in length, sophistication, and purpose.

- Have students practice writing their own prompts. Students should craft prompts based on a text they have read for class.

- Increase opportunities for students to analyze and talk about prompts.

- Create opportunities for students to respond to a variety of prompts.

Extending Responding to a Writing Task Schoolwide

- “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” and “Focused Note-Taking” are not limited to one discipline or one type of text. These strategies are transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use these strategies, ask them to think about how they could be used in other classes.

- Teachers from different disciplines should get together to craft cross-curricular prompts, asking students to synthesize and apply ideas from multiple contents and perspectives.

- “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” should be a schoolwide approach for preparing students for high-stakes writing exams.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
This work takes time and effort from both the student and the teacher, but in the end it helps you become a much better reader and writer.

Jessica Miranda,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Summary writing is a fundamental skill that is important to all academic classes both in secondary and postsecondary education. It requires competence in reading as well as writing. Summarizing texts is widely understood to mean the act of identifying and accounting for essential information in a text. Summaries, then, tend to be short descriptions of something said or done, and they are usually used to demonstrate comprehension of something written or spoken.

As students enter into high school and move on to college, summary writing becomes more academic. A greater emphasis is placed on how well students can analyze and articulate what they have read. As content becomes more challenging, so do the reading and writing assignments. Teachers expect students to engage in original analysis and evaluation as part of the summary. This chapter attempts to prepare students for this type of summary work.
How should students Summarize the Text?

What do we want our students summarizing? To answer this question, we must first decide on what we want our students to know and understand. Once we are clear on this, we can employ prompts that direct students to summarize information we want them to know. Why should we create prompts? Because they provide structure and focus for the reading. With a focus, students can begin to recognize information that is relevant to the reading task. Once a prompt has been provided, show students how to analyze the prompt. Then, model for students how competent readers use prompts to help them think through a reading assignment. Using the “Marking the Text” strategy, circle key words and underline essential information. While modeling this work, expect students to imitate what you are doing. While marking, verbalize your decisions and explain why you have made them. Once the text is marked, write concise summary statements in the margins of the text or write brief descriptions on a piece of Cornell notepaper. Eventually students will be able to do this work on their own. Remember to start with a prompt: how students mark the text and what they summarize will depend on the given reading task.

When it’s time to write the actual summary, consider using the templates provided in this chapter. These templates provide linguistic support and guide students to write in a way that is commonly seen in academic summaries. To develop this skill, students must practice writing a wide range of summaries in various disciplines.

When should students Summarize the Text?

Our first thought may be to have students summarize full-length articles, chapters, or units. However, students will not be expected to do this type of work; instead, they will be asked to summarize specific information like claims, evidence, research, data, processes, sequences, and various other types of information. For this reason, we need to develop summary activities that ask students to summarize specific information in a text. Although it is true that students will need to learn how to read and summarize full-length arguments, assigning this type of reading and writing task—before they have learned how to competently write summaries—might cause unnecessary frustration for both the teacher and the students. Start off assigning small, manageable summary exercises so that students can develop this skill. If we assign shorter exercises, we can have students engage in them more regularly. So, when should we assign summary writing activities? Every time our students read a text for class, they should complete some type of summary activity. Summary writing can (and should) happen during and after reading assignments. Summarizing texts is a skill that requires lots of practice and guidance.
Why should students Summarize the Text?

We know that only half of all incoming college freshmen are able to write competent summaries.¹ This issue is not unique to any one state. The majority of states in America are reporting that high school students are unable to read and write well. Students unable to write basic summaries are more likely to enter college taking remedial reading and writing courses. Remedial course work does not count toward earning a degree, making it that much harder for students to graduate from college. As students advance through secondary education and into college-level work, they will be expected to incorporate source material into the papers they write; they will be expected to use what others say and accurately describe what others have done.

The ability to write basic summaries should be a concern for middle and high school teachers. Not only do we want to prepare students for college-level reading and writing tasks, we also want to teach students how to be successful in our classes. Because students in secondary education are expected to read independently and comprehend various texts, they must learn the skill of summary writing. In science, for example, students are expected to summarize processes, research, procedures, and various other forms of information. In social science, students must summarize cause and effect relationships, beliefs and tenets of a particular group, and various political and social issues. And in mathematics, students are expected to summarize steps and procedures either verbally or in writing. Summary writing is a fundamental skill that all students must learn how to do well.

There are many purposes for summarizing texts. Some of those purposes include:

- clarifying information;
- gaining a general idea of what is being discussed;
- condensing lengthier passages into more manageable texts;
- checking for understanding;
- remembering what has been read;
- accounting for essential information;
- advancing an idea by using what others (writers and experts) say; and
- doing other work not listed here.

Summarizing the Text

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Summarizing the Text” as a critical reading strategy.

**Introducing Summarizing the Text**

- Define the “Summarizing the Text” strategy and explain why it is important for readers to learn this skill. Communicate to students how summary writing will be used in the class.

- Craft prompts that provide a focus for the reading. These prompts should direct students to the types of information you would like them to summarize. Two sample prompts have been provided below:

1. *Martin Luther King, Jr., in his speech “I See the Promised Land,” utilizes rhetorical devices to move, interest, and persuade his audience. Using the “Marking the Text” strategy, circle the names of people, places, and things and analyze why King makes these references. As you read and mark the text, write brief statements in the margins that describe what Martin Luther King, Jr., is doing in his speech (for instance, telling a story, making historical allusions, or drawing comparisons).*

2. *In the section “The French Revolution Begins,” we learn that social inequality and economic problems contributed to the French Revolution. To better understand this section, let’s investigate how the ideas are organized. For example, are there cause and effect relationships? Is something being compared and contrasted? In your Cornell notes, create a graphic organizer that will help you analyze the structure of this text. A Venn Diagram, for instance, could be used to organize comparisons in the text. Use your graphic organizer to account for main ideas, key vocabulary, concepts, and important people, places, and things.*

- Teach students how to analyze a prompt. Refer to Quick Reference 9.1: “Analyzing a Writing Prompt” for additional support.

- Model for students how mature readers use prompts to focus their reading.

- Use a document camera or overhead projector to model marking the text and summarizing in the margins. Expect students to watch, listen, and copy what you are doing while reading. Write summary statements in the margins and explain why a reader would want to do this work while reading a text.

- Provide linguistic support in the form of starter sentences and templates.

- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include, “How should readers want to chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in another class, such as English or biology?”
• Teach students how to create margins with sticky notes or teach them how to write brief summaries in their Cornell notes if they cannot write in their books. Try photocopying a few key pages so that students have experience writing on the actual text.

• Assign specific paragraphs or sections of text that you would like your students to summarize. When learning a new strategy, isolate parts of the text that require deeper analysis, thereby reducing the amount of text students have to reread at one time.

• Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students can work in pairs as they learn how to summarize texts or they can work in groups of four or five. Expect students to share their summaries with others in the class.

• Craft prompts that ask students to summarize specific information like an author’s claims, an author’s use of evidence, a scientific process, or a sequence of events, or do some other summary work not listed here.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
Strategies for Summarizing an Argument

This Quick Reference describes the steps a reader should take when summarizing an author’s argument. When we summarize an argument, we want to consider more than what the text is about. Good summaries will include a description of the central ideas including any claims made by the author. They will also discuss the structure of the text (that is, what the author does first, second, and third) and review evidence used to advance the argument. Depending on the writing task, students may be asked to analyze the author’s rhetorical strategies and explain the author’s purpose for writing the text. To prepare for this type of summary writing, students must be able to read for multiple purposes. Students must read to understand the text, while gaining insight into what the author is doing and how he or she uses language to construct meaning. The following steps will help students read the text critically, deepening our understanding of the argument.

Step 1: Seek to understand the reading and writing task.
   What are you expected to know and do? What are you summarizing?

Step 2: Carefully read the text.
   Read the text once to get a general idea of what the text is about.

Step 3: Reread and mark the text.
   Circle key terms and underline the author’s claims.

Step 4: Chart individual paragraphs.
   Chart individual paragraphs in order to gain insight into what the author is saying and how he or she says it. Examine the overall structure of the text as part of your charting.
   • What is this paragraph (or section) about?
   • What is the author saying?
   • Does the author make a claim in this paragraph (or section)? What does he or she argue?
   • What is the author doing in this paragraph (or section)?

Consider the following when summarizing an argument:

• Ideas are typically presented in the order that they appear in the text; however, you may need to present ideas in a different order if it makes sense to do so.
• Refer to your markings, charting statements, summary statements, and any other comments you made as you craft your summary.
• Use accurate verbs like clarifying, interpreting, or introducing, to describe what an author is doing in a paragraph or section of text.
• Use your own words and paraphrase when necessary. Ideas taken directly from the source should be properly quoted and cited.
• Directly quote or paraphrase the author’s claims. If claims are not explicitly stated, go back and examine the text for claims that are made implicitly.
• Be aware of your own biases; avoid inaccurate interpretations or representations.
• Read your paragraph or full summary for clarity and accuracy. Someone reading your summary should have a good understanding of what the author is saying and doing in the text being summarized.
Summarizing Sections of an Argument: Guided Practice

This activity is designed to support students as they learn how to summarize arguments. The work presented here could be completed in Cornell notes.

Title of Text: ___________________________________  Author: _____________________________________

Type of Text: ___________________________________  Paragraph(s) #: ________________________________

1. What is the author doing? Use a verb like introducing, defining, asserting, illustrating, or some other verb that accurately describes what the author is doing.

   Examples:  • Introducing the idea that…  • Challenging the view that…
              • Reviewing research…  • Interpreting data…

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What is this paragraph about? What does the author say? Account for main ideas, central claims, evidence, or other essential information. If the writer cites an authority (an expert or another writer), note the authority and record what he or she says.

   Examples:  • This section is about…  • The author presents a couple of ideas…
              • This paragraph is about…  • The main idea of this passage is…

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Use this space to craft a concise summary sentence(s) that includes the ideas from questions 1 and 2.

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________________________________
Summarizing Sections of an Argument: 
*Independent Practice*

This activity is designed to support students as they learn how to summarize arguments. The work presented here could be done in students’ Cornell notes.

Title of Text: ____________________________________________________________

Author: _______________________________ Type of Text: ________________________

Which paragraph(s) are you summarizing? Paragraph(s) # ________________________

1. What is the author doing? Use a verb such as introducing, defining, asserting, illustrating, or some other verb that accurately describes what the author is doing.

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

2. What is this paragraph about? What does the author say? Account for main ideas, central claims, evidence, or other essential information. If the writer cites an authority (an expert or another writer), note the authority and record what he or she says.

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

3. Use this space to craft a concise summary sentence(s) that includes the ideas from questions 1 and 2.

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________
Accounting for an Author’s Claims

Multiple Claims

Before completing this activity, make sure you have thoroughly read the text you are being asked to read. Go back to the text and underline the author’s claims and circle any key terms. A claim is an arguable statement or assertion made by the author. Data, facts, or other backing should support an author’s assertion. Refer back to the text as you complete the following activity. You are encouraged to reread sections of the text in order to accurately account for the author’s claims.

An author may make any number of claims in a text, and claims may appear at any point in an argument. Some claims will be made explicitly (stated directly) and others will be made implicitly (assertions that are implied and are not directly stated). As you read and reread, identify those claims that are central to the argument. Central claims are assertions made by the author that are most significant to his or her overall position. Paraphrase or directly quote the author’s claims on the lines below. Include a parenthetical citation for each claim.

Title of Text: ____________________________________________________________

Type of Text: ___________________________ Author’s Name: _______________________

Claim 1: ________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

(______).

Claim 2: ________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

(______).

Claim 3: ________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

(______).

Claim 4: ________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

(______).

Main Claim

Authors of expository texts may directly state their main or central claim in the form of a thesis statement or they might use guiding language (i.e., my argument is, I contend that, my position is clear, or other language that offers direction) to lead their readers to the central claim of the argument. Sometimes authors will make a central claim in the beginning of the text and other times they will wait until the end. When authors do not explicitly state their central claim, a reader must infer it from the sub-claims and evidence in the text. One way to approach this type of work is to ask, “What does it all add up to?” You might also ask, “What is the main point that the author is making?”

If the author provides his or her main claim in the text, paraphrase or directly quote the claim on the lines provided. If the main or central claim is not directly stated, you will need to refer to the sub-claims listed on the previous page, review the author’s evidence in the text, and through inference, make a conclusion about the author’s main claim.

Crafting an Argument Statement

Step 1: Introduce the text and the author, and provide comments about the author or the text.

Step 2: Paraphrase or directly quote the author’s main claim. (Use a verb, such as argues, claims, contends, asserts, or another verb to set off the claim.)

Sample Argument Statement

In her essay “The Wreck of Time: Taking Our Century’s Measure,” Annie Dillard—a prolific writer and teacher of writing—suggests that the 20th Century is insignificant when one considers the hundreds of civilizations that have come and gone (122–123).1

Analyzing an Author’s Evidence

Use this student activity to help you analyze an author’s evidence. After you fill out the initial information, identify and record a claim made by the author of the text you are assigned to read. Then, complete the table below.

| Title of Text: __________________________________________________________ |
| Type of Text: ___________________________ Author’s Name: ____________________ |

**Sample Claim:**

1. Walter Williams argues that racial profiling is acceptable when there is an association between ethnicity and reprehensible behavior.

| Author’s Claim: ___________________________________________________ |

**Evidence**

Paraphrase or directly quote the source material that the author uses to support his or her claim.

| Paragraph #_____ |

**What type of evidence is the author using?**

Is this a personal experience, an allusion, an anecdote, a type of data, research, expert commentary, testimony, or some other backing?

**Analysis**

(Questions to consider)

Why is the author using this evidence? Is the evidence convincing? Who might the evidence appeal to? Who would accept it?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase or directly quote the source material that the author uses to support his or her claim.</td>
<td>Paragraph #_____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type of evidence is the author using?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this a personal experience, an allusion, an anecdote, a type of data, research, expert commentary, testimony, or some other backing?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Questions to consider) Why is the author using this evidence? Is the evidence convincing? Who might the evidence appeal to? Who would accept it?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proven Achievement. Lifelong Advantage.
Summarizing an Author’s Use of Evidence

The ability to analyze and coherently summarize an author’s use of evidence is an important skill for us to learn. Too often we voice our opinion about the evidence used in a text before we completely understand it. Judgment, therefore, should come after we have learned how to articulate the types of evidence used to support an argument. The task of summarizing and analyzing the different types of evidence in an argument presents a challenge for some. It requires a close reading of the text and asks us to write with accuracy and objectivity. The following describes what we should include when analyzing and summarizing evidence.

Part 1: Introduce the source, the author, and his or her claim.

Part 2: Discuss the types of evidence the author uses and explain why the author uses it. (Some types of evidence include personal experiences, allusions, anecdotes, definitions, data, first-hand accounts, research, or some other evidence not listed here.)

Part 3: Provide one or two examples of the author’s evidence.

Part 4: Analyze the evidence you have provided and discuss its significance to the author’s claim.

The following is a sample prompt that a student might encounter in an academic course. This prompt could function as the sole writing task, or it might be a second or third aspect of a lengthier writing assignment.

Sample Prompt

Show how Mark Lynas uses evidence of a “changing world” to implicitly argue that global warming is directly impacting communities all over the world and ultimately putting humans at risk.

Sample Response

Mark Lynas, in the article “Global Warming Is a Serious Threat to Humanity’s Future,” suggests that climate change due to the steady increase in greenhouse gases is threatening human life (123). In his article, Lynas observes changes in weather patterns, the rapid decrease in glacial ice, and the evaporation of lakes and streams in order to illustrate the devastating effect global warming is having on nature and the people who depend on it. For example, Lynas describes severe drought and dust storms that continue to strangle China’s northern provinces (125). This evidence suggests that global warming is placing tension on China’s water supply, a vital resource for farmers and surrounding communities.
Analyzing and Summarizing Evidence: Template

This following template is a summary exercise designed to help young writers practice analyzing an author’s use of evidence.

_____________________________ , in the article ____________________________,
(author’s full name) (article title)

__________________________________________ s that _________________________________.
(verb) (What is the author’s claim?)

__________________________________________ .
(Discuss the type of evidence the author uses and explain why the author uses it.)

__________________________________________ .
in order to ____________________________________________.

For example, ____________________________ (s)
(author’s last name) (verb) (List or describe the evidence.)

(Use this space to describe specific evidentiary details.)

__________________________________________ ( ).

This evidence suggests that ______________________________________.
(Analyze the evidence and discuss its significance to the author’s claim.)
One-Page Report: *Poster Activity*

The following summary exercise can be used to assist students as they learn how to analyze an author's argument. The “One-Page Report: *Poster Activity*” combines visual and textual elements. Because information from the text is presented in manageable parts, this activity becomes accessible to a wide range of students. It also works well as a change of pace. Following is a description of the activity.

The teacher will need to gather these materials:

- For individuals, use standard 8½ x 11 unlined paper; for groups, use poster paper.
- Markers or colored pencils
- Rulers
- Each student should have a copy of the text.

It is always a good idea to provide structure and guidance when asking students to do this type of work. Below you will find suggestions for design, content, and assessment.

**Design**

- Names should be written on the back of the paper.
- Written work must be in ink or typed.
- Use color when appropriate.
- Ideas should be organized and presented clearly.
- Use your best penmanship when creating your One-Page Report. Your work needs to be legible.
- Organize your report so that it makes sense.
- Creativity is welcome.

**Content**

- Write the title of the text at the top of the page.
- Include the full name of the author(s) (place underneath the title).
- Write the publication date next to or underneath the title.
- Copy a significant quotation from the text and explain why you think it is important. (Provide a parenthetical reference.)
- Summarize the author's key claims.
- List the evidence the author uses to advance his or her argument.
- Account for any key terms in the text and explain how they are used.
- Draw two or more illustrations that represent the ideas discussed in the text.

**Assessment**

- The teacher may want to create a rubric or score sheet for holistic grading.
- Students can present their posters to small groups or to the whole class.
- Students can turn in their posters for a grade.
Say, Do, Mean:
What does the author say?
What does the author do?
And, what does it mean?

The following summary exercise can be used to assist students as they learn how to analyze an author's argument. Say, Do, Mean scaffolds some of the important elements found in a rhetorical précis—a summary exercise that asks students to craft a concise analysis of an argument. This activity presents three different ways to think about an argument: (1) What is the author saying? (2) What is the author doing? and (3) What is the meaning of the text? Isolating these ideas into three separate sections allows each to be thought and written about separately. The following describes what to include in each of the three parts.

Part 1: Say
In this section, introduce the source and the author, and provide comments about the author or source. In the same sentence, paraphrase or directly quote the author’s main claim.

Sample:
In her essay “Don’t Take Valuable Space in My School,” Jenny While, a senior at El Cajon Valley High School, argues that students who are unmotivated and misbehave take away from the learning environment and cause teachers to slow down and lower expectations.

Once you have introduced the author and his or her main claim, include other essential or relevant information such as main ideas, evidence, and other support.

Part 2: Do
For this section, analyze what the author is doing in individual paragraphs (or in a section). Describe the rhetorical choices the author has made (for instance, the author shares an anecdote, reviews current research, or does some other work), and explain why the author has made these choices (usually these explanations begin with "in order to").

Sample:
Mark Lynas observes the rapid decrease in glacial ice and the evaporation of lakes and streams in order to illustrate the devastating effects global warming is having on nature and the people who depend on it.

There is no limit to how many rhetorical choices an author makes in one text. Identify the most significant rhetorical strategies and explain why the author is using them.

Part 3: Mean
In this last section, evaluate the significance of the text. What greater meaning can be assigned to the text? What deeper connections can we make to our own lives? This section allows the reader to move the discussion from one context to another.
Say, Do, Mean

After reading a text selection, complete this handout.

What does the author say? (What is the text about?)
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

What does the author do? (What rhetorical choices has the author made?)
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

What does the text mean? (What is significant about this text?)
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
Say, Do, Mean: A Student Sample

The following offers a complete student sample for the Say, Do, Mean exercise.

**Say**

In the article “Don’t Take Valuable Space in My School,” Jenny While, a former student at El Cajon Valley High School, asserts that “space-takers”—students who go to school for reasons other than learning—affect the educational environment. While argues that valuable learning time is being taken away from those students who are motivated and focused. When the focus of instruction is turned to the lowest common denominator, the higher performing students stop learning. This is partly due, she says, to the No Child Left Behind Act, which aims to increase all students’ proficiency levels. According to While, this piece of legislation robs advanced students of their education. This is an issue that extends beyond the classroom. While insists that catering to low-performing, apathetic students can cause schools to suffer, resulting in lower test scores, higher failure rates, and higher teacher turnover rates.

**Do**

Jenny While observes the behavior and actions of students who do not care about their education and shares her observations with the reader. While uses the term “space-takers” to define a group of students who take valuable time away from students interested in learning and doing well in school. She shows how space-takers negatively impact classes, instruction, and overall school performance. Toward the end of the article, While challenges the very system that is designed to help the students who are low performing, No Child Left Behind. While wants to illuminate the flaws in education by showing that space-takers are hurting schools everywhere and the law is encouraging them.

**Mean**

This article is significant because, as a high school student, I understand what While’s concern is and I am sure many other students who read this article feel the same way as well. I understand that some students only go to school because they are forced to. I have been in classrooms where students take away from the learning environment. Students who do not care about their education negatively impact learning. And it is these students who perform poorly on state exams. This is a concern because low scores on high-stakes exams hurt schools. Low-performing schools develop a reputation that leads to more problems for students and teachers.
**Sample Text: The Space-Taker Effect**

This text—written by an AVID senior—was used to create sample responses for the following rhetorical précis activity. Use this text as a reference as you teach the précis.

**The Space-Taker Effect¹**

1. Despite the push for good education, and the increasing competition in careers and jobs—to the point that it seems you need a college diploma to work at McDonald’s—some students are still dragging their feet in school.

2. One would think that without the guarantee of having a job and a future, every single student would pay attention in school and stop slacking off. However, the fact still remains that an ever-present amount of students are simple “space-takers,” or students that come to school for petty reasons and only take up space for the students that are actually dedicated to their education.

3. Not only are they an annoying addition to an already stressful environment, they take away valuable teaching time when teachers either scold them for disrupting class or cater to their below average needs. Because of these students, the smart ones actually in a class to learn are being deprived of their education. By the time the class is over, the space-takers might be close to the level of the smart students. However the ones wanting to learn will get nowhere, having to suffer through reviews of material they have already learned day in and day out.

4. These space-takers are obviously still required to take the same STAR tests as all the others. So after a fun filled year of doing absolutely nothing, they pick up a test they can barely read, and proceed to drop our scores. When the results come in, teachers are replaced, standards are decreased, and a label of “insufficient” is stamped on the school. Yet the space-takers remain.

5. Then a wonderful law, aimed at increasing the education of California’s students, was passed: the No Child Left Behind Act. Yes, it did have the good intentions of bringing the below average student up to par with the rest. It would create a smarter state because it would virtually destroy below average students. It would create exceptional students in every single classroom. However, all this act created was exceptional students who got frustrated while they waited for the mediocre students to catch up. Teachers must put the good students on hold while holding the hand of the bad. When first proposed, the hope was to raise the education level of the state. However, based on observation at my own school, it seems that this has only weakened our education system.

6. In a class full of space-takers, I am forced to bear through the teacher’s jaded lesson to deaf ears. She is incapable of teaching the lessons she loves to the students who care. And I, and a few others, are denied our education because these students must be as good as the rest of us.

7. Communistic? In every negative meaning of the word.

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¹This article was published on February 20, 2008 in the *San Diego Union Tribune, East County*. Jenny While wrote “The Space-Taker Effect” as an AVID senior at El Cajon Valley High School. In 2008, Jenny was accepted into San Diego State University as a Communications major.
Writing an Argument Summary: 
*Rhetorical Précis*¹

Students must learn how to analyze arguments—whether they are written or spoken—and accurately describe the rhetorical techniques used in the work. One way to prepare students for this type of thinking is to engage them in a reading and writing exercise called a rhetorical précis. There are two purposes for a rhetorical précis: the first, to practice writing a concise summary of an argument; and the second, to demonstrate comprehension of the complexities and nuances inherent in sophisticated discourse. The rhetorical précis includes five parts. The following outlines the information you should include in each of the five parts.

**Part 1:** Introduce the writer or speaker, the text, and the central claim.

**Part 2:** Explain how the author develops or advances the argument.

**Part 3:** State the author’s purpose in writing the text.

**Part 4:** Describe the intended audience and the author’s relationship to the audience.

**Part 5:** Explain the significance of the work.

---

**Part 1: Introduce the writer or speaker, the text, and the central claim.**

**Sample**

In the essay “The Space-Taker Effect,” Jenny While, a senior at El Cajon Valley High School, *argues that* students who are unmotivated and misbehave take away from the learning environment and cause teachers to slow down and lower expectations. According to While, these “space-takers take away valuable instructional time,” leaving little for those who want to learn.

**Template:**

In ______________________________, ______________________________, ______________________________, ______________________________, ______________________________.

(type of text) (title of text) (author’s first and last name)

______________________________________________________________

(information about the author) (verb, e.g., claims, argues, asserts, etc.)

that ____________________________________________________________

(Paraphrase or quote the central claim and include other essential sub-claims.)

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

---

Part 2: *Explain how the author develops or advances the argument.*

When completing this section of the précis, consider how the author has developed or supported his or her central claim. What does the writer or speaker do in each paragraph and in each section? For instance, authors will illustrate an idea, describe an event, share an anecdote, draw a comparison, or do some other work. The explanation for this section typically follows the sequence of ideas in the text.

**Sample**

*She supports this claim by first* describing the types of students who “take up space” in her school. Then, she makes a connection between her school’s poor performance on state and local exams and the “space-takers” who have done very little to prepare themselves for these high-stakes tests. *Toward the end of the essay,* while challenges the effectiveness of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and outlines its limitations.

**Template:**

______ this claim by first ________

(He/She) (supports/develops) (Explain what the author is doing: verb.)

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Then, _________________________________________________

(Explain what the author does next.)

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

(Use a prepositional phrase like “Toward the end of the text,” “In the section,” or some other phrase in order to add variety to your writing.)

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________
Part 3: State the author’s purpose in writing the text.

Sample

While’s purpose is to call attention to the flaws in educating all students—especially those who outwardly reject the opportunity—in order to prompt schools and districts to formulate practical solutions for low-performing students while taking care of those who want to learn.

Template:

_________________________'s purpose is to ____________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________

in order to ______________________________________________________________

(What does the author want the audience to do or feel as a result of this work?)

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

Part 4: Describe the intended audience and the author’s relationship to the audience.

Sample

She establishes a formal tone for educators, politicians, and concerned parents who have children in high school. Although she is writing to an adult audience, her message extends to her peers—high school students.

Template:

________________________ establishes ______________________________ for __________________________

(He/She) (Describe the tone of the author.)

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

(What is the relationship between the author and his/her audience?)

_________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________
Part 5: Explain the significance of this work.

Sample

This work is significant because it challenges those in education to rethink classroom dynamics. Specifically, she addresses how the various skill levels and attitudes in one classroom can affect the quality of learning.

Template:

This work is significant because ___________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

The complete précis

In her essay “Don’t Take Valuable Space in My School,” Jenny While, a senior at El Cajon Valley High School, argues that students who are unmotivated and misbehave take away from the learning environment and cause teachers to slow down and lower expectations. According to While, these “space-takers take away valuable instructional time,” leaving little for those who want to learn. She supports this claim by first describing the types of students who “take up space” in her school. Then, she makes a connection between her school’s poor performance on state and local exams and the “space-takers” who have done very little to prepare themselves for these high-stakes tests. Toward the end of the essay, While challenges the effectiveness of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and outlines its limitations. While’s purpose is to call attention to the flaws in educating all students—especially those who outwardly reject the opportunity—in order to prompt schools and districts to formulate practical solutions for low-performing students while taking care of those who want to learn. She establishes a formal tone for educators, politicians, and concerned parents who have children in high school. Although she is writing to an adult audience, her message extends to her peers—high school students. This work is significant because it challenges those in education to rethink classroom dynamics. Specifically, she addresses how the various skill levels and attitudes in one classroom can affect the quality of learning.
Rhetorical Précis: Template

In ____________________________________________________________________________
(Include the following: author’s first and last name, type of text, title of work.)

______________________________________________________________________________
(author’s last name)

He/she claims that _________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________this claim by first
(He/She) (supports/develops) (Explain what the author is doing: verb.)

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Then _________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

And finally, _________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________’s purpose is to ____________
(author’s last name)

______________________________________________________________________________

in order to ________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

______________________ establishes________________________________________

(He/She) __________________________ (Describe the tone of the author: formal, sarcastic, critical, etc.)

for __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

(What is the relationship between the author and his/her audience?)

This work is significant because ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
List of Words to Describe an Author’s Tone

This is a list of words that could be used while examining an author’s tone. Students can use this list when completing the rhetorical précis or while doing similar work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apologetic</td>
<td>sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciative</td>
<td>grateful; thankful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerned</td>
<td>worried or interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>finding fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curious</td>
<td>wanting to find out more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defensive</td>
<td>defending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>direct</td>
<td>straightforward; honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disappointed</td>
<td>discouraged; unhappy because something went wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouraging</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td>excited; energetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal</td>
<td>respectful, appropriate behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frustrated</td>
<td>angry because of not being able to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hopeful</td>
<td>looking forward to something; optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous</td>
<td>funny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal</td>
<td>not formal; relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspirational</td>
<td>encouraging; reassuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ironic</td>
<td>different from what is expected or the opposite of what is meant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>judgmental</td>
<td>judging others; critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lighthearted</td>
<td>happy, carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mocking</td>
<td>scornful; ridiculing; making fun of someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>unhappy; pessimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neutral</td>
<td>neither good nor bad; neither for nor against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nostalgic</td>
<td>thinking about the past; wishing for something from the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective</td>
<td>without prejudice; without discrimination; fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optimistic</td>
<td>hopeful; cheerful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pessimistic</td>
<td>seeing the bad side of things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sarcastic</td>
<td>scornful; mocking; ridiculing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satirical</td>
<td>making fun of something to show its weakness or teach a lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentimental</td>
<td>thinking about feelings, especially when remembering the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sincere</td>
<td>honest; truthful; earnest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sympathetic</td>
<td>compassionate; understanding of how someone feels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urgent</td>
<td>insistent; saying something must be done soon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies for Summarizing Informational Texts

This quick reference describes the steps a reader should take when summarizing expository texts. When we summarize purely informational texts, we want to account for the main ideas. Because informational texts can be content heavy, we will need to read carefully for the most important content. Not all the information in the text is important. Seek to understand the reading and writing tasks. Establishing a purpose for reading will help narrow our focus as we make decisions about what we should include in our summaries. The following steps will help us complete this type of reading and writing assignment.

**Step 1:** Seek to understand the reading and writing task.
*What are you expected to know and do? What are you summarizing?*

**Step 2:** Carefully read the text.
*Read the text once to get a general idea of what the text is about.*

**Step 3:** Reread and mark the text.
*Circle terms and underline information relevant to the reading and writing tasks.*

**Step 4:** Pause to connect ideas within the text.
*Chart individual paragraphs in order to gain insight into what the author is saying and how he or she says or connect what is said to the visuals in the text. Ask questions such as, “How does this section connect to the previous section?” or “What does this idea have to do with that idea?”*

**Step 5:** Write summary statements in the margin.
*What is this paragraph (or section) about? What is the author saying? What is the author doing in this paragraph (or section)?*

Consider the following when summarizing informational text:

- Ideas are typically presented in the order that they appear in the text; however, you may need to present ideas in a different order if it makes sense to do so.
- Refer to your markings, summary statements, and any other comments you made as you craft your summary.
- Use accurate verbs, such as defining, illustrating, or introducing, to describe what an author is doing in a paragraph or section of text.
- Include important content and lesson-based vocabulary.
- Account for the main ideas in the text. We should include enough information so that someone who has not read the text would understand the main points.
- Use your own words and paraphrase when necessary. Ideas taken directly from the source should be properly quoted and cited.
- What we quote and how we quote it will depend on the actual discipline. For example, a science paper will have far fewer direct quotations than an English or social science paper. As a general rule, we should directly quote ideas that cannot be expressed accurately through paraphrasing or summarizing.
- Write objectively. Be sensitive to biases; avoid inaccurate interpretations or representations. We should express the ideas in the text fairly and accurately.
- Summaries should be read for clarity and accuracy.
- Summaries should not be more than one-fourth to one-third the length of the original text.
Summarizing Sections of Informational Texts

This activity is designed to support students as they learn how to summarize expository texts. The work presented here could be done in students’ Cornell notes.

Title of Text: ___________________________________  Author: ___________________________________
Type of Text: ___________________________________  Paragraph(s) #: ______________________________

1. What is this paragraph or section about? What is it saying?
   • This section is about…                  • This section discusses…
   • This paragraph is about…                • He (or she) begins with…
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

2. On the lines below, record information from the reading that is relevant to your reading purpose.
   • The author presents some ideas…  In the section (insert subtitle here), we learn that…
   • The main idea of this passage is…  • Paragraph two introduces (or it might do some other work)…
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

3. Use this space to craft a concise summary sentence(s) that includes the ideas from questions 1 and 2.
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
Sample Summary of an Expository Text

This page provides an authentic summary paragraph written by a sophomore college prep student from El Cajon Valley High School. The student was responding to the following reading and writing task:

*George Russell, a writer for Time magazine, accounts for the eruption of Nevado del Ruiz in his article “Colombia’s Mortal Agony.” While reading the article, mark the text: circle names and numbers and underline what witnesses say. In a paragraph (or two), summarize Russell’s account of this event. What is his purpose for writing this article? What does Russell do to bring this tragic event to life for his readers?*

The student who wrote the summary below was given a template to help him organize his thoughts and guide his analysis. (See page 2 of this Quick Reference for the template.) Minor changes were made to this summary. Read the sample below. What do you notice? What is this young writer doing? How does he do it?

**A Summary of George Russell’s “Colombia’s Mortal Agony”**

George Russell, in his article “Colombia’s Mortal Agony,” describes the tragic eruption of the volcano Nevado del Ruiz in 1985. Even though Russell discusses the causes of volcanic activity and mentions historic volcanic eruptions, his purpose for writing the article is to account for the catastrophic event that killed nearly 20,000 Colombian people. Russell brings this tragic event to life through the use of descriptive language and powerful eyewitness testimonies. In the article, Russell provides details about the towns devastated by the flood of water, ash, and mud that thundered down the 17,716 ft. volcano. He explains that Armero, a town 30 miles from Nevado del Ruiz, experienced the most loss in both life and property. Toward the end of the article, Russell personalizes the event when he introduces Omaira Sanchez, a 13-year-old girl who eventually dies after being stuck in the mud for two days. George Russell writes this article in order to help us understand the destructive power of volcanoes and to share the catastrophic event that became “Colombia’s mortal agony.”

---

Sample Summary Template for “Columbia’s Mortal Agony”

______________________________________________________, in his article ____________________________________________, (Author’s full name) (article title)

_____________________________________________ s _________________________________________________________.
(verb)

______________________________________________________________ .

Even though ___________________________________________________, (author’s last name)

__________________________________________________________
his purpose for writing the article is to ________________________________________________________________ .

________________________________________ brings the tragic event to life through/by _____________________________________________.
(author’s last name)

______________________________________________________________ .

In this article, __________________________________ provides details about _______________________________________.
(author’s last name)

______________________________________________________________ .

He explains that ________________________________________________________________ .

______________________________________________________________ .

George Russell writes this article in order to ________________________________________________________________ .

______________________________________________________________ .
Summarizing the Text

Deepening Understanding of Summarizing the Text

- Remind students that summary writing is a literacy skill that is used at all levels in education and that it becomes increasingly important as writing assignments become more text centered.

- Assign reading tasks that vary in length, sophistication, and purpose. Provide time for rehearsal; students need time to practice this skill.

- Use the templates and exercises in this chapter as students learn how to write good summaries. Refer to the chapter on templates for more guidance and support when creating these academic literacy tools.

- Increase opportunities for students to talk about what they are reading.

- Increase opportunities for students to summarize the texts they are asked to read. They can write summaries in their margins or in their notes. They can also summarize verbally.

- Assign both informal and formal summary tasks.

- Create opportunities for students to workshop (that is, to work together to read and edit their writing) and then to revise their summaries.

- Evaluate what students are writing and offer constructive feedback.

- As students master this skill, they will need less guidance. Although you will want to provide a purpose for reading, you might be able to reduce the amount of scaffolding you offer your students.

Extending Summarizing the Text Schoolwide

- Summary writing is not limited to one discipline or one type of text. This skill is transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day. As students learn how to use this strategy, ask them to think about how this type of writing could be used while reading texts in other classes.

- Photocopy sections of a novel, short story, textbook, or other print materials that students could write on while reading. Students should experience actively reading a wide range of texts.

- Encourage students to write summary statements in the margins of state and local exams. Teach them to read the question stems before reading the selection so that they know what to think about while reading.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
AVID has had a major impact on my education. The strategies used for reading and writing have helped me to organize my thoughts and have helped me know what to say and how to say it. Because of this training, I have improved my grades in all subject areas.

Daja Dorsey,
Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
“Utilizing Sentence Starters and Templates” offers layers of scaffolding for students learning how to write (and speak) academically. The strategies and approaches outlined here should be used to support the work described in this book. Specifically, sentence starters and templates are tools that help students respond to expository texts. They provide linguistic structures and vocabulary that guide not only what students say but also how they say it. Kate Kinsella, a teacher educator in the Department of Secondary Education at San Francisco State University, suggests that sentence starters should be used to frame both the students’ verbal and written academic responses of students. According to Kinsella, Academic English as a Second Language (AESL) students are typically found in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms; their needs for learning academic English are great. Kinsella contends that learning to speak academically will significantly improve students’ ability to write academically.
What are Sentence Starters and Templates?

The following provides a few examples of sentence starters that could be used for either verbal or written responses. More samples are available later in the chapter.

- *Author X claims that…*
- *According to…*
- *In the article, Author X explains that…*
- *This data on page ___ shows that…*
- *This word problem is asking…*
- *The author defines __________________ as…*

The second scaffolding tool discussed in this chapter is template-writing exercises. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, in their text *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, explain that academics across the disciplines master certain rhetorical conventions or moves that underlie all academic, persuasive writing (XIV, 1, 3). It is these moves that we must teach our students to make if we hope to prepare them for college-level reading and writing assignments. Like sentence starters, templates help students master rhetorical moves common in academic discourse. Some of the common moves include introducing source material, qualifying positions, and citing research. So what is the difference between a sentence starter and a template? A template combines multiple sentence starters to frame a complete academic response. Templates engage students in lengthier writing exercises and assess students’ comprehension of a text. The following provides an example of a template-writing exercise.

*In the speech __________________________________________________ ,
Martin Luther King, Jr., states that ____________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________.

*This is significant because _____________________________________________ .

How should teachers use Sentence Starters and Templates?

This chapter offers a range of sentence starters and templates that could be used to guide and support students as they learn how to speak and write academically. This chapter cannot offer a scaffolding tool for every reading and writing situation, so teachers will need to use the ideas, samples, and activities in this chapter to help them create additional sentence starters and template-writing exercises for their students.

Teachers need to know what they want their students to know and do. In addition, teachers need to be familiar with rhetorical conventions (moves) common in their discipline. For example, in science, how do writers introduce research, explain processes, or interpret data? In social science, how do
writers introduce primary documents, analyze various contexts and texts, and talk about historical events? Teachers should investigate how writers write in their respective disciplines in order to create sentence starters and templates to help students imitate the dominant moves in the discourse.

Finally, teachers should use (and build if necessary) sentence starters and templates that support the work of specified learning outcomes. Template exercises should vary in length and sophistication, and supports should fall away as students demonstrate mastery of common rhetorical conventions in their own writing.

When should teachers use Sentence Starters and Templates?

Teachers should use sentence starters and templates with their students when…

• teaching them how to write academically;
• supporting their academic language development;
• guiding them through new ways of thinking about and discussing texts;
• assessing their comprehension of a text;
• teaching common rhetorical moves in academic writing;
• modeling how writers move from one idea to the next; and
• engaging them in a deeper reading of a text.

Why should teachers use Sentence Starters and Templates?

Sentence starters and templates can help our struggling readers and writers think through a complex text (and eventually write about it) with some proficiency.

But aren’t templates formulaic, restricting original thought? No. Templates promote rich, insightful writing. Graff and Birkenstein argue that templates do not inhibit students’ writing; instead, templates have a “generative quality, prompting students to make moves in their writing that they might not otherwise make or even know they should make” (XIII). Templates, then, strengthen students’ ability to read and write about complex texts, giving them the tools and strategies to communicate effectively with an academic audience.
Utilizing Sentence Starters and Templates

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce “Sentence Starters and Templates” as a critical reading strategy.

Introducing Sentence Starters and Templates

- Define for students how sentence starters and templates are designed to develop and support their academic responses.
- Start small. Begin with sentence starters before having students complete a template.
- Write sentence starters and templates on the board, use them in PowerPoint presentations, create handouts, or make them available to students in other ways. Sentence starters could be stated verbally, but lengthier templates need to be written down for students.
- Model for students how to complete a sentence starter. Write some models on the board and talk them through the process. Sentence starters can be completed verbally or in writing.
- Create daily opportunities for students to rehearse academic speaking and writing. Write a sentence starter on the board that asks them to review what they learned the previous day: “Yesterday we investigated…” or “Mr. LeMaster’s class discussed…” Have students record their sentences in their Cornell notes. Students can also practice what Kate Kinsella calls “academic talk” during or after a reading. Write some sentence starters on the board that guide students to consider and respond to the important ideas in the text.
- Engage students in various cognitive exercises. Ask questions such as, “How did this strategy improve your comprehension?” and “Why would readers want to use this strategy?” Other useful questions include “How should we mark or chart this text?” and “How could you use this strategy in another class like English or biology?”
- Use a document camera or overhead projector to model for students how to complete a template exercise.
- Assign specific paragraphs or sections of text that you would like your students to analyze. Create a template that will help them complete the analysis. Start with an introduction (“In the article ________________________________ (author’s name) ___________________________ (verb: what does the author do?)…”).
- Create opportunities for students to learn this strategy in small groups. Students can work in pairs as they learn how to imitate rhetorical moves common in academic writing. Have students share their completed templates with other groups of students.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
General Features in College Writing

The following offers a description of writing features in college writing. The purpose of this description is to highlight what high school graduates will have to know and be able to do in order to successfully complete college writing assignments. How can starter sentences and templates prepare students for these types of postsecondary reading and writing assignments? What rhetorical conventions will they need to know?

College writing tasks require…

• the integration of sources. Even if this requirement is not mentioned in the prompt, students are expected to integrate class readings, lectures, and discussions into their writing. This integration must demonstrate that the students understand the readings and know how to bring sources into their own texts for a variety of purposes.

• concise, impersonal, academic writing. Writing should be straightforward, precise, and efficient…and backed by appropriate evidence.

• deep understanding and analysis of class objectives and concepts, as well as an understanding of the academic discipline, the readings, and the lectures. Assignments and timed writings are contextualized; faculty admire intellectual energy and disciplinary orientation in student writing.

• critical reading and thinking at a number of levels—summary, analysis, synthesis, and critique—based upon a deep understanding of the readings, lectures, and concepts.

• students to identify arguments in texts, compare arguments or concepts, respond to an author’s thesis, and summarize.

• students to have an appropriate level of sentence-level competence. If the writing is timed, faculty may be forgiving. However, if students have opportunities to edit out-of-class papers, grades may be lowered for carelessness.

1 “General Features in College Writing” came from the work of Dr. Ann Johns and her research into college readiness.
Sentence Starters

This section offers sentence starters that young writers could use to imitate the general writing features in college writing. The sentence starters could also be used to frame verbal responses during class discussions. General categories were used to organize the sentence starters.

Employing Metadiscourse

Writers are responsible for leading the reader through a text they have written and for telling the reader about their responses to what they are discussing. If you can use appropriate metadiscourse, you will be able to read well and write good expository prose.

How do writers employ metadiscourse? There are many ways. Using related vocabulary, paragraphing, and including text headings are a few. Other general examples are listed below:

1. Framing Metadiscourse (also called “Metacommentary”)

Language referring to major sections of a paper, including phrases or sentences that tell you what is going to happen in the text or what has already happened. They might be something like the following at the beginning of a paper:

- This essay is organized in the following way:
- In what follows, I shall…
- This paper will…
- It is the intent of this paper to…
- The purposes of this research report are to discuss the methodology employed, present the results, and discuss the results in light of current theories.

Phrases or sentences that refer to what has already happened in the text and what will come next:

Here are possibilities:

- So far, I have discussed Chua’s major claim. Now, I will turn to…
- The first part of this paper was devoted to Farmer’s early life. The second part will focus on his accomplishments.
- A third argument relates to…
- The most obvious objection to this is…
- One result of this is…

Words, phrases, or sentences that mark the conclusion of a paper or section:

- In conclusion (or in summary), it is important to note that…
- To sum up this section, I will…
- Finally, it should be argued that…
- Therefore, it can be concluded that…
- Hence, the stern advice…

2. Focusing Metadiscourse

Language that shows the writer’s main ideas or principal claim(s):

- My point here is that…
- What I am claiming is…
- So this helps me to conclude that…
- This is, in fact, my principal argument:
- The most important idea here is that…
- My thesis is…

Language that writers use to talk about multiple sources in one paper:

- Author X would agree/disagree with Author Y for the following reasons:
- Author X’s phrase, ____________, provides a good lens through which we may view Author Y’s description of…
- These two Authors (name both) offer…
- Author X’s description of ____________ clarifies (or it might extend, complicate, or illustrate an idea)…
- With Author X’s definition of ____________, we can better understand…
- Here is where Author X’s discussion can be most useful:
- Although these authors are engaged in different projects, their work…

Words, phrases, or sentences that mark the conclusion of a paper or section:

- In conclusion (or in summary), it is important to note that…
- To sum up this section, I will…
- Finally, it should be argued that…
- Therefore, it can be concluded that…
- Hence, the stern advice…

3. Connecting Metadiscourse

Academic writers need to use words that connect information or arguments that have been presented to what will appear later. Often these occur within sentences, within paragraphs, or as paragraphs begin:

- Words or phrases that tell the reader that something related will be added to what has been written: in addition, and, also…
- Words or phrases that tell the reader that there will be a change or contrast presented: but, yet, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, another way of looking at this, instead, alternatively…
- Words or phrases that show a cause/effect relationship: as a result, so, consequently, thus…
- Words or phrases that tell the reader that an example of what has been discussed will follow: for example; for instance; to understand this, you need to look at…
- Words or phrases that indicate time discussed: today, in the past, meanwhile, at the same time, there was a time when…

4. Explaining Metadiscourse

Words or phrases that further explain an idea or concept:

- This means that…, in other words, namely, in fact…, that is…
5. Attitudinal Metadiscourse

Language that helps the reader to understand how the writer feels about the topic being discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedges</th>
<th>Emphatics</th>
<th>Directionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words or phrases that show that the writer may be uncertain about what is being presented:</td>
<td>Words or phrases that show that the writer is certain about something:</td>
<td>Words or phrases that ask the reader to do something:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perhaps this means that we should be more careful…</td>
<td>• It is clear that the experts were wrong.</td>
<td>• Imagine having AIDS in a Third World country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This finding <strong>might</strong> indicate…</td>
<td>• I am certain that this is not the case.</td>
<td>• Consider how much has been spent on foreign assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is <strong>possible</strong> that this argument is…</td>
<td>• I agree that this is important.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Admittedly,</strong> the reason…</td>
<td>• Of course, we all know that…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is <strong>reasonable</strong> to conclude…</td>
<td>• I understand the struggle…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>I concede</strong> that…</td>
<td>• I take issue with Author X’s…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>I accept</strong> that fact that…</td>
<td>• <strong>I found</strong> Author X and Y to be…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>I tend to agree</strong> with…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How can sentence starters support the work in classes such as science and math?

In science, sentence starters could be used to frame student observations during a lab (for instance, “As I applied heat to the solution…” or “After reviewing my data, I concluded that…”). Sentence starters could also be used during lectures or group work. Before the lecture, write a few sentence starters on the board that will help frame students’ academic responses. Once the lecture is over, call on volunteers to answer your questions. Refer students to the starter sentences as they formulate their responses. Expect students to write in their Cornell notes what others in the class are saying.

This academic support could also be done in math classes as well. Starter sentences should include the lesson and content-based vocabulary so that students have multiple opportunities to hear the vocabulary while taking notes, use it while talking with others, and apply it while solving problems. Math teachers can use sentence starters to help students summarize steps (First, distribute… Then, multiply… and Finally, add…), or they can use sentence starters to support students as they learn how to graph. Are there other ways to use sentence starters? How can this scaffolding tool work in your classroom?
Providing Information About a Source

When writers use source material in their texts they usually provide information about the cited source. If the writer decides to cite an author’s work, he or she may provide information about the cited author’s life, credentials, and/or professional experience; the writer might also find it necessary to talk about the publication information (the publication date, where the source was published, and for whom it was published). Writers will include information about the sources they use for any number of reasons, however writers commonly talk about their cited sources for particular reasons:

1. Signal that source material is now being used to communicate an idea
2. Contextualize a source, providing information about the source and the author
3. Demonstrate that they are responsible, trustworthy, and credible
4. Show how their evidence supports their arguments
5. Show the reader how they feel about a particular source

Attributions or attributive tags are statements that assign credit to the cited source, particularly to the author for something he or she has said or done. These “tags” are common in expository writing. Attributions (and other types of source information) serve to contextualize the cited source. To contextualize (in this case) is to show where an idea originated, to provide the necessary information needed to answer questions like “who is speaking,” “what is this about,” “where did this happen,” and “when did this take place.”

What do attributions and/or attributive tags look like? The following examples provide a few ways writers might assign credit and/or contextualize a cited source. While reading the examples, examine the information being provided and study the various constructions to see how writers talk about the sources they use in their texts.

The following are examples of how authors provide information about cited sources.

Example 1:

In the June 17 issue of *Time* magazine, Joe Klein...

In this example, the author names the magazine that published Klein’s article and provides the publication date.

Example 2:

“Direct Quotation,” says Tim Barnett, a marine physicist at Scripps...

In this example, the attribution comes at the end. This construction is common in newspapers and various news articles. This tag provides the name of the cited author (Tim Barnett) and states his professional career.
Example 3:

Amy Chua, a law professor and international businesswoman, argues that...

This third example differs from the first two in both its form and function. Notice that the writer has chosen to talk about the cited author but does not mention the author's text. Instead, this writer has provided for the reader the cited author's name and her professional experience.

Example 4:

In Selections from Into the Wild, John Krakauer reclaims...

In this example, the attribution comes at the end and the text is named. This construction is common in newspapers and various news articles.

Example 5:

In his article “Behind the Official Story,” James C. Scott—Director of the Program in Agrarian Studies at Yale University and Sterling Professor of Political Science and Anthropology—states...

Example five has elements from both the third and forth examples, creating yet another way to introduce source information. From this example, we learn the name of the cited author (James C. Scott), the title of his work, and about his professional experience.

Example 6:

According to a CBS news poll...

This information is designed to let the reader know that the cited source material came from a CBS news poll. Why is this important? Because a reader is going to question where the writer found his or her data. If the results of a survey were given, yet the source of that survey was withheld, the reader would have a hard time believing the results of that survey.
Citing Sources Directly: Using Quotation Marks and Parenthetical Citations

When should I use quotation marks?

Use quotation marks around source material that has been taken directly from a text. Quotation marks indicate that the material is not yours and that it came from another source. Both quoted and paraphrased material require citations.

Using Parenthetical Citations: This is the author of the source. If there isn’t an author, cite the title of the work.

…the answer is simple: “self-esteem” (Crawford 43).

This is the page number where the material can be found in the original text. Do not use a comma to separate the author from the page number.

Unless the direct quotation is a question or ends with an exclamation point, no punctuation is needed inside the quotation.

Notice that the period comes after the parenthetical reference. Usually, parenthetical references are followed by periods.

Using Parenthetical References with Source Information:

According to Crawford, the answer is simple: “self-esteem” (43).

Source information: author’s name.

Notice that you don’t need to include the author of the source in the parenthetical when the author is mentioned in the sentence.

If you use more than one source by the same author, the parenthetical reference should include the author’s name, the title of the work, and the page number.

Example: (Crawford, title of source 72). Using source information will simplify a lot of this work.

Please refer to a composition handbook for further guidance.
3-Part Source Integration

In order to make an in-text citation complete, it needs to be “packaged.” That is, it should be both introduced and discussed. Although there are a variety of ways to package citations, you can begin by using the templates below. Then, look at research papers or other texts with citations to see how a source is brought into the text and discussed.

Here is how one common type of citation package is organized into three parts:

**Part 1:** Introduce the source and the author, and provide comments about the author or source.

**Part 2:** Provide a paraphrase or direct quotation. (Begin with a verb and end with a parenthetical citation.)

**Part 3:** Comment on why this part of the text is important, relevant to the prompt, or significant in some other way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample 1</th>
<th>Sample 2</th>
<th>Sample 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1:</strong> Introduction</td>
<td>The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), in their article “Immigrants Are a Vital Component of American Society,”…</td>
<td>In the article “The Threat of Terrorism Is Being Reduced,” John Ashcroft, the U.S. attorney general,…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2:</strong> Paraphrase or direct quotation</td>
<td>maintains that immigrants in America make every effort to assimilate (64).</td>
<td>claims that “terrorism is relatively inexpensive to conduct, and devilishly difficult to counter” (Viewpoint 27).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3:</strong> Comment</td>
<td>This position refutes a common belief held by critics of immigration—that foreign-born Americans refuse to learn English and do not embrace “the American way of life.”</td>
<td>This point is troublesome. America is spending billions of dollars on the “War on Terror” and using its military might to fight an elusive enemy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 This writing strategy was produced by the authors of AVID College Readiness and Critical Reading.
3-Part Source Integration: *Chart*¹

Develop two citations for each part of the chart, using the samples provided by your teacher as models.

Title and author of source: __________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1:</th>
<th>Citation 1</th>
<th>Citation 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the source, the author’s name, and comments about the author.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2:</th>
<th>Citation 1</th>
<th>Citation 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a paraphrase or direct quotation. (Begin with a verb and end with a parenthetical citation.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3:</th>
<th>Citation 1</th>
<th>Citation 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment on why this part of the text is important, relevant to the prompt, or significant in some other way.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the chart above, transfer one of your 3-part in-text citations onto the lines below.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

¹This writing strategy was produced by the authors of *AVID College Readiness* and *Critical Reading*. 
Crafting Template-Writing Exercises

Getting Started: Selecting a Text
Purposefully select a text that you would like your students to read.

- Select a text that lends itself well to the teaching of reading strategies. Can it be read for multiple purposes? Can students learn a skill while reading the text?
- Select a text that is relevant to course objectives, the students’ lives, or relevant in some other way.
- Identify information in the text that you want your students to know. How should they read the text? What skills or strategies must they employ in order to learn from the text?

Setting a Purpose for the Template
Decide on how you want your students to read, think about, and discuss the text. Complete the thought:

My students will use this template to…

- summarize all or parts of the text.
- analyze the author’s use of evidence, metadiscourse, or other rhetorical devices.
- account for ideas presented in sections and sub-sections of the text.
- analyze and paraphrase a challenging section of text.
- outline a process being discussed in the text.

Other Purposes for Templates
In science, teachers could use templates to support lab reports, to teach students how to talk about data, or to help them formulate questions. In mathematics, templates could be used to support the analysis of graphs and charts, to help students think through a word problem, or to assist students in articulating the steps to a complex math problem.

While building the template…

- keep the objective for the template in mind.
- have an idea of what you would say and how you would say it.
- create blank space for students to write their ideas. The amount of space provided will be determined by what students are expected to write in that space.
**Tip #1**

When creating space for a title, such as “Selections from Losing Matt Shepard,” create a line long enough for students to write the entire title.

In the article “______________________________________________”

**Tip #2**

Provide starter language or information in parentheses either below or right after the blank spaces so that students know what to think about and how to think about it.

This example shows a template with guiding information placed after the blank space.

Michael Kinsley __________________________ (provide a verb) that ________________________________

______________________________________________ (paraphrase or directly quote central claim).

For this template, the guiding information is written under the blank space.

________________________ that ________________________________

(author’s full name) (verb) (central claim or viewpoint)

**Tip #3**

Beginning students will need templates that are full of guiding language, vocabulary, and starter sentences.

Example:

In the article “______________________________________________________,” Amy Chua, a law professor at (title of work)

_________________________________________ University, _____________________ (Use a verb, such as argues, contends, or asserts.)

You will want to gradually remove the support as students demonstrate competency. What does this look like? Intermediate and advanced students should be able to complete template exercises that have lots of blank space. With advanced students, you will be able to move away from the template and provide a list of directives.

For example, you can ask advanced students to: (1) introduce the source material; (2) account for the central claim that the author is making; and (3) summarize his or her key evidence—without the help of a template.
Introducing the Source and the Author

When developing a template to help students write about an expository text, begin the template with a space for students to introduce the source, the author, and any other relevant source information. Students should practice introducing source information as often as possible. The following three examples provide different ways writers introduce source material.

This first example introduces the source and the author, and provides information about the author.

Example 1

In the article “____________________________________________ ,”

(title of work) (author’s first and last name)

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

(information about the author)

__________________________________

(verb)

In this second example, the writer introduces the author and information about the author, but does not mention the text.

Example 2

________________________________________________ ,

(title of work) (source information)

__________________________________

(verb)

This final example introduces the text and provides information about the text, but does not name the author. This type of introduction is common when introducing op-ed pieces and other types of texts that do not list authors.

Example 3

________________________________________________

(title of work) (source information)

__________________________________

(verb)
3-Part Source Integration: Templates

After reading a text, use either template to help frame your academic response. Refer to the “3-Part Source Integration” for additional support and sample responses.

Template 1

Sample: Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography, explains that there were many white, Indian, and Coloured people involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. It is important for us to consider this point because often we think that apartheid was only opposed by black people.

______________________________________________________________________________________________

Template 2

Sample: In the article “The Threat of Terrorism Is Being Reduced,” John Ashcroft, the U.S. attorney general… claims that “terrorism is relatively inexpensive to conduct, and devilishly difficult to counter” (27). This is a valuable point. America is spending billions of dollars and using its military might to fight an elusive enemy.

______________________________________________________________________________________________
Expository Summary Paragraph: Sample Template

The following two pages provide sample templates that teachers have created for their students who were reading non-fiction and fiction texts. Refer to these templates as you build your own. Note: This template was developed to support sophomore students as they learned how to summarize the main points in an expository text. This work was part of a controversial issues unit. Students read “Immigrants Are a Vital Component of American Society” and used this template to frame their academic summaries.

In the article _________________________________________________________________,

the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) __________________________________________ (s) that
(verb)

(main claim)

____________________________________________________________________________________

According to AILA, anti-immigration groups generate myths about immigrants in order
to ____________________________________________
(Use this space to explain AILA’s position.)

____________________________________________________________________________________

In their article, AILA works to dispel three myths: the first, ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________; the second, ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________; and the third, ____________________________________________.

In response to the first myth, AILA reports that ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________.

The second myth is challenged by the fact that ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________.

AILA disputes the third and final myth by ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________.

The article concludes by ____________________________________________
Character Analysis Paragraph: *Sample Template*

**Note:** This template was created to support sophomore students as they learned how to analyze characters in fiction. Students read a short story, “And of Clay We Are Created” by Isabel Allende, and used this template to practice analyzing character traits.

In the short story ____________________________, Azucena ____________________________ s
(title of work) (verb)

______________________________ as she _____________________________________________
(main trait) (Explain her situation: what does she do?)

____________________________________________________________________________________________.

While waiting to be rescued, she ________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________

This behavior is unexpected because ________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________

Even though characters in the story do not directly describe Azucena, readers can infer that she is
_________________________ from her ______________________________________________________________________________________________
(trait)

______________________________________________________________________________________________

Azucena's ability to __________________________________________________________ illustrates

______________________________________________________________________________________________

(Restate the action or situation.)

(Explain how the character's actions illustrates the trait.)

Because of her ____________________, Azucena __________________________
(trait) (verb)

______________________________________________________________________________________________

(Provide insightful commentary that creates a feeling of closure.)
Utilizing Sentence Starters and Templates

Deepening Understanding of Sentence Starters and Templates

• Remind students that sentence starters and templates are tools and strategies to help students speak and write academically with greater proficiency.

• Assign template exercises that vary in length, sophistication, and purpose. Provide time for rehearsal; students need time to practice speaking and writing academically.

• Refer to the chapter on summary writing for more template ideas.

• Increase opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse. Support this work with starter sentences.

• Have students practice citing what their peers say during class discussions and/or during Socratic Seminars. Examples: Alex maintains that… or According to Courtney…

• Ask students to write their own templates. When the templates are finished, mix them up and pass them out to students in the class. Then, have the students complete the templates they were given.

• Create opportunities for students to workshop and revise their academic responses.

• Evaluate what students are writing and offer constructive feedback.

• As students master this skill, they will need less guidance. Reduce the amount of scaffolding you provide for your students.

Extending Sentence Starters and Templates Schoolwide

• Starter sentences and template-writing exercises are not limited to one discipline or one type of text. These scaffolding tools are transferable to all academic classes and should be taught throughout the school day.

• Faculty teams on campus can work together to create meaningful templates for their students. In addition to supporting reading and writing tasks, templates could be used to introduce ways of thinking about and processing information. These tools can also be used to build students’ skills from one year to the next. For example, a ninth grade coordinated science teacher could use templates to teach her students how to write lab reports, preparing them for future lab reports in earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________
Strategy 11: Utilizing Sentence Starters and Templates
I never knew how far away from college-level reading and writing I was until I became an AVID student. Now I am more confident than ever about my ability to read and write at the college level.

Laiyana Laraque, Senior, El Cajon Valley High School
Investigating Writers’ Choices

The strategies, activities, and approaches outlined in this chapter ask students to investigate the choices writers make in expository texts. When students read as writers, they analyze what writers say, how they say it, and why they say it. What constitutes good writing? To answer this question students need to be exposed to a variety of well-written expository texts (articles, journals, research reports, and other informational texts), identify common rhetorical moves and features in the different texts, and examine how writers make choices based on the audience and the discipline for which they are writing.
How should students Investigate Writers’ Choices?

The strategies provided in this chapter should not be done all at once and they should be selected purposefully. As part of this work, students should read a wide range of texts, exposing them to various writing styles and techniques.

Since texts should be read for multiple purposes, have students practice marking or charting the text, and as a reread, have students investigate how the writer introduces source material. You can give students a newspaper and ask them to read only the introductions to ten articles. You might ask, “What are the writers doing in these introductions? Are the writers making different choices? What are those choices that they are making?” Have students place two introductions under a document camera and explain what the writers are doing in each of the introductions. Mix it up. Bring in a variety of texts and create opportunities for students to work with their peers as they explore professional writing.

When should students Investigate Writers’ Choices?

Students should investigate writers’ choices when they are learning how to write in new ways. For example, when learning how to write a lab report in chemistry, students should spend some time reading model chemistry labs. What should the students be looking for? Students might investigate how the introduction is constructed, how methodology is discussed, or how the results are shared with the audience. What students investigate and at what depth they explore professional writing depends on the type of writing they are expected to do.

Why should students Investigate Writers’ Choices?

The types of reading strategies outlined in this chapter ask students to read as a writer. That is, students are asked to think about the various decisions authors make when constructing a text. Although this type of reading will deepen students’ understanding of the text, the purpose of this kind of reading is to strengthen students’ ability to write. Through studying good writing, students learn what competent writers do—how they construct meaning—and through imitation, students can begin to write more effectively.
Investigating Writers’ Choices

The following provides some effective ways teachers can introduce the idea of “Investigating Writers’ Choices” as a critical reading strategy.

**Introducing Investigating Writers’ Choices**

- Explain why readers (and writers) would be interested in this work. How can investigating writers’ choices improve students’ reading and writing skills?
- Select one strategy from this chapter and focus on it for a few weeks. Give students time to learn how to identify a convention or feature. As students become more comfortable identifying and analyzing a specific convention, have them use it in their own writing.
- Consider using a newspaper when engaging students in this work. A newspaper provides a wealth of articles that could be investigated.
- Model for students how to investigate a writer’s choices. While reading a text with your students, pause and talk with them about what you see in the text. Ask questions like, “Why is the author doing this?”
- Use a document camera or overhead projector to model for students how to complete the activities in this chapter.
- Assign specific paragraphs or sections of text to investigate, reducing the amount of text for students to reread and analyze.
- Create opportunities for students do this work in small groups. Students can work in pairs as they learn how to investigate writers’ choices. Have students share their work with other students in the class.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
Learning About Introductions in Expository Texts

What do introductions look like in expository writing? How are they constructed?

There are many decisions that go into writing an introduction. A writer will consider the topic, the audience, the overall purposes or reasons for the text, and the motives for writing it. A writer will also want to make sure that his or her introduction is appropriate. What makes one introduction appropriate and another inappropriate has a lot to do with the writing task, the intended audience, and perhaps most importantly, the writing conventions and expectations unique to individual disciplines.

Some writers will choose to introduce a paper with an anecdote or short narrative; others might use strategic questioning to introduce a topic; and still others will choose to begin a paper with background details and a clear thesis statement. Epigraphs, recipes, or images may also be used at the beginning of expository texts. Introductions are wonderfully different—they can be interesting, provocative, instructive, and at times, frustrating—but behind these differences is a writer’s desire to craft an introduction that is both purposeful and effective. Effective introductions do some or all of the following:

- establish the writer’s authority;
- address the “so what” of the topic;
- set the tone for the paper;
- state the objective of the paper;
- identify with the discipline from which the writer is writing;
- draw the reader into focus;
- identify the topic and provide essential background information;
- offer a central claim (thesis);
- establish the author’s stance (or attitude) toward the topic; and/or
- contextualize the topic being discussed.

As you read various texts, pay attention to the different ways writers write introductions. What do you find effective? Ineffective?
Investigating Introductions in Expository Writing

After reading a text, go back to the introduction and investigate what the author is doing. Fill in the spaces below with the appropriate source information and complete the following table.

Title of Text: ______________________________________________________

Type of Text: ___________________________  Author: ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the introduction about?</th>
<th>The writer is…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the writer saying?</td>
<td>• sharing a short narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• providing background information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• introducing research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• doing something else not listed here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Write your statement here.)

What is the writer doing in the introduction?

*Be sure to begin your statement with a verb. See the examples on the right.*

Why did the writer decide to begin this way? What is the purpose?

To answer this question you might need to consider the whole text.

What makes this introduction effective or ineffective? Explain.
Learning About Body Paragraphs in Expository Writing

When we talk about body (or supporting) paragraphs in an essay, we usually talk about three elements: the topic sentence, the concluding sentence, and all the “stuff” in the middle. It is this “stuff” that should concern us.

Writing handbooks discuss the importance of writing cohesive, developed, and coherent body paragraphs, but very few resources discuss the kinds of work that body paragraphs do. At the basic level, the purpose of a body paragraph is to communicate ideas, to carefully and thoughtfully develop a viewpoint. For most of us, our understanding of writing body paragraphs stops here. We know what body paragraphs are—and we know how to use them (for the most part) in our own writing—but we may not be able to articulate how writers use body paragraphs in their writing. The following list describes some of the work body paragraphs do in expository writing.¹

- Introduce new claims, ideas, or evidence
- Support a claim with evidence
- Analyze previously stated ideas
- Summarize what has been said
- Provide examples of what is being discussed
- Illustrate a point that has been made
- Interpret data, facts, or other backing
- Explain data, facts, or other backing
- Compare one idea to another
- Elaborate on what has been said
- Contrast one idea against another
- Define a term or concept

From this list, we can conclude that body paragraphs have many different purposes. As you read texts, chart body paragraphs so you can begin to see how writers use body paragraphs to communicate ideas.

Studying the length of individual paragraphs is also useful. You may have been taught that a successful body paragraph will have a set amount of sentences or words. As you develop your knowledge of how (and why) writers use body paragraphs, you will not have to ask teachers “How long does each paragraph have to be?” or “How many paragraphs do you want us to write?”

How do I write multiple body paragraphs? New body paragraphs are needed when a shift in the discussion occurs, and each new body paragraph should build on the previous one by doing purposeful work like defining terms, examining testimony, or citing data. Use this text as an example. Notice that a new paragraph begins with every shift in the discussion and that each paragraph builds on the previous one.

The number of paragraphs and how they are sequenced will be different for every writing task. Writers transition or show relationships between ideas through transitional or directional language. Skilled writers use logical bridges and metadiscourse to help create writing that is clear and organized.

# Investigating How Writers Use Paragraphs

While reading an expository text, take some time to investigate the work a paragraph is doing. Why should we be interested in this type of reading? Because studying how (and why) writers use paragraphs will help you make good decisions about the paragraphs you write. Complete the following activity for each paragraph you investigate.

Paragraph # ________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the writer saying in this paragraph?</th>
<th>What is this paragraph about?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the writer doing in the paragraph?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be sure to begin your statement with a verb. See the examples on the right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The writer is…  
- interpreting data  
- summarizing research  
- reflecting on a process  
- listing data  
- doing something else not listed here  

(Write your statement here.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How is this paragraph working with the surrounding paragraphs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it supporting, illustrating, or developing an idea? Is the paragraph building from the previous paragraph, or is it introducing a new idea?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does the writer transition from one idea to the next?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the writer guiding you through the different paragraphs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Studying Conclusions in Expository Writing

After reading the text, go back to the conclusion and investigate what the author is doing. Fill in the spaces below with the appropriate source information and complete the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the conclusion about?</th>
<th>The writer is…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the writer saying?</td>
<td>• summarizing main points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• calling readers to action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the writer doing in the conclusion?</td>
<td>• signaling a need for more research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be sure to begin your statement with a verb. See the examples on the right.</td>
<td>• speaking to the significance of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sharing a reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• answering a previously stated question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• restating a central claim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• doing something else not listed here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Write your statement here.)

Why did the writer decide to end this way? What is the purpose?

To answer this question you might need to consider the whole text.

What makes this conclusion effective or ineffective? Explain.
Learning About Evidence

What is the purpose of evidence? How is it used?

Although there are many purposes for evidence, authors will commonly use evidence to support, illustrate, test, refine, or extend a claim.

For each discipline (all are not listed here) there are expectations, conventions, and values that are communicated through writing. What counts as evidence or what is viewed as acceptable is therefore discipline specific. Each field of study has its own unique attitude toward evidence, and depending on the discipline, evidence may or may not be considered. The table below lists common evidence that would most likely be considered credible by the respective disciplines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Social Science</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Critical theories</td>
<td>• Case studies</td>
<td>• Graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical analyses</td>
<td>• Documents</td>
<td>• Charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literary criticisms</td>
<td>• Newspapers</td>
<td>• Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passages from texts</td>
<td>• Interviews</td>
<td>• Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lines of poetry</td>
<td>• Observations</td>
<td>• Other quantitative data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other text-based material</td>
<td>• Photographs</td>
<td>• Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other primary and</td>
<td>• Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secondary sources</td>
<td>• Observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions a reader should consider while reading an author’s evidence:

• How does the evidence support or develop the author’s claims?
• What are the different ways this evidence could be interpreted?
• What other information should the author include to clarify the evidence?
• How current and/or relevant is the author’s evidence?
• What type of evidence is this and how is it being used?
• Where did the author get this evidence?

Common ways evidence appears in scholarly writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Related</th>
<th>Visual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• direct quotation</td>
<td>• photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• summary</td>
<td>• charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• paraphrase</td>
<td>• graphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• reasoning</td>
<td>• illustrations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Some of the information on this reference can be referenced on the following online resources: University of North Carolina’s online writing lab; Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL); and Indiana University’s Writing Quick Reference Center.
Analyzing Evidence

After completing a reading, go back to the text and identify one claim the author makes. Directly quote or paraphrase the claim on the lines below. Use the following table to investigate the evidence the writer uses to advance his or her claim. Remember to fill in the spaces below with the appropriate source information.

Title of Text: ______________________________________________________

Type of Text: ________________________  Author: __________________________________________

Author’s Claim: ______________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the evidence?</th>
<th>What type of evidence is the author using?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase or directly quote the source material that the author uses to support his or her claim.</td>
<td>Is this a personal experience, an allusion, an anecdote, an example, a definition, a type of data, a first-hand account, a summary, source material from another text, or some other backing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paragraph # ____________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is the author using this evidence?</th>
<th>Why is the author using this evidence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the evidence convincing? Who might the evidence appeal to?</td>
<td>Is the evidence convincing? Who might the evidence appeal to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who would accept it?</td>
<td>Who would accept it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the evidence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase or directly quote the source material that the author uses to support his or her claim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph # ____________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type of evidence is the author using?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this a personal experience, an allusion, an anecdote, an example, a definition, a type of data, a first-hand account, a summary, source material from another text, or some other backing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
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<td>Is the evidence convincing? Who might the evidence appeal to? Who would accept it?</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this a personal experience, an allusion, an anecdote, an example, a definition, a type of data, a first-hand account, a summary, source material from another text, or some other backing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is the author using this evidence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the evidence convincing? Who might the evidence appeal to? Who would accept it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Writers Use What Others Say

Why do writers use what others say? That is, why do writers incorporate into their texts the beliefs, viewpoints, and ideas of others? Below is a fairly comprehensive list of reasons why. Think about the papers you write. Do you use the words and ideas of others? This list should give you some idea of how to use what others say. You could also use this list to better understand why writers cite certain authors.

Writers will use what others say in order to:

• support a claim;
• corroborate a story or idea;
• provide first-hand accounts;
• illustrate an idea being presented;
• provide information about an event or experience;
• summarize a view held by an individual or group;
• establish an accepted view or belief;
• identify prominent voices in the discussion;
• challenge or criticize what someone has said;
• offer opposing viewpoints;
• demonstrate awareness of opposing views;
• identify errors in someone’s reasoning or logic;
• demonstrate the breadth of research that went into writing the text;
• align with a particular way of thinking;
• identify a space for further research;
• establish themselves in a particular discourse community; and/or
• acknowledge someone for saying or doing something.
Analyzing How Writers Use What Others Say

The chart below will help you analyze how writers use source material and what others say in their writing. The term “cited author” refers to the individual or group that is being cited in the text. A group may be defined as two or more authors; it can also mean an organization or institution. Find a place in the text where the author uses what others say and complete the activity below.

Title of Text: __________________________________________________ Author: ____________________________

1. What is the name of the cited author?
   __________________________________________________

2. What do you (the reader) learn about the cited author?
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

3. Directly quote or paraphrase what the cited author says.
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   (________________________). ____________________________

4. How is the writer using the cited author? Why did the writer choose to use this individual (or group)?
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
Reading Pictures, Images, Graphs and Other Visuals

In expository texts, authors will use pictures, images, graphs, or other visuals to...

- support a claim
- illustrate an idea
- clarify an idea
- represent data
- solicit an emotional response
- provide an example
- represent various other ideas

Why should we be interested in how—and why—authors use visuals? Analyzing and interpreting a visual could increase your comprehension of the surrounding text. We should also study visuals to see how authors use them to communicate ideas or to persuade readers. Through the study of visuals, you will learn how to effectively incorporate visuals into the papers you write.

Using a text with one or more visuals, answer the questions below. The following questions will help you analyze, interpret, and evaluate the visuals in the text.

Title of Text: __________________________________________________ Author: ____________________________

1. Describe the visual on the lines below. What do you see?
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Why is the author using this visual? How does this visual connect to what the author is saying in the text?
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

3. What would the author like to have happen to the reader as a result of using this visual?
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

4. What other visual could the author use in this text? Why would he or she want to use it?
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
Learning About Rhetorical Devices

A rhetorical device can be defined as any method used by an author to engage, interest, direct, and/or persuade readers. Even though there are general definitions of rhetorical devices and common ways to identify them, a reader’s reaction (or response) to written or spoken text is very much an individual experience.

Since authors are not bound by any particular way of communicating ideas, and since readers have their own experiences, beliefs, and interests that they bring to the text, it is reasonable to conclude that rhetorical devices are as much an author’s construction as they are a reader’s reaction to what (or how) something is being said. Exhaustive lists of rhetorical devices, therefore, will only limit one’s understanding of how authors use language to engage their audiences. It is best, then, to approach texts openly, listening to what the text has to say. The following are a few examples of how authors use language to engage, interest, direct, and/or persuade their readers. Note: The following is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

- Making personal connections
- Repeating concepts
- Reflecting on a research process
- Listing information
- Sharing an anecdote
- Guiding readers through a process
- Using metadiscourse to guide readers

When writing about rhetorical devices, you will want to include the following information:

First: Identify where in the text (page, section, paragraph) the author is using a rhetorical device, state the author’s name, and briefly explain what the author is doing.

Second: Comment on how he or she is using this device and explain why.

Third: Discuss the effect the device has on you (the reader).
Analyzing Rhetorical Devices

After completing a reading, use this activity to help you analyze rhetorical devices. Write the title of the text and the author’s name on the lines below. Then, refer back to the text as you complete steps one through three. If there is time, combine the three steps into one complete response. A sample response is provided at the bottom of the page.

Title of Text: ____________________________________________  Author: __________________________

**Step 1:** Identify where in the text (page, section, paragraph) the author is using a rhetorical device, state the author’s name, and briefly explain what the author is doing.

In paragraph (or page) _____, ________________________________

(author’s last name) (verb: present tense)

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

**Step 2:** Comment on how he or she is using this device and explain why.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

**Step 3:** What effect does the device have on you (the reader)?

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

**Sample Response**

1) In paragraph 3, Williams discusses how he comes to know what he knows about the issue of AIDS in Africa. 2) He takes his readers through his process of discovery by introducing new information as he discovers it. This new information continuously reshapes Williams’ understanding of the issue and eventually leads him to challenge his original claim. 3) While reading, I was open to his ideas, and I found him very convincing; perhaps, this is because he was open to understanding the tragedies happening in Africa and not limited to his own biases.
Analyzing Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse is used to lead readers through texts and help them to understand the writer’s stance on an issue. However, much metadiscourse is unique to a writer or a specific text. If you look closely, you will see that good writers of expository prose are always leading readers through their texts using their own techniques and language. Using the text that you are currently reading in class, underline (or mark in some other way) sentences or phrases that contain metadiscourse. After you have identified passages that contain metadiscourse, complete the following activity. For more information on metadiscourse, refer to “Utilizing Starter Sentences and Templates.”

Title of Text: ___________________________________________  Author: ____________________________

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copy a sentence or phrase from the text that contains metadiscourse.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the author using metadiscourse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it effective or ineffective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copy a sentence or phrase from the text that contains metadiscourse.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the author using metadiscourse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it effective or ineffective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Investigating Writers’ Choices

Deepening Understanding of Writers’ Choices

- Remind students that investigating writers’ choices will help them develop into strong readers and writers.
- Assign reading tasks that vary in length, sophistication, and purpose. Exposing students to a wide range of good writing will deepen their knowledge of what it means to write well.
- Increase opportunities for students to talk about their reading.
- Create writing tasks that ask students to analyze the choices writers make.
- As students master the skills outlined in this chapter, they will require less guidance and support.

Extending the Strategy Schoolwide

- The strategies and approaches outlined in this chapter can only begin to develop students’ literacy in the disciplines. It is important that teachers take the time to understand what it means to read and write in their respective disciplines in order to adequately prepare students for college.
- Through the study of good writing, students develop their own ability to write effectively. They learn—through studying models—how to use paragraphs, evidence, source material, and various other language structures and conventions appropriate for academic writing. These skills increase students’ performance on state and local exams and improve their chances of doing well in college or in the world of work.

Use the lines below to record successful strategies that you or your colleagues have developed and implemented.
References


