**FROM THE COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS
TO TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM:
A SERIES OF RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS**

# SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN CLOSE READING

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# ORGANIZATION

# INTRODUCTION

This resource is part of a series produced by the Center for Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI) to assist teachers and those who support teachers to plan teaching and learning from College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) for all students, including students with disabilities, English learners, academically at-risk students, students living in extreme poverty, and gifted/talented students. The series of resources addresses key shifts in learning and teaching represented in the CCRS. This resource uses the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) as an example of CCRS. The processes described in this resource are applicable to all States' CCRS, including the CCSS. The content of this resource is drawn from leading theory and research about learning and formative assessment and from an examination of the CCSS. This resource guides teachers in the process of instructional planning for close reading with students.[1] A section on background reading is included at the end.

The ELA & Literacy CCSS call for students to:

*undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature…seek the wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational texts that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens worldviews…[and] reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence (2010, p. 3).*

Specifically, through close reading students can accomplish some major interpretive goals of the ELA & Literacy CCSS:

- **Key Ideas and Details:** Understand a text's key ideas and details expressed and/or implied by the author

- **Craft and Structure:** Understand how the craft and structure of a text reinforces and supports the author's message/purpose

- I**ntegration of Knowledge and Ideas:** Recognize how this text connects to others and be able to evaluate its quality or value

The emphasis on close reading in the ELA & Literacy CCSS means that teachers in every content area will need to plan lessons that include increased instructional time working with text and engaging students in close reading of content-area texts.

## ORGANIZATION

This resource is organized as a series of steps that teachers can follow as they prepare for close reading. These steps include:

(1)  Gaining an understanding of close reading;

(2)  Selecting appropriate texts to use with students;

(3)  Priming text: Reading the selected text multiple times to (a) annotate text to gain increased understanding of the text and (b) extract and record relevant information from the text;

(4)  Developing text-dependent questions to stimulate student thinking and discussion of the text;

(5)  Using evidence gathered from the close reading process to inform next steps in instruction (formative assessment).

[1] Although this resource focuses primarily on analytical reading, there are other reading goals that teachers will have for their students, namely, to increase students' capacity for sustained reading of longer texts over extended periods of time at their independent reading level.

# CLOSE READING OF TEXT

The goal of close reading is to enable students to deeply engage with challenging and high quality text. Eventually, through close reading, students will be able to read increasingly complex text independently, relying only on what the author provides in the text to support their comprehension and evaluation of the text.

The CCSS Anchor Standard 1 in Reading states that students:

> Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text (2010, p. 10).

Furthermore, according to the National Education Association (NEA, 2013), "80-90 percent of the [CCSS] reading Standards in each grade require text-dependent analysis" (p. 18). Therefore, students' successful and meaningful engagement with text necessitates teachers' careful planning of close reading.

Teachers and students have specific roles in close reading, which are described below.

| TEACHER ROLES | STUDENT ROLES |
|---|---|
| (1) Select challenging and appropriate text | (1) Read the text more than once |
| (2) Analyze the text's content and language ahead of time | (2) Persevere in reading and comprehending challenging text |
| (3) Anticipate potential challenges the text may present for certain students (e.g., English Learners, students reading far above or below grade level) | (3) Analyze the text for purpose and/or levels of meaning |
| (4) Write text-dependent questions that engage students in interpretive tasks | (4) Use evidence from the text to ask and answer text-dependent questions |
| (5) Lead rich and rigorous conversations (through the use of text-dependent questions) that keep students engaged with the text's deeper meaning | (5) Increase comprehension of a text through multiple re-readings |
| (6) Ensure reading activities stay closely connected to the text | (6) Participate in rich and rigorous conversations about a common text |

Lessons based on close reading of text have several distinct characteristics.[2]

- Close reading often entails a multi-day commitment to re-reading a text. Each re-reading has a different purpose.

- Close reading focuses on short, high-quality text that is appropriate for reading several times (e.g., a text with complex ideas and structure). Text can be excerpted from a longer piece of work.

- Instruction for close reading involves scaffolding students' meaning-making with the text. Students need to make sense of the text, engaging in productive struggle when necessary. To support this, teachers provide only a minimal amount of background knowledge or explanation to students prior to reading the text. For example, teachers might pre-teach some vocabulary that may otherwise block students' access to the text or tell students something about the text genre (e.g., that it is a memoir or science article).

- A major role for teachers is to ask text-dependent questions. Text-dependent questions can only be answered by referring explicitly to the text. Answering these questions does not rely on any particular background information outside of the text. The questions engage students in interpretive processes, guiding them in how to think about the texts and enabling them to practice the type of attentive reading and thinking called for by the CCSS. (See section on Text-Dependent Questions on page 17 for more information.)

- Lessons created for close reading of text usually include a culminating task related to the core understanding, key ideas, or theme of the text. This task can help students consolidate their learning and demonstrate their understanding of the text. A culminating task will often engage students in a combination of ELA domains, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (e.g., giving an oral presentation to the class or writing an exposition about the text).

Timothy Shanahan, an expert in literacy, teaching, and curriculum, recommends at least three readings of a text, in which the main purpose for each reading is aligned with the three main categories of the ELA Anchor Standards for Reading: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. The guide, *More on Planning for Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions*, in the "Tools and Exemplars" section of this resource provides a synopsis of Shanahan's approach.

In close reading, teachers minimally introduce the text with the goal that students read and make sense of what the text says for themselves. However, Catherine Snow, a leading researcher in the field of literacy, cautions against what she calls cold close reading in which students read a text without any introductory activity that warms them to a topic or task, orients them, or cultivates enthusiasm. Snow (2013) writes that a "collapse of motivation" occurs when the selected text is too hard, too long, too full of unknown words or an unknown topic, and the reader "quickly exhausts his or her initial willingness to struggle with it…the reality of reading a text too hard is that it often results, not in productive struggle, but in destructive frustration" (p. 19). Teachers will need to provide some motivator for students and an appropriate level of support (i.e.., not too much, not too little) so as to engage them in close reading of challenging text.

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[2] For more information, visit Timothy Shanahan's blog at www.shanahanonliteracy.com.

# SELECTING TEXT

There are many factors to consider when selecting text for close reading, including reading purpose and text type.[3] It is important to make sure that there is sufficient richness and complexity in a selected text to stimulate close reading. Students should read a variety of texts, but not every text can be, or needs to be, analyzed and examined in the deep manner required for close reading. Texts not selected for close reading can be used for other reading purposes, such as to help students increase reading fluency. Text used specifically for close reading should enable students to gain new insight into the text each time they read it, for example, because its structure and/or ideas are complex. According to Fisher and Frey (2012), texts that are instructionally worthwhile are those that:

> allow readers to reflect on themselves and their actions; invite them in the worlds of others; understand the biological, social, or physical world; or solve problems that are timely and important. Texts worthy of instruction also allow students to develop their literary prowess and become informed citizens (p. 2).

## SELECTING TEXT TOOL

An important step in selecting texts for close reading is to determine the level of challenge the text presents for students. The *Selecting Text* tool assists teachers in this process.[4] Factors to consider when determining the level of challenge for students include: age appropriateness of the text and likely interest of students, complexity of ideas, text and sentence structure, vocabulary difficulty, and length of the text.[5] A printable *Selecting Text* template for teacher use is included in the section "Tools and Exemplars." To illustrate what this tool might look like in use, an example from a narrative text "Eleven" (Cisneros, 1991) is provided below. An example of a completed *Selecting Text* tool for an informational text, *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* (Thomson, 2010), is also included in the section "Tools and Exemplars."

[3] The ELA & Literacy CCSS uses the term text type to categorize text into stories, poetry, and informational text.

[4] This tool is adapted with permission from the Ministry of Education, New Zealand website, www.nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/NZC-Updates/Issue-19-April-2012/Framework-for-estimating-text-difficulty.

[5] The writers of the ELA & Literacy CCSS have also developed a research-based model of key dimensions to determine text complexity and appropriateness for students. For more information on these dimensions, see the "Tools and Exemplars" section of this resource.

# EXAMPLE OF SELECTING TEXT TOOL

**Title and source:** "Eleven" (excerpt of the short story from CCSS Appendix B)

**Author:** Sandra Cisneros          **Grade Level and area:** 7th Grade, Reading

| Factors Affecting Text Challenge | Notes |
|---|---|
| **Age appropriateness**<br>Consider:<br>• word recognition demands (sight words & decoding)<br>• age of the main character(s)<br>• prior knowledge assumed by the text<br>• maturity required to deal with the themes<br>• familiarity of contexts, settings, and subject matter<br>• likely interests, motivation, and experiences of readers | • *The story uses mostly everyday words, so there should be few issues with word recognition demands*<br>• *The narrator (main character) just turned 11, which is close to the age of the 7th graders who will be reading this text*<br>• *Students will have familiarity with the idea of turning older (as they all have had birthdays), but they may not have considered what being older means as described by the narrator in the text*<br>• *The themes and content of the story are appropriate for 7th graders; readers will likely be interested in the story, and some may have similar feelings and experiences compared to the narrator* |
| **Complexity of ideas**<br>Consider:<br>• accessibility of the themes<br>• implied information or ideas (requiring readers to infer)<br>• irony or ambiguity<br>• abstract ideas<br>• metaphors and other figurative or connotative language<br>• technical information<br>• support from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, and so on | • *The story's theme that a person is and can act all the years below her current age is an abstract idea:*<br>  - *Readers will need to infer what the narrator means as she describes her feelings of growing a year older*<br>• *Text is highly descriptive: The author uses figurative language (e.g., similes) to convey the narrator's thoughts and emotions*<br>• *There is some ambiguity as to who the narrator is and who she is speaking to (i.e., "what they never tell you")* |

| Structure and coherence of the text | • The excerpted piece is a description of the narrator's thoughts and feelings, so it doesn't have a timeline of events (that will come later in the story) |
|---|---|
| Consider: | |
| • flashbacks or time shifts | • 1st person narrative point of view (i.e., narrator is speaking), but narrator occasionally addresses the reader/audience by using the 2nd person point of view (i.e..,"you") |
| • narrative point of view | |
| • mixed text types | |
| • connections across the text | • The author uses many examples in her descriptions as a way to explain the narrator's thoughts and feelings |
| • examples and explanations | |
| • competing information | |
| • length of paragraphs | • Short paragraph lengths |
| • unattributed dialogue | |
| • use of headings and subheadings | |
| **Syntactic structure of the text** | • There are a variety of sentence lengths found in the text, including sentence fragments |
| Consider: | |
| • sentence length | • The use/balance of sentence lengths is probably done to convey an informal tone (and perhaps to show the real-time thoughts of the narrator) |
| • the balance of simple, compound, complex, or incomplete sentences | |
| • use of passive voice or nominalization | • Repetition of words (e.g., "and" or "like") is stylistic and used to help set up the tone of the story as well as emphasize certain thoughts |
| • repetition of words or phrases | |
| • changes in verb tense | |
| **Vocabulary difficulty** | • Overall, the story uses basic, everyday (social) vocabulary that most 7th graders will know (no use of academic/technical vocabulary, non-English words, or proper nouns) |
| Consider: | |
| • unfamiliar vocabulary | |
| • technical and academic terms, non-English words, and proper nouns | • Some possible unique phrases (e.g., "little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other" or "rings inside a tree trunk") |
| • sentence-level and/or visual support | |
| • contextual clues | • As mentioned, the author employs the use of figurative language to describe vividly the narrator's emotions |
| • the use of a glossary or footnotes | |
| **Length of the text** | • Excerpt is the first 5 paragraphs from the short story; this is a good chunk of text to use for close reading because the narrator is describing her feelings/emotions and reflecting on getting older (after the first 5 paragraphs, the story moves to events and dialogue) |

| Estimated reading year level: | Notes: |
|---|---|
| 7 | *The text is written rather simply—use of everyday vocabulary, relatively easy-to-understand sentence structure, and short paragraphs. However, the author employs figurative language and some ambiguity (in both the language and the ideas she is trying to convey). Also, the theme found in this excerpt is quite sophisticated. This combination—simply written text with complex ideas—makes this excerpt a good text to use for close reading.* |

# PRIMING TEXT

According to Shanahan, the main point of close reading is to situate the text at the center of the reading experience, focusing on what is important in the text in terms of what it says, how it works, and how it relates to other texts (personal communication, January 4, 2014).

The purpose of priming the text is to enable teachers to become deeply familiar with what the text says; its purposes/themes, content, structure; and how these may relate to other texts. By priming the text, teachers can deeply understand the text themselves so that they can situate the text at the center of the students' reading experience.

The following sections present two tools to be used concurrently for priming the text. They are intended to help teachers gather information, summarize key features of the text, and identify their students' abilities and interests in relation to the text. These tools are:

- Text Annotation Protocol
- Text Cover Sheet

By using these tools, teachers are better able to clarify text meaning and formulate intended reading purposes, identify the different entry points into the text (anticipating challenges the text will pose to different students), think about ways in which to engage students with the important ideas and relationships described or implied by the author, and create text-dependent questions.

## TEXT ANNOTATION PROTOCOL

Teachers use the *Text Annotation Protocol* in tandem with the *Text Cover Sheet* to gain a deeper understanding of the text they have selected to use with students during close reading and to guide their planning of the specific close reading process students will undertake during the lesson.[6] Like their students, teachers will need to read a text several times in the process of annotating it. This re-reading and annotating process can follow a few different procedures. Below is one approach to studying and annotating a text to prepare for students' close reading. (This protocol is included as a handout in the "Tools and Exemplars" section of this resource.) The process delineated below is flexible; teachers should adapt it to their needs.

1) First, read to get the "big picture" of the text. Get a general sense of what the text is about, being sure to note aspects of the text that catch your attention.

2) Next, read through the text to note its major themes or ideas, levels of meaning, as well as the author's purpose (some of these concepts are more relevant to either literary or informational texts).

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[6] Information gathered in the *Selecting Text* tool may also be a helpful resource in priming the text.

3) On your third reading, annotate the text for types of language that the author uses, such as key words, types of sentence structures, visual components, and text cohesion strategies.[7] Note the reasons why the author uses these features in relation to the text's purpose or theme. Also annotate any images, or other forms of visual representation included with the text (e.g., data charts and diagrams accompanying science or social studies texts), noting the information they contain and the ways they may augment student understanding of the text. Look for the devices and features that stand out or are used repeatedly by the author.

4) Finally, read through the text a few more times with your students in mind. Based on what you have already noted and annotated, determine which aspects of the text you want your students to pay attention to. Also, make annotations about which aspects of the text may be challenging for specific individual students or groups of students (e.g., English learners). The annotations made in your final reading may end up being a synthesis of your earlier annotations of the text where you noted the author's use of language and sentence structure.

## ANNOTATION EXAMPLE

To illustrate the *Text Annotation Protocol*, an example is provided below from an excerpt of the narrative text "Eleven" (Cisneros, 1991). The example shows annotations from a teacher's third reading in which she makes notes about the types of language that the author uses, such as key words, types of sentence structures, and text cohesion. The teacher also comments on the reasons why the author uses these features. Note that the information gathered from the teacher's first, second, and fourth readings of the text are recorded in the *Text Cover Sheet* (see page 12). Annotated examples (showing steps 3 and 4 from the *Text Annotation Protocol*) for an informational text, *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* (Thomson, 2010), are available in the "Tools and Exemplars" section.

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[7] For more information on text features and the annotation process, see the *Text Study Guide for Teachers*, which is found in the "Tools and Exemplars" section on page 27.

**Excerpt from "Eleven"**

by Sandra Cisneros (1991)
(from CCSS Appendix B)

Ambiguous pronoun use (which refers to people); use of ambiguous pronoun adds to tone of passage

Use of 2nd person point of view conveys an informal tone. Also, there is some ambiguity with its use: is the narrator addressing the reader, or is the narrator using "you" to talk about herself?

Complex sentence structure that contains several pieces of information

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Repeated use of "and" is stylistic (e.g., written to mimic oral language); conveys informal tone and pace – as though character is speaking quickly

Use of "like" here signals that narrator is giving (another) example regarding one of the main themes of the story (note the different use of "like" in Para. 5)

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

Sentences in this paragraph support the details written in Para. 1 – that a person is and acts all the years below her current age

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Use of 1st person reveals narrator for the first time

First 3 paragraphs lead up to one theme of the story (although theme may be obscured by analogies)

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

The use of "like" here is to signal the rhetorical device of similes (note the different uses of "like" in this excerpt; see first word in Para. 2)

Use of short sentences and fragments is stylistic use of sentence structure to help convey tone and emphasis

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Variation in sentence structure in the paragraph makes it more (stylistically) interesting to read

## TEXT COVER SHEET

The *Text Cover Sheet* provides a space for teachers to identify and record for instructional purposes: (1) the standards addressed; (2) reading purposes and text content; and (3) text and language challenges and connections. Teachers concurrently fill out the *Text Cover Sheet* while annotating the text (using the process delineated above). After their first reading, teachers begin to fill in some fields of the *Text Cover Sheet*. It will likely take multiple readings to complete the *Text Cover Sheet* in order to come to a full understanding of the ideas or text structures presented in complex, advanced, or technical text (just like it would for students). If teachers have already completed the *Selecting Text* tool, this can also provide a valuable source of information for completing the *Text Cover Sheet*.

## AN EXAMPLE OF THE TEXT COVER SHEET

To illustrate what a completed *Text Cover Sheet* might look like, an example is provided below from the narrative text, "Eleven" (Cisneros, 1991).  Detailed descriptions of the fields included in the *Text Cover Sheet* follow the example. Available in the "Tools and Exemplars" section is a printable version of the template and a completed example for an informational text.

**Title of text:**   "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros

| ELA & Literacy Standards |
|---|
| **CCSS 7th Grade**<br><br>Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1)<br><br>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2)<br><br>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.4)<br><br>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.5)<br><br>• Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.5b)<br><br>• Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending*). (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.5c) |

| Other Content-Related Standards |
|---|
| Not Applicable |

| Reading Purpose and Text Content |
|---|
| **Goals**<br><br>• Understand the author's point – the central idea of the text<br><br>• Analyze how the author structured the text and the effect of the text structure on conveying her point<br><br>• Analyze how the author communicates the point through imagery<br><br>• Understand the narrator's emotions and why she has those feelings<br><br>• Participate in collaborative discussions about text |

**Big Picture/Gist of text**

- The narrator is a girl who just turned 11, but she doesn't feel 11 (or a year older). The excerpt describes the narrator's feelings about turning 11 and reflects on growing up. For the most part, the tone of the text is slightly melancholy, which may be somewhat surprising to a reader who may have a perception that birthdays are happy occasions.

- (*Note*: If students read the full text, the big picture will change slightly.)

**Text Purpose / Levels of Meaning**

- Themes:

  (1) A person is and acts all the years below her current age

  (2) Reflections on growing up

- Birthdays are usually a happy/special day for people, but the narrator doesn't feel happy about her birthday as she should perhaps be; instead, she is reflective and a bit melancholy.

- The age of 11 has some meaning/significance in the story. It's the first year of a person's second decade of life, but it's still an age in which adults/society think is young (and somewhat not meaningful in terms of overall age). The narrator has feelings of being misunderstood, powerless, and not smart enough to be 11.

- (*Note*: If students read the full text, there will be more themes, main ideas, and levels of meaning to list in this section.)

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**Text and Language Challenges and Connections**

**Vocabulary**

Given that there are almost no academic words or technical words in this story, no vocabulary words need to be taught before students read the text. However, text-dependent questions should query students' knowledge about the following words/phrases:

(Words/phrases that may be unfamiliar to ELs are noted with an *)

Possible unfamiliar or unique phrases:

- "little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other"*

- "rings inside a tree trunk"*

Stylistic use of familiar words (e.g., to convey uncertainty):

- "maybe" (repeatedly used)

- "one day," "some days"

Figurative language use:

- The preposition "like"* (when used to introduce a simile)

**Text Features and Structure**

Unconventional or stylistic use of varied sentence types conveys narrator's personality and voice and overall personal tone of the story, including:

- Short sentences or fragments, sometimes grouped together, such as:

  - "And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten."

  - "You don't feel eleven. Not right away."

- Some complex sentences, including those:

  - Using "and" and "or" repeatedly for emphasis on the theme (i.e., a person is all the years below her current age), for example, "...when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one."

  - Using "like" to extend a point by giving an example, such as "...you will need to cry like if you're three..."

- Related to complex sentences, words that extend sentence length, including:

  - Linking words "like," "because"

  - "what they," "that's what"

- Adverbial clauses, especially words that convey time, including:

  - "when you wake up on your eleventh birthday"

  - "everything's just like yesterday, only it's today"

  - "underneath the year that makes you eleven"

  - "it takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months"

Discourse/text structure may seem informal and unconventional, but it can be typical of narrative texts, including:

- No clear paragraph structure or paragraphs that consist of only 1 sentence

- Plot structure

**Specific Knowledge Required**

Prior knowledge that will support the use of this text includes:

- Personal experiences: growing up/change

**Text Connections**

Texts related to content of the story:

- Birthdays (maybe a fictional narrative/memoir on happy memories of being a child around the age of 11 or a story about a child who is excited about her birthday)

Texts related to the theme of the story:

- Growing up

Texts related to style of writing found in the story:

- First-person narration (fictional and non-fictional [memoir]) vs. third-person narration

# DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE TEXT COVER SHEET FIELDS

**ELA & Literacy CCSS**

The ELA & Literacy CCSS that will be addressed in the lesson using this text are recorded in this field. Recording the standards here also enables teachers to think of tasks that can be developed with the text to help students achieve the standards listed in this field.

**Other Content-Related Standards**

There may also be content goals for the close reading lesson that are drawn from other standards. For example, teachers may want students to read a science text to expand their understanding of a science concept that is the current focus of their science learning. In this instance, the text-dependent questions a teacher creates will be guided by the science content standards. In this field, particular content standards that are addressed through the process of close reading would be included.

**Goals**

Reading and literacy goals for the close reading lesson are listed in this field. Lesson-level reading and literacy goals are derived from the ELA & Literacy CCSS. They address aspects of the Standards, define the close reading learning focus for the lesson, and, because they address goals at the lesson level, they are of a smaller grain size than the standards. For example, when reading a persuasive text, the reading goals may be to analyze the argument structure the author uses and how she uses evidence to support the argument; when reading a literary text, the goals may include examining paragraph structures and the role each paragraph plays in advancing the narrative. (The resource in this series, *Building Blocks, Learning Goals, and Success Criteria*, provides a detailed description of developing learning goals from standards.)

In instances where a teacher has also identified other content-related standards for the lesson, he/she would also want to include content goals in this field (e.g., for science informational text).

**Big Picture/Gist of Text**

The primary purpose for filling out this field is to support teachers' overall understanding of the text. Additionally, the information written here can help teachers think about what information to give to students that would promote their interest and enthusiasm about reading the text without giving away too much information.

**Text Purpose(s)/Levels of Meaning**

The information included in this field will be a helpful resource in creating text-dependent questions (see page 17 for information on text-dependent questions). The author's purpose(s) in informational texts may be explicitly stated or may be implicit, hidden, or obscured in the text. Literary texts can range from having a single meaning to having multiple levels of meaning.

**Vocabulary**

Teachers record the words/phrases in the text that may be: (1) challenging to their students or (2) critical for understanding the text. Teachers may want to categorize words/phrases in ways that inform their lesson, such as by words that: (1) are likely to block student access to the text and should, perhaps, be taught ahead of time; (2) are important and are defined explicitly in the text, so it would be good to query students about these words after a

reading; (3) might be understood from context (another good questioning opportunity where teachers could ask why these words were treated differently by the author); and (4) might be problematic for English learners. For literary texts specifically, teachers may want to note other categories as well, such as stylistic uses of familiar words and figurative language.

**Text Features and Structure**

Language features related to sentence and text structure (e.g., types of sentence structures, visual components, and text cohesion strategies) that may be challenging to their students and/or are features that are critical for understanding the text are recorded here. Teachers can note the reasons why the author uses these sentence and text structure features in relation to the text's purpose or theme. Understanding the sentence and text structure features may be critical to students' comprehension of certain aspects of the text. See the *Text Study Guide for Teachers* for additional guidance.

**Specific Knowledge Required**

In this field, teachers can record specific knowledge that may be required of students to comprehend the text, such as familiarity with the text type, content, or context. While students should generally be able to make meaning of the text from only the content of the text (and any included graphics/images), there may be some information they need prior to, or during, reading to help them make better sense of the text and to increase their motivation to re-read the text.

**Text Connections**

Teachers' ideas on how this text might connect with or relate to other texts that the students have read or will read later are recorded here. This information can be used to develop text-dependent questions, build or extend students' schema (e.g., prior and/or background knowledge), and generate rich discussions among students.

As mentioned earlier, the *Text Annotation Protocol* and *Text Cover Sheet* **should be used in tandem** so that together they inform teachers about the content and structure of the text and the purposes for using the text with students for close reading. The examples of these two tools in this resource show their interwoven nature.

# TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

Text-dependent questions are a central component of close reading. When developing text-dependent questions, teachers should draw on the knowledge they have gained from completing the previous tools in this resource: *Selecting Text*, *Text Annotation Protocol*, and *Text Cover Sheet*.

The use of text-dependent questions is intended to guide students in how to think about what's important in the text —in the message/information, in the style and structure, and how the text connects to other texts. Text-dependent questions are not simply literal questions about information and facts from the text. While these questions should be asked to ascertain students' basic comprehension, text-dependent questions go beyond just asking about the surface ideas and details by also tapping into the craft, structure, and theme/purpose of the text as well as students' evaluation and judgments of the text. Text-dependent questions require students to draw inferences from, and make connections among, the details and ideas of the text. Furthermore, it is important that text-dependent questions are based on important, not trivial, ideas from the text. According to the NEA (2013, p. 19), typical text-dependent questions will ask students to engage in the following tasks:

- Analyze paragraphs on a sentence-by-sentence basis and sentences on a word-by-word basis to determine the role played by individual paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words

- Investigate how meaning can be altered by changing key words and why an author may have chosen one word over another

- Probe each argument in persuasive text, each idea in informational text, each key detail in literary text, and observe how these build to a whole

- Examine how shifts in the direction of an argument or explanation are achieved and the impact of those shifts

- Question why authors choose to begin and end as they do

- Note and assess patterns of writing and what they achieve

- Consider what the text leaves uncertain or unstated

As there is no single, best way to develop text-dependent questions, teachers should use and adapt a process that works for their purposes and contexts. The next section describes one process that can help teachers think about and create text-dependent questions for any given text.

## TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS GUIDE

There are various types of text-dependent questions that are aligned to different purposes in the close reading process. Here is an example of general text-dependent questions from Timothy Shanahan's *What is Close Reading?* article.[8] These questions can help guide teachers in creating more specific text-dependent questions for students to use during their close reading of a particular text.[9] A printable handout of these questions is available in the "Tools and Exemplars" section.

[8] See www.shanahanonliteracy.com/2012/06/what-is-close-reading.html.

[9] For more detailed information, see the handout *More on Planning for Close Reading & Text Dependent Questions* in the "Tools and Exemplars" section.

| 1st reading:<br>*What it says.* | • What is the text saying? |
|---|---|
| 2nd reading:<br>*How it says it.* | • How did the author organize it?<br><br>• What literary devices were used and how effective were they?<br><br>• What was the quality of the evidence?<br><br>• If data were presented, how was that done?<br><br>• If any visual texts (e.g., diagrams, tables, illustrations) were presented, how was that done?<br><br>• Why did the author choose this word or that word? Was the meaning of a key term consistent or did it change across the text? |
| 3rd reading:<br>*What it means.* | • What does this text mean?<br><br>• What was the author's point?<br><br>• What does it say to me about my life or my world? How do I evaluate the quality of this work—aesthetically, substantively?<br><br>• How does this text connect to other texts I know? |
| **General follow-up questions for any of the text-dependent questions:** | • How do you know?<br><br>• What in the text tells you that?<br><br>• What's the evidence? |

As noted earlier, when creating text-dependent questions, teachers should refer to their previously completed tools from this resource. The goals of the lesson (from the *Text Cover Sheet*) should guide teachers in creating a coherent set or sequence of effective questions that facilitate students' close reading.

## EXAMPLE

To illustrate the use of the *Text-Dependent Questions Guide*, an example is provided below with the narrative text, "Eleven" (Cisneros, 1991). Text-dependent questions for the first reading are based on key ideas and details of the text. For the second reading, the questions focus on the style and structure of the text. Lastly, in the third reading, the questions are based on the theme and the students' evaluation of the text. In this example, the teacher wrote down all the questions she thought could be used for this text. In a lesson, she may select a subset of the questions based on knowledge of her students, the context, and the purpose of the lesson. If the teacher needs more evidence of student thinking, she should ask one or more of the follow-up questions listed above.

**Text-Dependent Questions – 1st Reading**

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

*Who are they?*

*Who does "you" refer to?*

*Why doesn't the narrator feel like she's 11?*

*What makes the narrator feel like she's still 10?*

*What makes the narrator feel like she's 5?*

*When does the narrator think that you act like you're 3?*

*What does the narrator think being 11 is like?*

*When does the narrator feel like she's really 11?*

*How does the narrator feel about turning 11?*

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**Text-Dependent Questions – 2nd Reading**

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

*Why does the author use "they" without telling you exactly who "they" are?*

*Why does the author use "you" throughout the text?*

*Why does the author use the word "and" to begin these sentences?*

*Why is "and" used so many times?*

*What's the purpose of using this "like" at the beginning of the sentence?*

*How is the word "like" being used in Para. 4?*

*What's the author's purpose in using "tree trunk" and "wooden dolls"?*

*Why does the author sometimes write short sentences here (and elsewhere in the passage), then sometimes write really long sentences?*

Text-Dependent Questions – 3rd Reading

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

**What are the themes of this text?**

**What does this last sentence mean?  How do you know that?**

**How does this paragraph support the themes?**

**How does the use of similes support the themes?**

**What does being "smart" or "stupid" have to do with growing up?**

**Do you agree with this point that the author makes?**

## TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS COVER SHEET

For teachers who would like to have all their text-dependent questions organized together, they can write their questions on the *Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet*. A printable template of the cover sheet is provided in the "Tools and Exemplars" section.  An example of an informational text using the *Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet* is also provided in that section.

# FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is the process in which teachers and students use ongoing evidence of learning to adjust instruction or learning tactics during a lesson or in immediate subsequent lessons.[10] Below is a synopsis of the formative assessment process:

(1) Establishing clear Learning Goals for the lesson and associated Success Criteria;

(2) Sharing Learning Goals and Success Criteria with students and making sure they understand what goals and criteria entail;

(3) Planning strategies to elicit evidence of learning during the lesson (what students will say, do, make or write);

(4) Interpreting the evidence as close to the actual time of the lesson as possible to make judgments about where students are in relation to the lesson Learning Goals;

(5) Deciding on appropriate pedagogical action to move students' learning closer to the desired goal;

(6) Involving students in the process through peer and self-assessment.

In close reading, student responses to text-dependent questions are the primary source of evidence teachers use to gauge how students are engaging with the text and the degree to which they are accomplishing the reading goals. For example, to gain information about where students are in relation to one of the goals for close reading of the text "Eleven"—understand the narrator's emotions and why she has those feelings—teachers will pay attention to student responses to the questions: Why doesn't the narrator feel like she's 11? What makes the narrator feel like she's still 10? What makes the narrator feel like she's 5? How does the narrator feel about turning 11? Interpreting responses will provide teachers with an indication of students' current learning status with respect to the goal. With this information, teachers can decide on what deliberate act of teaching[11] to employ so as to move students closer to the goal. For example, modeling through a think-aloud, providing feedback, and prompting are some of the deliberate acts of teaching that teachers can use in response to evidence of student learning.

When students are aware of the learning goals, they can also assess how well they are meeting the goal or provide feedback to their peers about their responses to the text-dependent questions. Of course, students need to be taught how to engage in both self-assessment and peer feedback.

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[10] The formative assessment process and its inclusion in lesson planning are introduced and explained in detail in earlier resources from this series.

[11] The deliberate acts of teaching are addressed in more detail in an earlier resource of this series.

# TOOLS AND EXEMPLARS

This section contains printable guides and templates for the tools described in this resource. It is organized into three parts: guides, templates, and completed examples.

## GUIDES

CCSS THREE-PART MODEL FOR MEASURING TEXT COMPLEXITY
This handout provides more detailed information about the three aspects of the CCSS model for measuring text complexity.

TEXT ANNOTATION PROTOCOL
This handout provides a convenient list of the steps for studying and annotating the selected text in preparation for close reading.

TEXT STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS
This handout provides more information about the levels of text structures (from word to discourse level).  Included in this handout is a checklist of questions teachers can ask themselves as they annotate the text.

MORE ON PLANNING FOR CLOSE READING & TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS
This handout provides more detailed information on planning for close reading and text-dependent questions.

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS GUIDE
This handout provides a convenient list of generic questions that can be used to guide teachers in creating their own text-dependent questions about the text they select for close reading.

## TEMPLATES

SELECTING TEXT TOOL
The purpose of this tool is to determine if a particular text is appropriate to use with a particular set of students for the close reading process.

TEXT COVER SHEET
This cover sheet provides a template to record information about the selected text during a teacher's study of it. The information recorded here provides an overview of the text, which can be used to inform lesson planning. The *Text Cover Sheet* should be used in conjunction with the *Text Annotation Protocol.*

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS COVER SHEET
This cover sheet provides a template for recording text-dependent questions based on the text cover sheet (including goals and Standards) and the text annotations.

# COMPLETED EXAMPLES

INFORMATIONAL TEXT EXAMPLES

The tools described in this resource were applied to *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* by Sarah Thomson (2010), an informational text appropriate for students in grades 2-3.  They are placed together to show teachers the complete set of templates to use when planning for close reading.

Following the *Text Annotation Protocol* for *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*, this teacher recorded her annotations for steps 3 and 4 on two separate pages.  Also, this teacher chose to record the text-dependent questions she wrote on the *Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet* (instead of writing them in the margins of the text). Note that *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* is a picture book, and the original text is accompanied by illustrations of polar bears and the arctic landscape. The text used in these annotated examples does not have any illustrations.

# CCSS Three-Part Model for Measuring Text Complexity[12]

*Organized by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

I. **Qualitative Dimension: (best determined through human judgment)**[13]

- Levels of meaning (literary texts) or purpose (informational texts):
  - Single to multiple levels of meaning
  - Explicit to implicit purpose, which may be hidden or obscure

- **Structure**
  - Simple to complex
  - Explicit to implicit
  - Conventional to unconventional (chiefly literary texts)
  - Events related in or out of chronological order (chiefly literary texts)
  - Traits of a common genre or subgenre to traits specific to a particular discipline (chiefly informational texts)
  - Simple to sophisticated graphics
  - Graphics unnecessary or merely supplementary to understanding the text to graphics essential to understanding the text and may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text

- **Language conventionality and clarity**
  - Literal to figurative or ironic
  - Clear to ambiguous or purposefully misleading
  - Contemporary, familiar to archaic or otherwise unfamiliar
  - Conversational to general academic and domain-specific

- **Knowledge demands: cultural/literary knowledge (chiefly literary texts**)
  - Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required to cultural and literary knowledge useful
  - Low intertextuality (few if any references/allusions to other texts) to high intertextuality (many references/allusions to other texts)

- **Knowledge demands: content/disciplinary knowledge (chiefly informational texts)**
  - Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required to extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge required
  - Low intertextuality (few if any references to/citations of other texts) to high intertextuality (many references to/citations of other texts)

II. **Quantitative: (typically measured by computer software)**[14]

- **Word length or frequency**

- **Sentence length**

- **Text cohesion** (the linking of ideas within a text)

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[12] For more detailed explanations of this model, please refer to Appendix A of the ELA & Literacy CCSS document.

[13] The following information on the qualitative dimension comes directly from Figure 2: Qualitative Dimensions of Text Complexity in Appendix A of the ELA & Literacy CCSS (p. 6). The CCSS adapted this information from several sources.

[14] Software aligned to CCSS grade level text complexity designations include, for example, the Lexile Framework for Reading, developed by MetaMetrics, Inc. (www.lexile.com).

III. **Reader and Task Considerations: (best assessed by teachers using their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject)**

- **Reader motivation:** self-efficacy as a reader, reading purpose, and level of interest in the content

- **Reader knowledge:** knowledge of vocabulary, topic, language, discourse, and comprehension strategies

- **Reader experiences:** translatable experiences for meaning making

- **Task purpose:** type of reading to be done related to intended outcome; e.g., skimming, reading to learn (e.g., studying), reading for enjoyment, following directions, etc.)

- **Task complexity:** level of cognitive demand

- **Task-related question complexity:** level of critical and creative thinking

# Text Annotation Protocol

*Created by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

1) First, read to get the "big picture" of the text. Get a general sense of what the text is about, being sure to note aspects of the text that catch your attention.

2) Next, read through the text to note its major themes or ideas, levels of meaning, as well as the author's purpose (some of these concepts are more relevant to either literary or informational texts).

3) On your third reading, annotate the text for types of language that the author uses, such as key words, types of sentence structures, visual components, and text cohesion strategies. Note the reasons why the author uses these features in relation to the text's purpose or theme. Also annotate any images, or other forms of visual representation included with the text (e.g., data charts and diagrams accompanying science or social studies texts), noting the information they contain and the ways they may augment student understanding of the text.  Look for the devices and features that stand out or are used repeatedly by the author.

4) Finally, read through the text a few more times with your students in mind. Based on what you have already noted and annotated, determine which aspects of the text you want your students to pay attention to. Also, make annotations about which aspects of the text may be challenging for specific individual students or groups of students (e.g., English learners). The annotations made in your final reading may end up being a synthesis of your earlier annotations of the text where you noted the author's use of language and sentence structure.

# Text Study Guide for Teachers

*Created by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

When annotating text or filling out the cover sheet, teachers pay attention to language demands of the text and text features. Paying attention to the text's language demands is important for all students and it is essential for English learners.

Below is a list of questions that teachers can ask themselves as they annotate text in preparation for close reading with students. The list is not exhaustive, but it should provide teachers with ideas about which features make the text complex and challenging to the reader. Once teachers have identified areas of the text that are challenging to the intended group(s) of students, they will need to think of strategies that support students in understanding these features in relation to students' reading, comprehending, and learning from text.

| TEXT FEATURES |
|---|
| **Vocabulary & Expanded Word Groups** |
| ☐   What words may be unfamiliar to students? |
| ☐   Academic (general, content-specific, specialized/technical) |
| ☐   Figurative |
| ☐   Antiquated |
| ☐   Multiple meaning |
| ☐   Derived words (e.g., nominalizations) |
| ☐   Other |
| ☐   What phrases may be unfamiliar to students? |
| ☐   Noun phrases |
| ☐   Adverbial phrases |
| ☐   Prepositional phrases |
| ☐   Other |
| ☐   Are literary devices (mainly for literary texts) used? |
| **Sentence Structure** |
| ☐   Which sentences might pose comprehension problems to students?  Why? |
| ☐   Are the sentences long because of complex syntax? (Complex syntax can include embedded clauses, gerunds, and other clause or phrase structures; see above section on phrases.) |
| ☐   Are there nominalizations in the sentences? (Nominalizations–converting a verb into a noun, e.g., "instruct" to "instruction"–allow for more information to be packed into seemingly simple sentences.) |
| ☐   What are the connections made in and between sentences? (e.g., causal connectors like "because" or "however"; conjunctions such as "and" or "yet") |
| ☐   What cohesive devices are used to connect ideas? (e.g., references like "it" or "they"; temporal connectors like "when" or "first") |
| ☐   Are the cohesive devices complex and/or unclear? |
| ☐   Are cohesive devices used to connect ideas within a sentence, between sentences, and/or across paragraphs? |

| **Paragraph Structure & Purpose** |
| --- |
| ☐ Do paragraphs have a "standard" organization? |
|    ☐ If so, does each paragraph contain a topic sentence (usually for informational text)? |
|    ☐ If not, how are the paragraph(s) written and how are the sentences organized within the paragraph(s)? |
| ☐ What are the functions of the paragraph (e.g., to introduce, to support, to conclude)? |
| **Text Structure, Organization, & Purpose** |
| ☐ How is the text organized? (e.g., chronologically, cause and effect, compare and contrast) |
| ☐ What is the genre of the text? (Text organizational structures are related to certain genres of text. See examples below.) |
|    ☐ For informational text, is there an introduction, thesis statement, and/or conclusion? |
|    ☐ For literary text, what is the plot structure (e.g., rising action, climax, falling action)? |
|    ☐ For literary text, is the plot chronological, or does it jump around? |
| ☐ Do visual texts (e.g., graphs, tables, diagrams, illustrations) accompany the written text? |
|    ☐ To what degree do the visual texts aid comprehension of the written text? |
|    ☐ To what degree do the visual texts correspond with the written text? |
| **Functions, Design, & Context** |
| ☐ What are the functions of the text? (e.g., to explain, to describe, to tell a story (narrative), to argue or persuade) |
| ☐ What is the author's purpose for writing the text? (e.g., is there a theme, an argument, or point of view exposed by the author?) |
| ☐ What is the author's tone in the text? (e.g., authoritative, exploratory, humorous) |
| ☐ Is the text presented in a "considerate" (i.e., reader friendly) or "inconsiderate" manner? ("Considerate text" is well-written, well-organized, visually presented in a clear manner (e.g., use of white space), all of which aid readers in comprehension. "Inconsiderate text" is poorly written and organized and presented visually in a manner that is difficult to read, all of which require more work from readers to comprehend the text.) |
| ☐ How complex are the ideas and the content found in the text? |
| **Knowledge** |
| ☐ What is students' prior knowledge of the content? Prior knowledge includes students': |
|    ☐ Life experience (which may be helpful to connect to in literary texts) |
|    ☐ Cultural/literary knowledge (mostly relevant for literary texts) |
|    ☐ Content-area/disciplinary knowledge (mostly relevant for informational texts) |

# More on Planning for Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions

*Organized by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

Timothy Shanahan recommends at least three readings of a text, in which the main purpose for each reading is aligned with the three main categories of the ELA Anchor Standards for Reading: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.  The table below provides a synopsis of Shanahan's approach.

| READING | PURPOSE | TEACHER ACTIVITIES |
|---|---|---|
| Pre-Reading | Exploring students' prior knowledge; setting teachers' purpose for using the text; previewing and contextualizing the text | • Make pre-reading activities brief<br>• Give students some information to promote interest and enthusiasm about reading the text without giving away too much about it |
| 1st Reading<br>What the text says<br><br>(Key Ideas and Details) | Comprehending the main gist of the text (e.g., retelling the plot, answering questions on the key ideas and details of the text) | • Through text-dependent questions, guide students to consider important key ideas and details from the text<br>• Work to clarify any confusions students may have about the text's content/message<br>• Use text-dependent questions to frame student discussions around the text in order for students to gain a firm understanding of the content/message |
| 2nd Reading<br>How the text is worded<br><br>(Craft and Structure) | Understanding how the author wrote the text to convey specific ideas and emotions (e.g., organization of text, literary devices, quality of the evidence, data/visual presentation, word choice) | • Through text-dependent questions, guide students to think about how the text works to communicate ideas and the author's purpose<br>• Student discussions resulting from these questions should lead to students' understanding of how the text works, which will inform the deeper implications of text (e.g., purpose and theme; see below) |
| 3rd Reading<br>What the text means<br><br>(Integration of Knowledge and Ideas) | Going further/deeper with the text from the information gleaned from earlier readings (e.g., meaning/purpose/theme, author's point, readers' evaluations, comparisons with other texts, judgments about the text) | • Through text-dependent questions, guide students to think about what this text means to them and how it connects to other texts or events<br>• Students need to evaluate the quality of the text and to connect their experiences to the text |

See www.shanahanonliteracy.com/2012/07/planning-for-close-reading.html. Also see "Additional Resources" for information and a link to Shanahan's blog.

# Text-Dependent Questions Guide

*Organized by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

| | |
|---|---|
| **1ˢᵗ reading:**<br>***What it says.*** | • What is the text saying? |
| **2ⁿᵈ reading:**<br>***How it says it.*** | • How did the author organize it?<br><br>• What literary devices were used and how effective were they?<br><br>• What was the quality of the evidence?<br><br>• If data were presented, how was that done?<br><br>• If any visual texts (e.g., diagrams, tables, illustrations) were presented, how was that done?<br><br>• Why did the author choose this word or that word? Was the meaning of a key term consistent or did it change across the text? |
| **3ʳᵈ reading:**<br>***What it means.*** | • What does this text mean?<br><br>• What was the author's point?<br><br>• What does it have to say to me about my life or my world? How do I evaluate the quality of this work—aesthetically, substantively?<br><br>• How does this text connect to other texts I know? |
| **General follow-up questions for any of the text-dependent questions are:** | • How do you know?<br><br>• What in the text tells you that?<br><br>• What's the evidence? |

See www.shanahanonliteracy.com/2012/07/planning-for-close-reading.html. Also see "Additional Resources" for information and a link to Shanahan's blog.

# Selecting Text Tool

*Adapted by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

Title and source: _____

Author: _____   Grade Level and area: _____

| Factors Affecting Text Challenge | Notes |
|---|---|
| **Age appropriateness**<br>Consider:<br>• word recognition demands (sight words & decoding)<br>• age of the main character(s)<br>• prior knowledge assumed by the text<br>• maturity required to deal with the themes<br>• familiarity of contexts, settings, and subject matter<br>• likely interests, motivation, and experiences of readers | |
| **Complexity of ideas**<br>Consider:<br>• accessibility of the themes<br>• implied information or ideas (requiring readers to infer)<br>• irony or ambiguity<br>• abstract ideas<br>• metaphors and other figurative or connotative language<br>• technical information<br>• support from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, and so on | |
| **Structure and coherence of the text**<br>Consider:<br>• flashbacks or time shifts<br>• narrative point of view<br>• mixed text types<br>• connections across the text<br>• examples and explanations<br>• competing information<br>• length of paragraphs<br>• unattributed dialogue<br>• use of headings and subheadings | |

| Syntactic structure of the text | |
|---|---|
| Consider: <br><br> • sentence length <br> • the balance of simple, compound, complex, or incomplete sentences <br> • use of passive voice or nominalization <br> • repetition of words or phrases <br> • changes in verb tense | |
| **Vocabulary difficulty** <br><br> Consider: <br><br> • unfamiliar vocabulary <br> • technical and academic terms, non-English words, and proper nouns <br> • sentence-level and/or visual support <br> • contextual clues <br> • the use of a glossary or footnotes | |
| **Length of the text** | |

| Estimated reading year level: <br><br> _____ | Notes: |
|---|---|

# Text Cover Sheet

*Created by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

**Title of text:** _____

| ELA & Literacy Standards |
|---|
|  |

| Other Content-Related Standards |
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| Reading Purpose and Text Content |
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| **Goals** *Reading & Literacy* |
| *Content* |

Big Picture/Gist of text

Text Purpose/Levels of Meaning

| Text and Language Challenges and Connections |
| --- |
| **Vocabulary** |
| **Text Features and Structure** |
| **Specific Knowledge Required** |
| **Text Connections** |

# Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet

*Created by CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

| Text-Dependent Questions (TDQ) |
| --- |
| 1) TDQ for students' first reading |
| 2) TDQ for students' second reading |
| 3) TDQ for students' third reading |

# Selecting Text Tool - *Where Do Polar Bears Live? by Sarah L. Thomson*

*Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

**Title and source:** Where do Polar Bears Live? (from CCSS Appendix B)

**Author:** Sarah L. Thomson     **Grade Level and area:** 2nd Grade, Reading

| Factors Affecting Text Challenge | Notes |
|---|---|
| **Age appropriateness**<br>Consider:<br>• word recognition demands (sight words & decoding)<br>• age of the main character(s)<br>• prior knowledge assumed by the text<br>• maturity required to deal with the themes<br>• familiarity of contexts, settings, and subject matter<br>• likely interests, motivation, and experiences of readers | • *Most of the words are easily decodable though many may be unfamiliar and slow down students' reading fluency as they sound them out*<br>• *The characters are animals—one a baby and the other its mother (a relationship students can relate to)*<br>• *The text assumes some knowledge of the Arctic climate (or cold weather climates)*<br>• *The themes and subject matter are appropriate and probably interesting for 2nd graders (the cub romps around in the snow)* |
| **Complexity of ideas**<br>Consider:<br>• accessibility of the themes<br>• implied information or ideas (requiring readers to infer)<br>• irony or ambiguity<br>• abstract ideas<br>• metaphors and other figurative or connotative language<br>• technical information<br>• support from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, and so on | • *Most of the information is straight forward (no abstractions or ambiguity)*<br>• *There are some comparisons made that assume prior knowledge, e.g., "the size of a cocker spaniel" and "no bigger than a guinea pig"*<br>• *The picture book includes images that can help orient students* |
| **Structure and coherence of the text**<br>Consider:<br>• flashbacks or time shifts<br>• narrative point of view<br>• mixed text types<br>• connections across the text<br>• examples and explanations<br>• competing information<br>• length of paragraphs<br>• unattributed dialogue<br>• use of headings and subheadings | • *The text includes time shifts indicated by time order words—this could be confusing for some students, particularly English learners, if they are not familiar with these words*<br>• *The text is informational but includes a series of action events that together are structurally similar to narrative text* |
| **Syntactic structure of the text**<br>Consider:<br>• sentence length<br>• the balance of simple, compound, complex, or incomplete sentences<br>• use of passive voice or nominalization<br>• repetition of words or phrases<br>• changes in verb tense | • *The text has a combination of sentence types, including sentences starting with contextual information*<br>• *There is little passive voice in the text so students should be able to connect the subject with the action or characteristic described*<br>• *The sentences are not overly long* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vocabulary difficulty**<br><br>Consider:<br><br>• unfamiliar vocabulary<br><br>• technical and academic terms, non-English words, and proper nouns<br><br>• sentence-level and/or visual support<br><br>• contextual clues<br><br>• the use of a glossary or footnotes | • *The vocabulary includes mostly everyday language*<br><br>• *There are some subject-specific terms, e.g., fur and blubber, and specific verbs describing action, e.g., pokes, sniffs, tumbles* |
| **Length of the text** | • *This text is short and somewhat dense* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Estimated reading year level:**<br><br>2 | **Notes:**<br><br>*Because of the context of this informational text, the Arctic, students in my classroom would probably have some trouble visualizing the scenes described in the text without the support of the images in the book. These pictures of the Arctic and polar bears will be important to use to stimulate students' background knowledge, especially for those who haven't ever experienced snow. It is a good choice for close reading for my students, as there is a lot of information they can extract from the text and discuss, and some complex sentence structures to work through. Some students may need additional scaffolding while they decode unfamiliar words.* |

# Text Annotations - *Where Do Polar Bears Live? by Sarah L. Thomson*

*Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

The following example shows annotations from a teacher's third reading (step 3 in the *Text Annotation Protocol*) in which she makes notes about the types of language that the author uses, such as key words, types of sentence structures, and text cohesion strategies. The teacher also comments on the reasons why the author uses these features. Note that the information gathered from the teacher's first and second readings of the text are recorded in the *Text Cover Sheet* (see page 41).
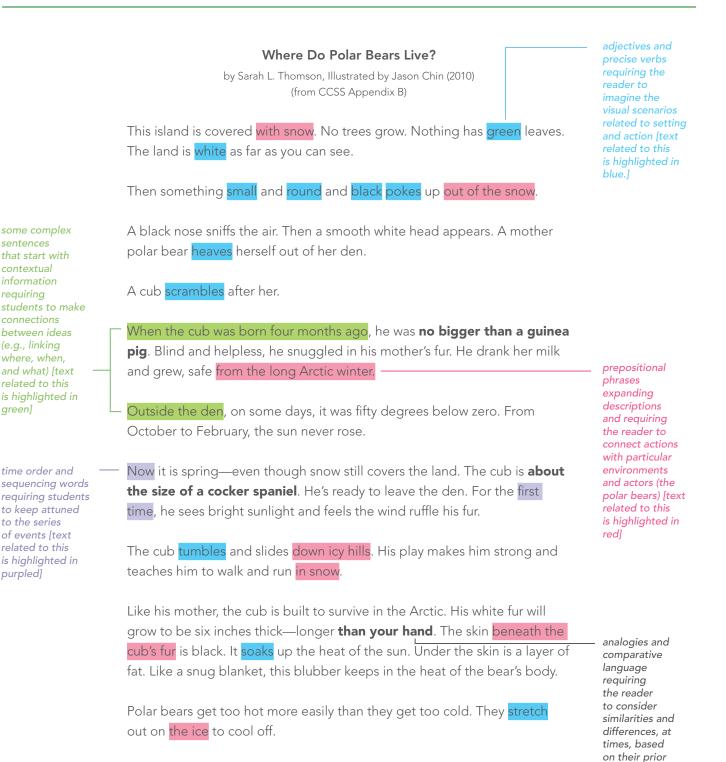
**Text Annotation Example #1 (third reading)**

| Text | Annotation |
| --- | --- |
| This island is covered with snow. No trees grow. Nothing has green leaves. The land is white as far as you can see. | • *Orientation to place: gives the reader a picture of where the events are occurring. Simple, declarative sentences. Mostly 3rd person with one 2nd person reference*<br><br>• *Generous use of topic vocabulary in the form of nouns referring to "place," e.g., island, snow, trees, leaves, land*<br><br>• *Verbs are generally action or "to be" verbs* |
| Then something small and round and black pokes up out of the snow.<br><br>A black nose sniffs the air. Then a smooth white head appears. A mother polar bear heaves herself out of her den. | • *First indication of time and movement with the use of the words "then" and "pokes"*<br><br>• *The text has descriptive details to draw the reader in before explaining what is happening, e.g., that there is a mother polar bear coming out of her den*<br><br>• *With the beginning description of movement comes the use of highly descriptive action verbs: sniffs, heaves, scrambles*<br><br>• *Regular use of prepositional phrases to expand simple sentences* |
| A cub scrambles after her. | • *Present tense action* |
| When the cub was born four months ago, he was no bigger than a guinea pig. Blind and helpless, he snuggled in his mother's fur. He drank her milk and grew, safe from the long Arctic winter.<br><br>Outside the den, on some days, it was fifty degrees below zero. From October to February, the sun never rose. | • *Background information*<br><br>• *This first sentence includes information before the subject in the form of a dependent clause starting with "when"*<br><br>• *This section includes the first use of past tense*<br><br>• *The reader is asked to imagine an earlier scenario with the same "characters" and in the same place but when the cub was a newborn*<br><br>• *Place word "outside"* |
| Now it is spring—even though snow still covers the land. The cub is about the size of a cocker spaniel. He's ready to leave the den. For the first time, he sees bright sunlight and feels the wind ruffle his fur | • *Present tense, more scene-setting about the cub*<br><br>• *Time-order word "now"* |
| The cub tumbles and slides down icy hills. His play makes him strong and teaches him to walk and run in snow. | • *Present tense action plus background* |

| Like his mother, the cub is built to survive in the Arctic. His white fur will grow to be six inches thick—longer than your hand. The skin beneath the cub's fur is black. It soaks up the heat of the sun. Under the skin is a layer of fat. Like a snug blanket, this blubber keeps in the heat of the bear's body. | • *Information related to how the polar bear's physical from and behavior allow it to survive in the cold Arctic* |
|---|---|

The next example shows annotations from the teacher's fourth reading of the text with her students' learning status and interpretive goals in mind (step 4 in the *Text Annotation Protocol*). During this read through, the teacher determined which aspects of the text she wanted her students to attend to, either because the text features would be challenging for her students or because those features would be critical for overall text comprehension.

# Text Annotation Example #2 (fourth reading)

*Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

## Where Do Polar Bears Live?

by Sarah L. Thomson, Illustrated by Jason Chin (2010)
(from CCSS Appendix B)

*adjectives and precise verbs requiring the reader to imagine the visual scenarios related to setting and action [text related to this is highlighted in blue.]*

This island is covered with snow. No trees grow. Nothing has green leaves. The land is white as far as you can see.

Then something small and round and black pokes up out of the snow.

A black nose sniffs the air. Then a smooth white head appears. A mother polar bear heaves herself out of her den.

A cub scrambles after her.

*some complex sentences that start with contextual information requiring students to make connections between ideas (e.g., linking where, when, and what) [text related to this is highlighted in green]*

When the cub was born four months ago, he was **no bigger than a guinea pig**. Blind and helpless, he snuggled in his mother's fur. He drank her milk and grew, safe from the long Arctic winter.

Outside the den, on some days, it was fifty degrees below zero. From October to February, the sun never rose.

*prepositional phrases expanding descriptions and requiring the reader to connect actions with particular environments and actors (the polar bears) [text related to this is highlighted in red]*

*time order and sequencing words requiring students to keep attuned to the series of events [text related to this is highlighted in purpled]*

Now it is spring—even though snow still covers the land. The cub is **about the size of a cocker spaniel**. He's ready to leave the den. For the first time, he sees bright sunlight and feels the wind ruffle his fur.

The cub tumbles and slides down icy hills. His play makes him strong and teaches him to walk and run in snow.

Like his mother, the cub is built to survive in the Arctic. His white fur will grow to be six inches thick—longer **than your hand**. The skin beneath the cub's fur is black. It soaks up the heat of the sun. Under the skin is a layer of fat. Like a snug blanket, this blubber keeps in the heat of the bear's body.

*analogies and comparative language requiring the reader to consider similarities and differences, at times, based on their prior knowledge [text related to this is in bold]*

Polar bears get too hot more easily than they get too cold. They stretch out on the ice to cool off.

# Text Cover Sheet - *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*

*Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

**Title of text:**   Where Do Polar Bears Live? By Sarah L. Thomson

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### ELA & Literacy Standards

**CCSS**

Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1)

Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.4)

Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6)

Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.8)

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### Other Content-Related Standards

**Next Generation Science Standards**

- For any particular environment, some kinds of organisms survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. (3-LS4-3)

- The environment also affects the traits that an organism develops. (3-LS3-2)

- Being part of a group helps animals obtain food, defend themselves, and cope with changes. Groups may serve different functions and vary dramatically in size. (3-LS2-1)

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### Reading Purpose and Text Content

**Goals**

*Reading & Literacy*

- Analyze how the author uses details to describe the polar bears' environment

- Analyze the author's use of specific words and phrases to convey the time sequence and the growth of the cub

- Integrate information from images and text to comprehend the text. *Teacher note: either use images from the picture book or find other relevant images*

*Content*

- Understand some environmental conditions in the Arctic

- Understand why polar bears can survive in these environmental conditions

**Big Picture/Gist of text**

This text describes the early stages of life of polar bears, including why they have certain physical features and behaviors, in relation to the Arctic environment. This information is conveyed in part through describing the experiences of a particular baby polar bear that is being cared for by its mother.

Text Purpose / Levels of Meaning

There is a focus on how polar bears' physical characteristics and behaviors (e.g., hibernations) are designed (i.e., adaptations) to survive the harsh Arctic climate. In conveying the experiences of these polar bears, the author draws several stark contrasts: first there is the barren lifeless landscape, and then there are the bears; there is the heaving mother and the scrambling baby, and there is the tiny baby and larger growing bear.

## Text and Language Challenges and Connections

### Vocabulary (Possible unfamiliar and/or topic-specific words and phrases)

- Words/phrases that are likely to block student access to the text (could be taught ahead of time): "cocker spaniel," "guinea pig," "fifty degrees below zero," "the long Arctic winter," "the sun never rose"

- Words/phrases that are important but are defined explicitly in the text (could query after a reading): "blubber"

- Words/phrases that might be understood from context (could ask why these words were treated differently but the author): "like a snug blanket," "den," "cub," "Arctic"

- Words that might be problematic for ELs : "fur," "pokes," "like his mother," "sniffs," "appears," "heaves," "scrambles," "snuggled," "ruffle," "tumbles," "survive," "soaks"

### Text Features and Structure

- This explanation moves between the present and past tenses

- The use of descriptive details about the setting, physical characteristics, and actions

- The use of language that signals time and sequence

### Specific Knowledge Required

N/A

### Specific Knowledge Required

*Related to:*

Content of the story: polar bears, the Arctic, organisms/animals surviving in different environments, animals growing up, babies and their mothers

Style of the story: stark contrasts depicted, use of vivid descriptions of action

# Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet - *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*

*Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014*

| Text-Dependent Questions (TDQ) |
| --- |

**1) TDQ for students' first reading**

    *(a)  What is the text saying?*

    *(b)  How would you describe the place where the polar bears live?*

    *(c)  What have you learned about polar bears from the text and images?*

**2) TDQ for students' second reading**

    *(a)  What is the author communicating in the first paragraph? Why is this information important?*

        • *What kinds of words and phrases does the author use to communicate these ideas?*

    *(b)  What actions take place in the text?*

        • *Can you explain how these actions are sequenced?*

        • *What words and phrases does the author use to provide clues for you to understand this sequence?*

    *(c)  Where does the text communicate to you things that happened to the polar bears before the current action?*

        • *What were those things that happened? How do they relate to the polar bears' environment?*

        • *Does this information help you better understand what's happening with the polar bears in the text now? How?*

**3) TDQ for students' third reading**

    *(a)  What is the relationship between the polar bears' features and their functions?*

        • *Why do polar bears have the features they have?*

        • *How is the polar bear adapted to survive in the Artic?*

    *(b)  In what ways does the mother polar bear help the baby polar bear survive?*

    *(c)  Do you think you could survive in the Arctic? Why or why not?*

    *(d)  What is the author's point?*

    *(e)  What else have you read that reminds you of this story? In what way is it similar or different?*

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources contain a variety of information that supports CCSS-aligned instructional planning as teachers select and analyze texts for close reading.

**ELA & Literacy CCSS, Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards**
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf
The three appendices of the ELA & Literacy CCSS provide additional information and supporting materials for educators implementing the CCSS in their classrooms. In particular, Appendix A describes the research that underpins the Standards. Appendix A is where the Model for Determining Text Complexity is found.

**National Education Association: Common Core State Standards**
http://www.nea.org/home/46653.htm
The National Education Association (NEA) is the nation's largest professional employee organization. NEA is committed to advancing the cause of public education, and it's members work at every level of education. NEA's Common Core State Standards website provides information to prepare educators to implement the Standards, including the Common Core State Standards Toolkit, a document that has updated links to many websites and resources.

**New York Department of Education: Engage NY**
http://www.engageny.org/english-language-arts
The New York State Department of Education has developed ELA modules for grades 3-12 that are available to educators on their website. These modules focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high-quality texts. Modules may include several units and each unit may include a set of sequenced, coherent progressions of learning experiences that build knowledge and understanding of major concepts. The units include daily lesson plans, guiding questions, recommended texts, scaffolding strategies, examples of proficient student work, and other classroom resources, such as worksheets and handouts that students can use to help them closely read text.

**The New Zealand Curriculum Online**
http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/
This website, maintained by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, contains a variety of resources for teachers, parents, and administrators.  Curricular resources are available, as well as information on pedagogy and instruction, standards, professional development, community involvement, child and adolescent development, and language acquisition.

**The Reading and Writing Project**
http://readingandwritingproject.com/
The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project is a research and staff development organization housed at Teachers College, Columbia University. It was founded and is directed by Lucy Calkins, The Robinson Professor of Children's Literature at Teachers College. The mission of the Reading and Writing Project is to help young people become avid and skilled readers, writers, and inquirers. The organization has developed state-of-the-art tools and methods for teaching reading and writing, for using performance assessments and learning progressions to accelerate progress, and for literacy-rich content-area instruction. Thousands of teachers regard the Reading and Writing Project as a continual source of professional renewal and education.

Student Achievement Partners
http://www.achievethecore.org/
Founded by three of the contributing authors of the Common Core State Standards, Student Achievement Partners supports effective, innovative implementation of the Standards, with the goal of accelerating achievement for all students. The organization brings together educators and researchers to develop evidence-based practices and tools that are made openly available at no cost to states, districts, schools, and teachers, who are encouraged to take these resources and make them their own.

TextProject
http://www.textproject.org/
TextProject, Inc. is a non-profit corporation that formalizes a decade-plus of ongoing work by its founder, president, and CEO Dr. Elfrieda H. Hiebert, a nationally-renowned professor of education and researcher in the field of reading. The website provides information and materials to bring beginning and struggling readers to high levels of literacy through a variety of strategies and tools, particularly the texts used for reading instruction. TextProject's three priorities in support of its mission are: creating products and prototypes for student reading programs, primarily based on the "TExT model" of text complexity; providing teacher support resources and classroom reading activities; and supporting and disseminating related research.

Timothy Shanahan
http://www.shanahanonliteracy.com/
Timothy Shanahan is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of urban education at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he is Director of the Center for Literacy and chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. His research emphasizes reading-writing relationships, reading assessment, and improving reading achievement. His blog provides information for teachers and parents on teaching and assessing reading, writing, and literacy.

Understanding Language: Persuasion across Time and Space
http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/ela_pdf/ELA%20Lesson%202.pdf
Understanding Language, centered at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, develops knowledge and resources that help content-area teachers meet English Language Learners' language needs in the context of the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. In particular for ELA, the Understanding Language group has developed a unit on informational text to illustrate how CCSS-aligned tasks can be used to support ELA instruction and language development for ELs at the middle school level. The lesson found in the above link is an example of a close reading lesson with informational text for middle school students, including English learners.

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