



Close Reading Protocol

Overview: These steps for close reading are specifically tailored for digging deeply into short passages of complex text. The complexity may arise from challenging lexile levels in relation to your students' readiness, from figurative language or abstract concepts, from unusual organization or structure, and/or from the complexity of the ideas within the text selection.

Process and Scaffolding: This protocol may be chunked into smaller steps and spread over several days, especially the first time it is introduced to students. Each section has unique learning demands and requires prior skills in word attack strategies, using context clues, and annotating text. Students will benefit from teacher modeling of each part, practice time, and re-teaching before putting all the pieces together. Gradually release the steps to students, providing less guidance and increasing their independence.

Steps:

1. Reading #1: Getting to know the text
Read the selection, silently or aloud based on preference and need. The purpose for this first reading is to enjoy the selection, to get a general sense of its flow and ideas, and to build fluency.
2. Reading #2: Capturing the gist
Re-read the selection individually or guided by teacher modeling, depending on student need. The purpose of this reading is to locate the most important information by building on what you know and making connections to unfamiliar words and phrases to make meaning.
 - Beginning with the first sentence, underline what you know and summarize the ideas with annotation above the line of text. Circle unfamiliar words or phrases. Continue through the first paragraph.
 - State the gist or central idea of the paragraph in your own words. Write it as a short phrase in the margin.
 - If you cannot decipher the gist,
 - a. Return to any unknown vocabulary and
 - For students who can read the words with fluency, use the five steps for context clues to uncover meaning (see below).
 - For students who cannot read the passage, begin with word attack strategies and then move to context clues if needed (see below).
 - b. Consult a resource (dictionary, guide to using context clues, etc.) if necessary.
 - c. Re-read the paragraph and follow the steps for capturing the gist again.
 - Ink-pair-share concept summaries: First rewrite the passage in your own words, sentence by sentence. Share your translation with a partner. Partners check off each concept in the selection as they hear it re-phrased. Switch roles and repeat.
 - Together, pairs may create a concept map of the selection, showing how ideas are inter-connected and developed in the text. Model this as needed for students.
 - If there is confusion on any section, repeat steps a-c above.

3. Reading #3: Teacher frames this stage with rich, evidence-based text-dependent questions that students focus on during this reading. This question may be centered on developing inferences or asking their own questions to dig for deeper information/ uncover assumptions and analyze arguments in the text, or it may be content-specific for building and expanding background knowledge.
 - Students re-read targeted sections of the text and complete recording forms that drive at the text-dependent questions.
 - Share with a partner, noting areas of agreement and differences.
 - Share with whole group using a sharing or discussion protocol based on purpose and preference.

5 Steps for Using Context Clues

Step 1: Check for synonyms or definitions embedded right there. If you find one, reread the sentence with the new term keeping the synonym or definition in mind. Then tell yourself in your own words what the sentence is saying.

Step 2: Check for a contrast clue. If you find one, think about its meaning, telling yourself the opposite meaning. Then reread the sentence and rephrase it in your own mind.

Step 3: When you read a sentence that you have trouble understanding because of an unfamiliar word, reread the sentence and substitute a word that seems to make sense in the context.

Step 4: Read on. If the word you substituted does not make sense in the context of the rest of the paragraph, try again.

Step 5: If the sentence still does not make sense to you and you do not understand the main point, look for a synonym, definition, and contrast clue. If you are still uncertain, check a dictionary.

Word-Attack Strategies: Digging Into Problem Areas

Word-attack strategies help students decode, pronounce, and understand unfamiliar words, using all three cueing systems. They help students attack words piece by piece or from a different angle.

- Use Picture Clues
 - Look at the picture.
 - Are there people, objects, or actions in the picture that might make sense in the sentence?
- Sound Out the Word
 - Start with the first letter, and say each letter-sound out loud.
 - Blend the sounds together and try to say the word. Does the word make sense in the sentence?
- Look for Chunks in the Word
 - Look for familiar letter chunks. They may be sound/symbols, prefixes, suffixes, endings, whole words, or base words.
 - Read each chunk by itself. Then blend the chunks together and sound out the word. Does that word make sense in the sentence?
- Connect to a Word You Know
 - Think of a word that looks like the unfamiliar word.

- Compare the familiar word to the unfamiliar word. Decide if the familiar word is a chunk or form of the unfamiliar word.
- Use the known word in the sentence to see if it makes sense. If so, the meanings of the two words are close enough for understanding.
- Reread the Sentence
 - Read the sentence more than once.
 - Think about what word might make sense in the sentence. Try the word and see if the sentence makes sense.
- Keep Reading
 - Read past the unfamiliar word and look for clues.
 - If the word is repeated, compare the second sentence to the first. What word might make sense in both?
- Use Prior Knowledge
 - Think about what you know about the subject of the book, paragraph, or sentence.
 - Do you know anything that might make sense in the sentence? Read the sentence with the word to see if it makes sense.

References

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