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Introduction

Texts For Close Reading and Deep Comprehension

Close reading involves careful study of a short text passage to build a deep, critical understanding of the text. By developing children's comprehension and higher-order thinking skills, you can help them make sense of the world.

"A significant body of research links the close reading of complex text – whether the student is a struggling reader or advanced – to significant gains in reading proficiency, and finds close reading to be a key component of college and career readiness."
(Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2012, p7)

Reading and Re-Reading For Different Purposes

The texts in *Close Reading* are carefully selected and deliberately short. This focuses children on purposeful reading, re-reading and responding. They learn about the topic through rich vocabulary development and deep comprehension.



Children re-read and analyse the text through questioning to explore:

- text structure and features
- key ideas and details
- connections/conclusions
- predictions/inferences
- words and phrases in context.

Children actively respond to the text using:

- higher-order thinking skills
- paired discussion
- written responses.

Text Marking: A Powerful Active-Reading Strategy

To improve their comprehension of literary texts, children must actively engage with the material. Careful and consistent text marking by hand is one valuable way to accomplish this. The true goal of teaching text marking is to help children internalise an effective close-reading strategy, not to have them show how many marks they can make on a page. Text-marking skills are encouraged in each passage.

Dancing Day

Read the dance story.

Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

Zoey was walking home from school with her friend Trey. She had an extra bounce in her step.

“Why are you so jiggy and bubbly today?” asked Trey.

“It’s Wednesday,” said Zoey. “This is my favourite day. It’s when I go to my dance class. My friend Max’s mum teaches us. She used to be a dancer. We practise in their basement.”

She gave her backpack to Trey to hold. Then she did a graceful leap and twirl right there in the middle of the pavement. Trey smiled, gave her a thumbs up and said, “Look at you, girl!”

“Why don’t you come along with me,” she said. “It’s really fun to dance!”

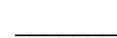


Text Marking

Think about the story.



Circle WHO the story is mostly about.



Underline two details that tell about that person.

Dancing Day

► Answer each question. Give details from the story.

1 Which shows that Trey noticed ‘an extra bounce’ in Zoey’s step?

- A He held her school bag.
- B He smiled and gave a ‘thumbs up’.
- C He asked why she was jiggy and bubbly.
- D He didn’t notice anything different about Zoey.

What helped you answer? _____

2 Who said, “She used to be a dancer”?

- A Trey
- B Zoey
- C Max’s mum
- D Max

What helped you answer? _____

3 Why do you think Zoey danced for Trey? _____

4 Do you think Trey will go with Zoey to her dance class? Why or why not?

1 Character Name _____ Date _____

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★ ★ Text Marking ★ ★

Think about the story.

○ Circle WHO the story is mostly about.

— Underline two details that tell about that person.

14 Close Reading Fiction Ages 7+

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 1: Dancing Day

1 C; *Sample answer:* I picked C because he asks Zoey why she is acting so jiggy and bubbly, and that's like bouncing around.

2 B; *Sample answer:* I picked B because I found those words in the story and read that Zoey said them.

3 *Sample answer:* I think she wanted to show how much fun she has when she dances.

4 Accept reasonable responses. *Sample answers:* He and Zoey are friends, so maybe he'll give it a try. Or: Maybe Zoey first has to ask Max's mum if she can bring someone else to the class.

2 Character Name _____ Date _____

Satellite Search

Read the historical fiction story.
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

It was October, 1957. Nora and Fred went to bed early because they would lose sleep later. Fred grumbled about the babyish bedtime. Fred didn't care about science. Nora was different. She knew about Sputnik (SPUH-*nik*). She knew it was the first satellite (SAT-uh-*lite*) ever to travel around the Earth. She had heard this spacecraft's 'beep-beep' sound on the radio. She saw photos and read news stories about it.

That night, the whole family went outside after midnight. They searched the dark sky for Sputnik. "Is that it?" Nora asked, pointing to a bright star.

"No," said Dad. "Sputnik moves fast, like a shooting star."

"Can't I go to sleep?" whined Fred.

"No! Keep looking!" Nora urged.

Mum spotted it first, pointing, "I think that's Sputnik!"

"Freddie, look!" cried Nora. But her brother was already sound asleep on the grass.



Sputnik was about the size of a beach ball.

★ ★ Text Marking ★ ★

Think about the children in the story.

○ Circle the names of these two characters.

— Underline one detail about each character.

16 Close Reading Fiction Ages 7+

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 2: Satellite Search

1 C; *Sample answer:* I picked C because the story said so in the first paragraph.

2 A; *Sample answer:* The story showed that she is interested in science and that she knew about Sputnik.

3 *Sample answer:* Their parents would wake the children up in the middle of the night to go outside to look for Sputnik.

4 *Sample answer:* It says at the beginning that it was October in 1957. That is many years ago!