

ELA Strategies for Grades 7-12

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Instructional Strategies

Close Reading -- [Close Reading Questions](#)

Close reading is based on three factors: the complexity and richness of the text, the skill of the readers, and the tasks to be completed. Helping students grapple with complex text involves consideration of these factors. You should always approach this process as a series of decisions which changes with each text, group of students, and tasks. The goal is to develop students' ability to independently read and comprehend complex text.

Steps:

- Introduce or re-introduce purpose and text-dependent questions.
- Students reread to answer questions.
- Students think and discuss their answers in pairs or groups.
- Students write answers to questions.

Annotating Text -- [Purposeful Annotations](#)

The purpose of annotating is to deliberately interact with a text. This strategy increases students' interest and engagement. Annotating provides a purpose for the reader and includes creating purposeful notes, highlighting key words and phrases, explaining definitions, and establishing connections within the text.

[Annotating Text -- Video Example](#)

Steps:

- Define the purpose.
- Model annotating while thinking aloud.
- Distribute materials.
- Practice with students.

Assessment Strategies

Hot Seat

The **Hot Seat** is an interactive structure that you can use as part of your formative assessment. Place key reflection or probing questions on the underside of random seats throughout the room. When prompted, students check under their seat to see if they have a Hot Seat card. Students then answer the questions. Students who do not have a hot seat question are asked to agree or disagree with the response and explain their thinking.

Selective Highlighting

Selective highlighting has many benefits including: active reading, identifying important content, taking notes, and making connections.

Steps:

- Introduce learners to the selective highlighting method.
- Model to ensure that learners understand selective highlighting.
- Read through the selection, reread and start to highlight main ideas.
- Highlight the facts, not the whole sentence.
- Summarize what is highlighted.

Have each student read the same passage or resource, highlighting sentences that seem important or interesting. Then, divide the class into groups. Based on what's highlighted, each group should be able to pinpoint the text's main idea or theme, students submit an explanation so you can determine general comprehension levels.



Classroom / Time Management Strategies

Student Engagement

Sometimes you need to throw a twist into the day to re-energize and refocus students. Perhaps try one of the following ideas.

Go on a hike outside. A short walk with fresh air may help students clear their minds and focus better for the remainder of class.

Play a game. Since students are generally competitive, play a quick game. Even if it is just throwing paper wads into a trash can!

Break out the crayons. Give the students blank paper and crayons/colored pencils and have them take notes during the lesson.

Joke of the day. Choose a joke/riddle for each day. They may think it is cheesy, but you will get a laugh watching their reactions!