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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 informational 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.

Instant Replay

Read the sports history article.

Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

Was that a penalty? In today's fast-paced sports, action can be difficult to see. Since referees, umpires and linespeople are only human, they make mistakes. But such errors, unintentional as they are, have affected the course and outcomes of many matches. Players, manager and fans complained about refereeing decisions. Something had to be done; technology, potentially, offers a solution.

In 2018, the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system was inaugurated at an FA Cup match between Brighton & Hove Albion and Crystal Palace. Decisions became more accurate because officials could analyse slow-motion video from several camera angles to reconsider and then overturn any incorrect decisions.

However, although some errors have been corrected because of this innovation, it has also led to complaints about which incidents are reviewed, how long the reviews take and how reviews interrupt play. Some feel that the old problems have simply been replaced by new ones.

Tennis, another sport with long and honoured traditions, had similar issues with officiating. Line calls were contested vigorously by players. Spectators, justifiably so, were frustrated when bad calls were upheld. That ball was in! Umpires rarely changed their calls, so tennis officials acknowledged that changes in officiating rules were needed.

Change came to the Wimbledon tennis championship in 2007 with the introduction of Hawk-Eye. This system uses cameras angles to calculate the trajectory of the ball. Accordingly, questionable calls could then be reviewed and corrected. Hawk-Eye provides a reliable and impartial second opinion, but over-use could get out of hand. For that reason, players are only allowed to challenge three calls per tennis set.



Text Marking

Find the cause-and-effect relationships.

Box the signal words.

Circle the causes.

Underline the effects.

Instant Replay

► Answer each question. Give evidence from the article.

1 Which of the following could be used in place of **inaugurated** (paragraph 2) without changing the meaning of the sentence?

- A elected ► B launched ► C debated ► D overturned

What in the text helped you answer? _____

2 What was not a cause for bringing the Video Assistant Referee system to football?

- A Some incidents are hard to see. ► C Fans wanted football games to be longer.
► B Managers and players argued too much. ► D Bad calls made many loyal fans angry.

What in the text helped you answer? _____

3 In your own words, explain why refereeing review technology is *not* always appreciated by everyone in the sports community.

4 How could overuse of Hawk-Eye **get out of hand** (paragraph 5)? Explain what you think the author means.

9 Cause & Effect Name _____ Date _____

Instant Replay

Read the sports history article. Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

Was that a penalty? In today's fast-paced sports, action can be difficult to see. Since referees, umpires and linespeople are only human, they make mistakes. But such errors, unintentional as they are, have affected the course and outcomes of many matches. Players, manager and fans complained about refereeing decisions. Something had to be done; technology, potentially, offers a solution.

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Text Marking

Find the cause-and-effect relationships.

Box the signal words.

Circle the causes.

_____ Underline the effects.

30 Close Reading Non-fiction 11+ SCHOLASTIC

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 9: Instant Replay

- 1 B; *Sample answer:* I used context clues to work out that 'inaugurated' must mean 'started something new' or 'launched'.
- 2 C; *Sample answer:* Paragraph 3 gives the other three choices as reasons for bringing this change to football.
- 3 *Sample answer:* Adding in time to review video and change decisions takes a lot of time, which interrupts play. Not all incidents are reviewed.
- 4 *Sample answer:* The author says that to stop things getting out of hand, players can only have three challenges per set. So I think that the author means that having more than this would be hard to control. I think the problem must be that if they didn't limit the number of challenges, players could challenge every single point, which would be impractical and unmanageable, or 'out of hand'.

10 Cause & Effect Name _____ Date _____

Better by Hand?

Read the letter to the editor. Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

To the Editor,

The invention of the typewriter by E Remington & Sons in the 1870s resulted in the beginning of a focus on keyboard proficiency rather than on handwriting. Furthermore, due to widespread use of computers today, this change has continued and gained speed. I am all for the advantages of learning to become adept at using improved technology; typing and word-processing are fast and efficient alternatives to writing by hand. But diminished attention to handwriting is not altogether good news.

Because we have become less and less dependent upon handwriting, educators have begun de-emphasising joined writing in classrooms across the country. But several recent studies by neuroscientists and psychologists support the idea that forming letters by hand has significant advantages. These studies show a link between drawing letters freehand and increased brain activity. Their results indicate that recording ideas by hand not only improves motor skills, but helps children retain new information better. It also helps them generate ideas better.

Adults as well as children benefit from writing instead of typing. The new studies indicate that people learn better when they take handwritten notes because doing so leads to better understanding and memorisation. According to the researchers, the act of writing helps us focus on what's important. It may help us think better.

For these reasons, I believe that our schools ought to reinstate some focus on penmanship and on taking notes by hand. I suggest that we continue handwriting practice beyond primary school. The gains could be profound; the losses could be irreversible.

Beryl Lewis

Text Marking

Find the cause-and-effect relationships.

Box the signal words.

Circle the causes.

_____ Underline the effects.

32 Close Reading Non-fiction 11+ SCHOLASTIC

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 10: Better by Hand?

- 1 B; *Sample answer:* Each of the other choices is an advantage of writing by hand, according to the article.
- 2 C; *Sample answer:* In paragraph 1, the writer refers to 'being adept at using technology', so having proficiency means getting good at something.
- 3 *Sample answer:* The author believes that if children and adults stop writing by hand, they may have a harder time learning and remembering and will have one less way to stimulate and focus their brains.
- 4 *Sample answer:* The author accepts that computers and technology are here to stay and do offer many benefits. Lewis wants to show support for technology, but hopes the new findings about the benefits of handwriting are addressed.