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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.

1st Reading — PREPARE AND READ

2nd Reading — READ CLOSELY

3rd Reading — DISCUSS

4th Reading — WRITE

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.

'How Did That Taste, Doggie?'

Read the life science essay.
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

If you have ever spent any time with dogs, you will have noticed how much better their sense of smell is than yours. They can smell things before you do. They can detect smells that you cannot. But how does a dog's sense of taste compare with ours?

Their sense of taste is not as good as ours. You get one clue simply by watching them gobble up food as if they are starving and don't seem to even taste what they are wolfing down. Well, dogs just don't seem to care much about taste. That's because they have fewer taste buds than you do.

Taste buds are groups of cells that let us know how things taste. They tell us whether foods are sweet, salty, sour, bitter or savoury. Taste buds are located on the surface of the tongue. There are also some on the roof of the mouth and in the back of the mouth. The more taste buds you have, the better your sense of taste is. Whereas humans have about 9000 of these, canines have about 1700.

But compared to cats, dogs are foodies. Poor cats have only about 470 taste buds in their mouths.

A puppy wolfing down dinner

Text Marking

Find the main idea and supporting details.

◯ Circle the main idea in each paragraph.

_____ Underline supporting details for each main idea.

'How Did That Taste, Doggie?'

▶ **Answer each question. Give evidence from the essay.**

1 Which of the following words has the same meaning as **detect** (paragraph 1)?

▶ **A** avoid   ▶ **B** enjoy   ▶ **C** identify   ▶ **D** taste

What in the text helped you answer? _____

_____

_____

2 Which statement is *true* about the connection between number of taste buds and the ability to taste different things?

▶ **A** An animal with more taste buds has a weaker sense of taste.

▶ **B** An animal with more taste buds senses more kinds of smells.

▶ **C** The fewer taste buds an animal has, the weaker its sense of taste.

▶ **D** There is no connection because all animals can taste the same things.

What in the text helped you answer? _____

_____

_____

3 In your own words, explain what you think it means to 'wolf down' food.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 Suggest a different title that would work for this piece. Explain your thinking.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Answers

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1 Main Idea & Details   Name _____   Date _____

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◄ Sample Text Markings

Passage 1: 'How Did That Taste, Doggie?'

1 C; *Sample answer:* This paragraph talks about how much better dogs can smell than we can. I used context clues in the text to work out that C is the correct answer. Also, 'detect' reminds me of 'detective', and detectives try to identify clues.

2 C; *Sample answer:* In paragraph 3, the author writes, 'the more taste buds you have, the better your sense of taste is'.

3 *Sample answer:* I think it means to gobble the food down as fast as possible. It probably comes from wolves in the wild eating very quickly before others try to take their food.

4 Accept reasonable responses. *Sample answer:* I might call the essay 'All About Taste Buds' because it is mostly about how the number of taste buds affects how well an animal can taste different flavours.

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2 Main Idea & Details   Name _____   Date _____

Towers of Green

Read the architecture essay.
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

Most people would describe farms as huge outdoor fields for growing crops. Farms are mostly horizontal – flat spaces on the land. A vertical farm is a new way to bring farms to cities. Most cities are crowded and lack open spaces, you say. No problem! Vertical farms are flat fields hung from a towering skyscraper.

Supporters of vertical farming envision many benefits for their futuristic idea. First, crops would grow closer to where most people live, saving money and energy now used to transport crops. Next, vertical farming would provide jobs for city workers. And vertical farms would use far less water than traditional farms do.

Architects in Seoul, South Korea, are designing what they call the Urban Skyfarm. It resembles a massive tree that supports 24 acres of 'fields' for growing food. The 'trunk' has rooms for indoor growing. The 'canopy' holds solar panels and wind engines needed to make clean energy. The 'branches' are open-air terraces, stacked one above another, where plants can grow.

The architects see other uses for vertical farms. They could provide spaces for community gardens, public parks, learning centres and farmers' markets. Architects hope that vertical farms will become a major solution to food shortages.

Design for the Urban Skyfarm

Text Marking

Find the main idea and supporting details.

⬭ Circle the main idea in each paragraph.

____ Underline supporting details for each main idea.

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◄ Sample Text Markings

Passage 2: Towers of Green

1 D; *Sample answer:* It says in paragraph 2 that vertical farms could provide jobs and use less water.

2 A; *Sample answer:* The text compares the Skyfarm to a tree and mentions parts, like the trunk, branches and canopy, so the canopy is probably the top. Plus, since the canopy holds solar panels, it makes sense that this is at the top where it can catch sunlight.

3 *Sample answer:* I think they make sense in crowded cities that don't have a lot of open space for traditional farms. Vertical farms would be more likely to fit.

4 *Sample answer:* It seems like the vertical farm would grow more crops in a smaller space so there is less wasted water. Also, it looks like water could probably drip down to layers below.

SCHOLASTIC