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Overview

What Is Close Reading?

Close reading is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text. Close-reading instruction gives your students guided practice in approaching, understanding, and, ultimately, mastering complex texts. This type of instruction builds positive reading habits and allows students to successfully integrate their prior experiences and background knowledge with the unfamiliar text they are encountering.

There are certain factors that differentiate close-reading instruction from other types of reading instruction. These factors include the types of **texts** used for instruction, the **tasks** students are asked to perform, and the **questions** they are expected to answer. For detailed information on these factors, see “A Closer Look” on pages 4–5.

What Are Text-Dependent Questions?

Text-dependent questions (TDQs) can only be answered by referring explicitly back to the text. They are designed to deepen the reader’s understanding of the text, and they require students to answer in such a way that higher-level thinking is demonstrated. To be most effective, TDQs should address all that a reading passage has to offer; the questions asked should prompt students to consider the meaning, purpose, structure, and craft contained within the text.

How Is This Guide Organized?

The units in *Close Reading with Text-Dependent Questions* are divided into two sections. Each of the twenty **Section I Units** (pages 8–87) is a four-page unit.

Page 1 Close-Reading Passage	This page contains a short, complex, high-interest reading passage. Parts of the passage are numbered for easy reference, and space for annotation is provided in the left margin and between lines of text.
Page 2 Close-Reading Tasks	Students are guided to read the passage, summarize it, reread and annotate it, and meet with a partner to discuss and define the author’s word choices.
Page 3 Text-Dependent Questions	Students are asked to display a general understanding of the text, locate key details within it, cite evidence, and begin to use tools such as inference.
Page 4 More TDQs	Students examine the structure of the text and the author’s purpose. They form opinions and use evidence to support and defend claims. A research prompt encourages choice, exploration, and cross-curricular connections. (Note: Monitor students’ Internet research for content appropriateness.)

Each of the two **Section II Units** (pages 88–91) contains two pages.

Page 1 Close-Reading Passage	This page contains a short, complex, high-interest reading passage. Parts of the passage are numbered for easy reference, and space for annotation is provided in the left margin and between lines of text.
Page 2 Peer-Led Tasks	This page guides groups of students through a series of peer-led tasks in which each member is assigned a different role. Students become teachers to one another as they work together to analyze a text.

A Closer Look

Close Reading with Text-Dependent Questions focuses on the three main components of close-reading instruction: the **texts** students are asked to read, the **tasks** they are instructed to perform, and the **text-dependent questions (TDQs)** they are expected to answer thoughtfully and accurately.

The Texts

- ✓ short
- ✓ complex
- ✓ high-interest
- ✓ multi-genre

Not all texts are appropriate for close-reading instruction. Passages need to be written in a manner that invites analysis and at a level that requires slow, careful, deliberate reading. The texts in this guide achieve these goals in a number of ways.

- **Length:** Close-reading passages should be relatively short because the rigorous work required of students could make longer passages overwhelming.

Each unit in this guide contains a one-page passage of about 300–325 words. This is an ideal length to introduce and explore a subject, while allowing students of this age to conduct an in-depth examination of its content and purpose.

- **Complexity:** The best way to foster close reading of informational or fictional text is through text complexity. Writing achieves a high level of text complexity when it fulfills certain factors. The **purpose** of the text is implicit or hidden in some way, and the **structure** of the text is complex and/or unconventional. The **demands** of the text ask students to use life experiences, cultural awareness, and content knowledge to supplement their understanding. The **language** of the text incorporates domain-specific, figurative, ironic, ambiguous, or otherwise unfamiliar vocabulary.

The passages in this guide contain all of these different types of language and ask students to decipher their meanings in the context of the parts (words, phrases, sentences, etc.) around them. The passages meet the purpose and structure criteria by delaying key information, defying reader expectations, and/or including unexpected outcomes — elements that challenge students to follow the development of ideas along the course of the text. Students must combine their prior knowledge with the information given in order to form and support an opinion.

- **Interest:** Since close reading requires multiple readings, it is vital that the topics covered and style employed be interesting and varied. The passages in this resource will guide your students down such high-interest avenues as adventure, invention, discovery, and oddity. These texts are written with humor and wonder, and they strive to impart the thrill of learning.
- **Text Types and Genres:** It is important to give students experience with the close reading of a wide variety of texts. The passages in this guide are an equal mix of fiction and nonfiction; and they include examples and/or combinations of the following forms, text types, and genres: drama, poetry, descriptive, narrative, expository, and argumentative.

- **Lexile-Leveled:** A Lexile measure is a quantitative tool designed to represent the complexity of a text. The passages featured in this resource have been Lexile-leveled to ensure their appropriateness for this grade level.

A Closer Look *(cont.)*

The Tasks

- ✓ read and reread
- ✓ summarize
- ✓ annotate
- ✓ collaborate
- ✓ connect
- ✓ illustrate
- ✓ cite and support
- ✓ ask and answer

An essential way in which close-reading instruction differs from other practices can be seen in the tasks students are asked to perform. This resource focuses on the following student tasks:

- **Read and Reread:** First and foremost, close reading requires multiple readings of the text. This fosters a deeper understanding as the knowledge gained with each successive reading builds upon the previous readings. To keep students engaged, the tasks associated with each reading should vary. When students are asked to reread a passage, they should be given a new purpose or a new group of questions that influences that reading.

- **Annotation:** During at least one reading of the passage, students should annotate, or make notes on, the text. Annotation focuses students' attention on the text and allows them to track their thought processes as they read. It also allows students to interact with the text by noting words, phrases, or ideas that confuse or interest them. When writing about or discussing a text, students can consult their annotations and retrieve valuable information.
- **Additional Tasks:** Collaboration allows students to discuss and problem-solve with their partner peers. An emphasis is placed on demonstrating an understanding of unfamiliar words in context and applying academic vocabulary in new ways. Throughout, students are prompted to cite evidence to support claims and reinforce arguments. Often, students are asked to illustrate written information or connect text to visuals. A section of peer-led activities (pages 88–91) encourages students to ask and answer peer-generated questions.

For more information about annotation, see pages 6–7 of this guide.

The TDQs

- ✓ general
- ✓ key details
- ✓ word choice
- ✓ sequence
- ✓ structure
- ✓ purpose
- ✓ inference
- ✓ opinion

Text-dependent questions (TDQs) emphasize what the text has to offer as opposed to the students' personal experiences. This helps students focus on the text — from the literal (what it says) to the structural (how it works) to the inferential (what it means).

The TDQs in this resource ask students to demonstrate a wide range of understanding about the text. There is a progression from questions that ask for general understanding to those that require deeper levels of focus. The first question or two are relatively easy to answer, as this promotes student confidence and lessens the possibility for discouragement or disengagement. Subsequent questions delve into increasingly higher-order involvement in the text. Students are asked why a passage is written the way it is and if they feel that the author's

choices were ultimately successful. This type of instruction and questioning not only makes students better readers, it also makes them better writers as they consider the decisions authors make and the effects those choices have on the text and the reader.

Crocodile Tears

1

Snap! The crocodile's jaws snapped shut! Having caught its lunch, the crocodile began to consume it. As the reptile ate its lunch, it began to cry. Tears ran out of its eyes. Why was the crocodile crying? Was it sad that it was consuming a meal? Did it feel sorry for its prey?

2

Crocodiles do not cry when they are sad. They do not cry when they are happy. They do not have emotions the way people do. Crocodiles cry because it is good for them. The tears help them in many ways. For one thing, the tears clean their eyes. The tears also help get rid of extra salt the crocodiles take in with their food. In addition to these two things, the tears also help keep a crocodile's eyes from drying out.

3

People can be said to cry crocodile tears. "Crying crocodile tears" is an expression. We use it when someone is not expressing real emotion. We use these words when we talk about someone who is crying fake tears. Someone may pretend to be sad or upset. The expression came about because crocodiles will often shed tears as they eat. The crocodiles may look sad, but they are not sad. It is just that the act of eating starts the tears flowing.

4

There is still one more case in which all is not what it seems when it comes to crocodiles. Crocodiles have the strongest bite of any animal. Think of a great white shark. A crocodile can clamp down with even more force than a fully grown great white shark! If this is true, how is it possible that people can hold crocodile's mouths shut with their bare hands? Are we being tricked when we see this?

5

Think about what you see. A person could not hold a crocodile's mouth open! They can hold it shut! A crocodile has strong jaw muscles for clamping down, but its muscles for opening its jaws are small and weak. These muscles are so weak that a person could indeed hold a crocodile's mouth shut.

Your Name: _____ Partner: _____

Crocodile Tears (cont.)

First

Silently read "Crocodile Tears." You might see words you do not know. There might be parts you do not understand. Keep reading! Try to find out what the story is mainly about.

Then

Sum up the story. Write the main actions and most important information. If someone reads your summary, that person should know it is this story you are writing about.

**After
That**

Read the story again. Use a pencil to circle or mark words you don't know. Note places that confuse you. Underline the main action or idea of each paragraph.

Next

Meet with your partner. Help each other find these words in the text.

consume reptile emotion

Read the sentences around the words. Think about how they fit in the whole story. Discuss what the words mean. Then answer the questions for each word.

- a. My partner and I know the meaning of *consume* because in the story

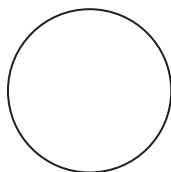
For lunch, we will consume _____

- b. My partner and I know that a crocodile is not a mammal because in the story

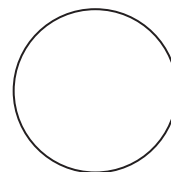
We can think of two kinds of reptiles: _____ and _____.

- c. My partner and I know an emotion is a feeling or state of mind because in the story

We can draw mouths that match the emotion.



happy



sad

Your Name: _____

Crocodile Tears *(cont.)*

Now

Answer the story questions below.

1. Why are some people able to hold a crocodile's mouth shut?

2. How are tears good for crocodiles? List three reasons given in the story.

Reason #1: _____

Reason #2: _____

Reason #3: _____

3. If someone says, "Casey is crying crocodile tears," what does that person think Casey is doing?

Do you think the person crying crocodile tears is sad? Write down one sentence from the story that helped you answer.

4. Whose bite is stronger? For each one, circle the animal that has the stronger bite.



or



or



or



Find a line from the story that you could use to defend your answers. Write that line here.

Your Name: _____

Crocodile Tears *(cont.)*

Then

Reread the entire story one last time. Pay attention to how paragraph 3 is different from the rest of the passage.

5. In your opinion, which paragraph is the *most* important paragraph in the passage? Fill in the bubble beside your answer and then tell why.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

In your opinion, which paragraph is the *least* important paragraph in the passage? Fill in the bubble beside your answer and then tell why.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. Is this passage fiction or nonfiction? How do you know? _____

Reread the first line of paragraph 3. Imagine this is the *only* line you read in the entire passage. Why might this one line make you think that the passage is fiction?

7. You are told in paragraph 1 that crocodiles cry when they eat. You are not told until later *why* crocodiles cry when they eat. Why do you think the writer did this?

**Learn
More**

Look in books or on the Internet to find out three more facts about crocodiles. Write your facts on the back of this paper.