



The Thompson TDA Model

Close Reading Questions Leading to Text Dependent Analysis

Close reading is one framework that involves the use of a collection of evidence-based comprehension strategies embedded in a teacher-guided discussion and planned around repeated readings of a text, in order to increase and deepen student comprehension.

Close reading can be defined simply as repeated readings and discussion of text in order to increase comprehension. Embedded within close reading lessons are text dependent questions. These questions provide students with the opportunity to think deeply about the meaning of the text, and to answer the questions through collaborative conversations. The close reading text dependent questions should be based on the focus of the text dependent analysis prompt. There is no one correct strategy for creating a set of text dependent questions; however, effective questions engage students in systematically extracting the deep meaning of details, vocabulary, or other literary elements and techniques. The purpose of this resource is to assist educators with developing cognitively complex questions that engage students in collaborative discussions during close reading lessons. The first part of this resource provides a sampling of different questions that can be used to plan a close reading lesson. The second part provides a lesson illustrating how text dependent questions are purposefully selected for a close reading lesson based on a specific text and prompt.

Begin with the End in Mind

Developing text dependent questions for use during close reading first requires the teacher to read and annotate the text, and then write a text dependent analysis prompt. The prompt is based on the reading elements that stand out from the selected text. The text dependent questions for collaborative discussions must focus on key insights that students should gain from reading the text. The questions guide them with tackling difficult sections of the text. The questions move beyond literal comprehension to interpretive comprehension—being able to grasp implied ideas. Students are expected to provide explicit and implicit evidence from the text, rather than their own experience, to support their ideas, claims, and reasoning about what



the author does and/or how the text is structured (Boyle, 2014; Frey & Fisher, 2013; Porter-O'Donnell, 2004). To achieve this purpose, questions should ensure that students:

- make connections and inferences (connect a piece of text and what is in the mind together – background knowledge/experiences and the information in the text);
- examine how key vocabulary or figurative language impacts the meaning of the text;
- probe the meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure (narrative—characters' words, thoughts, and actions, symbolism, theme, etc.; informational—main idea, individual's actions, text features, text structure);
- examine repetitions, shifts or patterns in text;
- consider what the text leaves uncertain or unstated; or
- consider different types of texts beyond words printed on a page.

These close reading questions allow students to orient themselves to the text, guide students to gain deeper insights, challenge their thinking, spark thought-provoking collaborative discussions with peers, and more specifically, lead students to analyze the reading elements expected from the text dependent analysis prompt. The questions will influence how students read a text. It is important for the teacher to recognize that there are many good questions that will inspire deep discussions among students that are not text dependent. For example, asking questions that rely on opinions about issues they read, such as *Do you think internment camps would ever be used in our country today as a means of containing people?* may be thought-provoking and inspire interesting conversations, but they are not text dependent (Boyles, 2014).

The teacher needs to determine stopping points in the text for students to respond to text dependent questions. Although there is no set process for asking text dependent questions, i.e., no set number of sections or amount of questions, the questions must be systematic and purposeful. The text itself will determine where to stop and how often; in fact, deeper dives into the text require fewer, but more probing, questions.

Part I

This section provides examples of different text dependent questions that may occur during collaborative conversations.

A. Questions for making connections, inferences, and revealing reactions	
Focus	Questions
First reaction	What is your first reaction to the text? Briefly explain. What personal connection do you have with this text?
Feelings	What feelings did you have when reading this text? What emotions did you feel as you read the passage?
Inferences	What do you think are the most important details in this part of the text? Why?
Perceptions	What did you see happening in the text? Paraphrase it—retell the major events briefly.



Visual images	What pictures/images were called-to-mind by the text? Describe them briefly.
Associations	What does the text help you think about—people, places, events, sights, smells, or even of something more ambiguous, perhaps feelings or attitudes.
Comparison of Reactions	Compare your understanding of the text with others in your group? In what ways are they similar?

B. Questions for examining how key vocabulary or figurative language impacts the meaning of the text

Focus	Questions
Word Choice	How do particular words cause us to look at ___ (characters, events, setting, or other text element) in a particular way?
Tone	How does the author’s choice of particular words shape the tone of the text? What one word describes the tone?
Multiple Meanings	Are there any words that could have more than one meaning? Why might the author have played with language in this way?
Figurative Language	How does the author’s use of figurative language (idioms, similes, metaphors, personification) impact the meaning?

C. Questions for probing the meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure

Focus	Questions
Message/Theme	What is the author’s message in this story, and how does the author show this through the events?
Setting	How does the setting impact the conflict?
Characters	How do the main character’s motivations affect her interaction with other characters? Read the lines of dialogue. What does this exchange tell us about the characters?
Plot	How does one event lead to another?
Suspense	How does the author build suspense or cause uncertainty during the text?
Craft	How does the author craft the introduction of the text to get readers’ attention?
Structure-Words, Phrases, and Sentences	Why did the author place this word first in the sentence instead of last, and what effect does that have on tone? How does the author vary sentence length and why? What is he trying to convey?
Structure - Beginning, Middle, & End	How does the author craft the beginning and ending to come full circle?
Craft and Structure	Does this passage include description, narration, or argument? How does this impact the meaning of the passage?
Craft and Structure - Poetry	How does the first stanza of this poem connect to the second stanza?



D. Questions for examining repetitions, shifts, or patterns in text

Focus	Questions
Repetition	Does the author repeat particular words, lines, or phrases? How does this impact meaning? Why does the author (character) repeat specific events or actions?
Shifts	How did the character's behavior change and what do you think that means?
Patterns	What do the patterns of dialogue exchanges between the two characters reveal?

E. Questions for considering what the text leaves uncertain or unstated

Focus	Questions
Critiquing- Informational Text	Is the information current? How do you know? Does it matter and why? Does the author present the topic fairly, respecting varying points of view? Has information been omitted leading to bias?
Claims and Evidence	Which points support the author's claim?
Evaluation	How did the rules of society impact the behavior of the character?
Translation	Can you create a metaphor for the author's description?

F. Questions for examining different types of texts beyond words printed on a page

Focus	Questions
Videos	How did different images capture your attention?
Media	What individuals are most often represented in the media, and what individuals (e.g., gender, culture, age) are absent?
Photograph	Based on what you have observed in the photograph, what might you infer or conclude from this image?
Images	What questions does this image raise in your mind?
Literary Associations	Was any other text called-to-mind from this "text"? What is the connection you see between the two?

Part II

This section demonstrates how text dependent questions, based on designated sections of a text, are utilized within a lesson and ultimately lead students to respond to a text dependent analysis prompt. The text dependent questions are selected for the specific text used and the expectations of the TDA prompt. These questions guide students to reread the identified section of the text during collaborative conversations and to think deeply while locating evidence to support their thinking. Additionally, posing these questions as students read the text provides them with a purpose for annotating¹.

¹ See TDA Series: Purposeful Annotations



Text (grades 7-8)	Daedalus and Icarus Retrieved from: http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/textonly1598-daedalus-and-icarus.html
Reading Elements for Analysis	Symbolism and theme related to human nature (humans possess both good and evil)
TDA Prompt	Symbols are insightful expressions of human nature. Write an essay analyzing the symbolism in the myth, <i>Daedalus and Icarus</i> , and how the author reveals a theme about human nature through these symbols. Use evidence from the text to support your analysis.

Section of Text	Type of Question / Question
Section 1: Paragraphs 1-4	<p><i>Connections, inferences, reactions:</i> Images What images were called-to-mind by the description in the text? Describe them briefly.</p> <p><i>Connections, inferences, reactions:</i> Perceptions What did you learn about Daedalus and Icarus? Consider literal and implied information.</p>
Section 2: Paragraphs 5-9	<p><i>Repetition, shifts, or patterns:</i> Repetition Throughout these paragraphs, a labyrinth is described. Why do you think there is so much description about the labyrinth?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Character What do you learn about Daedalus from the author's description and from the building of the labyrinth?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Character What does the labyrinth tell you about King Minos?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Symbols What symbols are present in this section and what do they mean? In what ways does the Minotaur symbolize human nature?</p>
Section 3: Paragraphs 10-15	<p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Character What more do you learn about Daedalus from this section?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Foreshadowing/Suspense How does the author build suspense in this section and foreshadow the conclusion?</p>
Section 4: Paragraphs 16-21	<p><i>Repetition, shifts, or patterns:</i> Repetition Why does the author repeat the traits of Daedalus?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Character What is learned or confirmed about Daedalus' character?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Symbols What symbolism can you find in these paragraphs and what do they mean?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Theme What do the symbols tell you about human nature?</p>



Section 5: Paragraphs 22-30	<p><i>Key vocabulary or figurative language:</i> Word choice Which words does the author use to reveal the nature of Daedalus and Icarus?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Symbols What symbolism can you find in these paragraphs and what do they mean? Do they reveal anything further about human nature?</p> <p><i>Meaning of reading elements, techniques, or structure:</i> Theme What is a theme statement that is conveyed by this myth and how is it revealed through the symbols you discussed?</p>
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Conclusion

The text dependent questions will depend on the students'—grade level, ability level, opportunities to engage in close reading and text dependent analysis prompts. However, the questions should allow students to: 1) think deeply about the text, 2) provide a purpose for annotating the text, 3) engage in collaborative conversations, and 4) be prepared to respond to a text dependent analysis prompt.

For more information on the different aspects of text dependent analysis, refer to the series of Text Dependent Analysis Resources by Dr. Jeri Thompson, Center for Assessment.

Suggested Reference

Thompson, J. (2020). *Text Dependent Analysis Resource: Close Reading Questions and Activities Leading to Analysis*. www.nciea.org, <http://www.education.pa.gov>, and <http://pdesas.org>.

References

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Porter-O'Donnell, C. (2004). Beyond the Yellow Highlighter: Teaching annotation skills to improve reading comprehension. *English Journal*, 93(5), 82-89.

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