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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.

<b>Page 1</b> <b>Close-Reading Passage</b>	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.
<b>Page 2</b> <b>Close-Reading Tasks</b>	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.
<b>Page 3</b> <b>Text-Dependent Questions</b>	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.
<b>Page 4</b> <b>More TDQs</b>	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. ( <b>Note:</b> Monitor students’ Internet research for content appropriateness.)

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

<b>Page 1</b> <b>Close-Reading Passage</b>	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.
<b>Page 2</b> <b>Peer-Led Tasks</b>	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 325–350 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.

## *Purr for the Perfect Pet*

1 Brian yearned for a pet so badly that his heart ached. He begged for a dog, but his father said no. His father told him that dogs barked too much. “The small ones never stop yapping or yipping, and the big ones howl at the moon,” he said. “There’s not going to be a dog in this house, ever,” he said, shaking his head.

2 His father suggested a fish, but Brian wanted a pet he could pet. A fish wouldn’t have soft fur, and it certainly couldn’t sit on his lap. Brian suggested a hamster, but his father was adamant that he would not permit it. Speaking firmly, his father said, “No hamsters in this house. I detest rodents. Rodents of any kind are disgusting. I really dislike them. Hamsters are better than mice, but no kind of rodent will ever live in this house.”

3 Thinking that his father might not detest birds, Brian suggested a canary. “I like the way canaries chirp,” his father said, “but the answer is ‘no’.” When Brian protested, his father remained adamant about his decision. “I don’t think it’s fair to the bird,” his father said. “Birds should not be kept in cages. They should be allowed to soar through the air.”

4 Brian showed his father a notice he found.

***FREE cat.  
Purrs but doesn’t roar.  
Chirps like a canary.***

Brian’s father read the notice very carefully. “Sounds like a perfect pet,” he said, “and I like that it is free. Call and see if anyone has taken it yet. If it’s still available, you can go get it right now.”

5 The cat was still available, so Brian left immediately and brought it home. When Brian’s father saw the cat, he was dumbfounded. The cat didn’t bark or roar. It purred and chirped like a canary. Still, Brian’s father couldn’t speak. Perhaps it was because the cat was a cheetah!

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

*Purr for the Perfect Pet* (cont.)

First

Silently read "Purr for the Perfect Pet." You might see words you do not know. There might be parts you do not understand. Keep reading! Find out what the story is mainly about.

Then

Sum up the first four paragraphs of the story only. (Do not write about the last paragraph.) Write down the main actions and most important information.

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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.

yearned      adamant      detest      available      dumbfounded

Read the sentences around the words. Think about how they fit in the whole story. Define the words. Which key words or phrases from the text help you and your partner define them? One row is already filled in for you.

Word	What It Means	Key Words or Phrases
yearned		
adamant	firm, not willing to change one's mind	Brian's father says he will never permit it.
detest		
available		
dumbfounded		



Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_


*Purr for the Perfect Pet* (cont.)


Now


Answer the story questions below.

1. Why didn't Brian want a fish? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Before Brian found the notice for the free cat, he suggested three animals that he would like to have as pets. Draw the three animals. Draw them in the order in which Brian asked for them. Below each drawing, write the animal's name.

First

_____

Second

_____

Third

_____

3. What did Brian's father like about a canary? \_\_\_\_\_

Give one reason why Brian's father didn't think it was fair to have a canary as a pet. Use a quotation to show your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. You are told in the first line that Brian's "heart ached." Why did the author say Brian's heart ached rather than his hand or head?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Two of the following are kinds of rodents: **parrot, chipmunk, squirrel, eagle**. Pick which two you think are rodents. Defend your answer by evidence from the story.

The rodents from that list are the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.

The following parts from the story helped me answer this question: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Purr for the Perfect Pet* (cont.)

**Then**

Reread the entire story one last time. Pay attention to how the last paragraph relates to the rest of the story.

6. Write a very short summary of the last paragraph.

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7. What kind of pet do you think the author wanted you to think of when you read the title? Why?

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How do you think the author wanted you to feel when you read the last paragraph? Tell why.

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Would the ending have the same effect if the reader didn't know what a cheetah was? Why?

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8. Write a short paragraph about someone who is dumbfounded. You can make up a character and a situation. Or, you can just write about a time when you were dumbfounded.

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Exchange papers with a partner. Discuss your stories. Tell your partner if you think he/she followed directions well and wrote about a person who was dumbfounded. Each partner should be able to defend his/her story.

**Learn  
More**

Use the Internet to listen to cheetah sounds. Find out other cheetah facts, too. Create a diagram or chart that shows how cheetahs' bodies are perfectly made to run fast. List at least four parts of a cheetah's body that are built for speed.

