

Close Read Tip Sheet

Close reading is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft, meanings, etc. It is a key requirement of the Common Core State Standards and directs the reader's attention to the text itself.

Tips to examine text in-depth: Even one of the tips can help a child better comprehend the text.

GRADES 2-12

1. **Paraphrase** in ordinary language: Read the passage and carefully paraphrase its meaning in ordinary language.
2. **Logic of the passage:** Think about the logic of the passage's argument. Does your paraphrase flow smoothly from one point to another, or does it reveal significant gaps? What's assumed, missing, or being glossed over in the passage?
3. *Language of the passage:* **key words or phrases:** Now examine carefully the language of the passage. Look at key words or phrases in the passage (which are these?).
4. *Language of the passage:* **repeated words:** Don't finish with the words yet. Are there ever any words repeated right in the same passage?
5. *Language of the passage:* **connotation and pun:** Don't finish with the words yet. Can you find words in the passage that seem to have more than one meaning? Does one word have several different connotations, or even two contradictory meanings (this happens more than one might expect)?
6. *Language of the passage:* **metaphor and imagery:** Now consider the metaphors and other figures of speech, such as vivid images, employed in the passage. Do you recognize them from elsewhere in the text? Like repeated words or phrases, repetition of a metaphor or an image should be a signal to you that one passage is relevant to another. Ask yourself the same kinds of questions as in 3 above.
7. *Language of passage:* **form:** Consider the passages **formal characteristics**. This can be tricky to relate to the content of a passage, but you might wish to consider it, especially if you're reading poetry. How is the language of a passage structured? Is the passage verse? Does it rhyme?
8. **What happens?** If something happens in the passage, think about how this element of the plot relates to or repeats others. All the questions above about related passages apply.
9. **Logic of events:** What happens or what is said right before or right after the passage in question? Here you'll want to ask questions similar to those in 2 above. Why does the passage come when it does? Are there any gaps or missing links between the passage and its context?
10. **The speaker:** Think about who is speaking your passage? Is the speaker being ironic? Can you trust the speaker? On the other hand, don't assume that just because a "bad" speaker or character says something, it isn't true, or within a range of possible beliefs for an author. Sometimes "bad" speakers or characters tell us truths that we don't like to hear. Also, are you sure the speaker or character is really "bad"?