

Close and Critical Reading

Common Core Reading Standards

Step 3: What does the text mean? Or What is the theme/thesis of the text and how does the author's choice of content, structure, and craft combine to achieve his/her purpose—author's intent?

Close reading (Step 1) and critical reading (Step 2) together with reflection on the content and craft, structure, and purpose reveal the big idea, theme/thesis, and the effectiveness of the passage.

Guiding Questions to determine what the text means. (What is the theme/thesis of the text and how do the author's choice of content, structure, and craft combine to achieve his/her purpose—author's intent?)

- What is the central idea/thesis/theme of the text? **CC2**
- How does the author support the central idea, thesis, or theme with ideas and details? **CC2**
- What are the purposes, ends, and objectives? **CC2**
- What is the author's stance/perspective towards the topic? **CC6**
- How does the author use language: dialect, variant spellings, archaic words, formal or informal words, etc. to shape the tone (the author's attitude toward the subject) and the meaning of the piece? **CC6**
- How does the author use point of view, style, mood, tone, text features, imagery, figures of speech (e.g. simile, metaphor, alliteration, irony, repetition, onomatopoeia, personification, etc.), and the lead, etc. to achieve his/her purpose (author's intent)? **CC6**
- Why does the author choose the method of presentation? **CC8**
- What are the concepts that make the reasoning possible, what assumptions underlie the concepts, and what implications follow from the concepts? **CC7, CC8**
- What does the author want the reader to believe? **CC7, CC8**
- What is the quality of information collected; are the sources sufficient, relevant, credible, and current? **CC7, CC8**
- Who or what is not represented? Why? **CC7, CC8**
- What is the quality of information collected, and are the sources sufficient, relevant, credible, and current? **CC8**
- Who or what is not represented? Why? **CC7, 8**

Common Core Reading Anchor Standards

CC2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CC6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CC7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*

CC8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Activities to Determine Meaning

Reflection Activity

Students learn to ask the following kinds of questions of the text

What would make this passage more believable?

What would make this passage more effective?

How would changing the perspective, change the meaning?

Steps for Creating Socratic Circles

The Socratic Seminar is based on the idea of Socratic dialogue in which *teachers* lead student discussion through careful questioning to higher levels of thinking, analysis and interaction. Students are divided into two randomly selected groups, the inner and outer circle. The inner circle starts off in its discussion of the text. The outer circle is responsible for listening to the dialogue in the inner circle and, after the discussion is complete (in about 20 minutes), providing feedback to the members of the inner circle about the effectiveness (not content) of the dialogue. Then the process is repeated with the circles exchanging places. Finally, all students turn in a personal reflective piece of writing about the discussed text as well as the process of the circle.

Copeland, Matt (2005). *Socratic Circles: Fostering Critical and Creative Thinking in Middle and High School*.

Portland, Maine:

Stenhouse Publishers

Tear and Share

Students respond to the four steps of the Close and Critical Reading Protocol on a paper divided into four boxes. The papers are collected and papers are torn into the four parts and organized by the 4 steps. Responses are shared. - developed by Cynthia Clingman

Research Supporting Step # 3 What does the text mean?

Gallagher, M., & Pearson, P.D. (1989) "Discussion, Comprehension, and Knowledge Acquisition in Content Area Classrooms" (Tech. Rep. No. 480). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading.

Raphael, T.E., & Wonnacott, C.A., & Pearson, P.D. (1983). "Increasing Students' Sensitivity to Sources of Information: An Instructional Study in Question-Answer Relationships" (Tech. Rep. No. 284). Urbana, IL University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading.