
READING CLOSELY FOR TEXTUAL DETAILS

DEVELOPING CORE PROFICIENCIES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY UNIT

GRADE 12

"And Life steps almost straight."



DEVELOPING CORE PROFICIENCIES SERIES

This unit is part of the Odell Education Literacy Instruction: Developing Core Proficiencies program, an integrated set of ELA units spanning grades 6–12. Funded by USNY Regents Research Fund, the program (under development) is comprised of a series of four 3-week units at each grade level that provide direct instruction on a set of literacy proficiencies at the heart of the CCSS.

Unit I: Reading Closely for Textual Details
Unit II: Making Evidence-Based Claims
Unit III: Researching to Deepen Understanding
Unit IV: Building Evidence-Based Arguments

The Core Proficiencies units have been designed to be used in a variety of ways. They can be taught as short stand-alone units to introduce or develop key student proficiencies. Teachers can also integrate them into larger modules that build up to and around these proficiencies. Teachers can also apply the activity sequences and unit materials to different texts and topics. The materials have been intentionally designed for easy adaptation to new texts.

Unit materials available at
www.odelleducation.com/resources



READING CLOSELY FOR TEXTUAL DETAILS

Becoming literate involves developing habits and proficiencies associated with many reading purposes, from reading for pleasure to preparing for high-stakes business meetings. This unit develops students' abilities to read closely for textual details—a proficiency essential for a variety of reading purposes and contexts. Attending to and analyzing details are essential skills for accessing meaning, allowing texts to inform our understanding and enrich our lives.

Rather than simply ask students to read closely, this unit instructs them in a process for doing so. The activities lay out a process for approaching, questioning and analyzing texts that helps readers focus on key textual characteristics and ideas. Just as experts in any field access deep understanding by knowing what to look for in their particular fields, expert readers know the questions to ask of texts in order to guide them to deep meaning. The framework of questioning presented in this

unit takes the invisible process expert readers have internalized and makes it explicit – to support teachers and students as they develop proficiency in reading text closely.

Proficient readers can also explain and share the discoveries they have made through reading and analyzing a text. Developing evidence-based explanations is essential for clarifying and deepening one's own understanding as well as the foundation for participation in academic and civic life. This unit integrates the development of explanatory communication skills into the close reading process. Students learn to explain their thinking and link it with textual evidence both in discussion and writing. The unit culminates in a structured text-centered discussion in which students examine discoveries they have made about an important topic, by explaining and comparing their textual analyses with their peers.



HOW THIS UNIT IS STRUCTURED

The unit activities are organized into five parts, each associated with short texts. The parts build on each other and can each span a range of instructional time depending on scheduling and student ability.

Part 1 introduces students to the idea of reading closely for details through an examination of a range of text types. Part 2 introduces students to a particular process for close reading that involves questioning the text—at first generally and then in text-specific ways—to help them focus on important textual ideas and characteristics. Part 3 develops student proficiency by analyzing textual details for making comparisons across texts. Parts 4 and 5 develop students' abilities to express their analysis, first through writing text-based explanations in Part 4 and then, in Part 5, through facilitating and participating in text-centered discussions.

This organization is designed to strengthen the precision of instruction and assessment, as well as to give teachers flexibility in their use of the unit.

The final activities in Parts 1–4 are designed as independent student tasks that can be done either in class or as homework.

Part 5 includes an optional extended assessment activity involving the creating of a student portfolio of work and a reflective essay on their experience throughout the unit.



HOW THIS UNIT MIGHT BE EMBEDDED IN CONTENT-BASED CURRICULUM

The unit is explicitly and intentionally framed as skills-based instruction. It is critical for students to understand that they are developing core literacy proficiencies that will enrich their academic and civic lives. The unit and activities should be framed for them as such. Nonetheless, the texts have been chosen, in part, for their rich content and cultural significance. They contain many important historical and contemporary ideas and themes. Teachers are encouraged to sequence the unit strategically within their

curriculum and instructional plans, and to establish content connections that will be meaningful for students. This might involve connecting the unit to the study of topics or eras in social studies, related genres or voices in literature, or themes and guiding questions. Whatever the curricular context established by the teacher, the central emphasis of the unit should, however, be on evidence-based, text-focused instruction.



HOW THIS UNIT TEACHES WRITING

Communicating understanding effectively is an essential part of the close reading process. And while this unit focuses primarily on reading proficiencies, writing from textual evidence plays an important role in most of the activities. The nature of the writing instruction at this stage in the Developing Core Proficiencies Series is rooted in some core principles. First, strong writing flows from deep comprehension of a text or topic. Many deficiencies in writing are the result of shallow or uniformed critical thinking. The unit writing activities are linked closely to student reading in ways that help them both develop and express their emerging understanding of the evidence at hand. Students are continually asked to explain their thinking about texts in their writing. Developing this ability is fundamental to supporting students as they craft extended pieces of writing in later contexts.

The writing activities—including the writing students complete on the worksheets—are all very limited in scope. In most cases students write only one or two sentences and at most a few short paragraphs. This in NO way suggests that they are limited in importance. The limited scope intentionally allows teachers and students to focus on building the ability to accurately incorporate textual evidence into their communication, and include effective word choice, punctuation, and syntax that are appropriate to the audience and task.



HOW THIS UNIT TEACHES VOCABULARY

This unit draws on a variety of strategies for teaching academic and disciplinary vocabulary. The primary strategy is the way critical disciplinary vocabulary and concepts are built into the instruction. Students are taught words like “analyze,” “perspective,” “questioning,” and “criteria” through their explicit use in the activities. Students come to understand and use these words as they think about and evaluate their textual analysis and that of their peers. The handouts and worksheets play a key role in this process. By the end of the unit, students will have developed deep conceptual knowledge of key vocabulary that they can transfer to a variety of academic and public contexts.

The texts and activities also provide many opportunities for academic vocabulary instruction. Many of the activities focus directly on analyzing the way authors use language and key words to develop ideas and achieve specific purposes.

The sequence of topical texts also builds vocabulary knowledge and connections, supporting both textual comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The texts are formatted with integrated tools for vocabulary development. Each page includes editable glossaries where teachers and students can choose various words to define. Some words have been pre-selected and glossed. Teachers may choose to differentiate vocabulary support by student.

HOW THIS UNIT ALIGNS WITH CCSS FOR ELA/LITERACY

The instructional focus of this unit is on learning to read text closely: attending to details, language, and perspective; posing and responding to text-dependent questions; and analyzing connections and relationships to deepen understanding. The unit also emphasizes informational text, while incorporating literary nonfiction and other literary texts. Accordingly, the primary alignment of the unit – the targeted CCSS – are **RI.1**, **RI.2**, and **RI.6** (*read closely to determine literal and inferential meaning, determine central ideas and supporting details, and assess author’s point of view – while attending to and citing specific textual evidence*). Students develop these skills throughout the unit through direct instruction and guided practice, and they are assessed continuously through activities, worksheets, and written products.

As students develop these primary targeted reading skills, they are also practicing, and eventually demonstrating, their abilities to engage in text-centered discussions. Thus, **SL.1** (*engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively*) is also an emerging targeted CCSS as the unit progresses, and is directly assessed in the final, discussion-based activity of Part 5.

As students develop these primary targeted CCSS skill sets, they also practice and use related reading and writing skills from supporting CCSS. Thus, in Part 2, they begin to focus on **RI.4** (*interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text*) and in Part 3 on **RI.9** (*analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics*), with **RI.9** formatively assessed in Part 5.

Students focus on crafting effective evidence-based writing, working from titles and paraphrases to summary sentences and explanatory paragraphs. Thus, **W.2** (*write explanatory texts to convey ideas and information clearly and accurately*) and **W.9** (*draw evidence from texts to support analysis*) are also introduced and practiced in the unit, as is **W.4** (*produce clear and coherent writing*).

Finally, because students are expected to read and analyze a grade-level text somewhat independently in Parts 4 and 5, the unit provides initial evidence of how well students can meet the expectations of **RI.10** (*read and comprehend complex texts independently and proficiently*).

SOURCES OF THIS UNIT INSTRUCTION

The instructional ideas contained in this unit are presented as our contribution to the national effort to prepare all US secondary students for college and career readiness. We intend that these principles, activities, tools, and strategies will be taken up, adapted, and improved upon by the educators who use them. While we take full responsibility for the content of the unit, and recognize that mentioning our key sources in no way implies their endorsement of that content,

we would like to acknowledge some important influences and reference points for this work: the students and colleagues who contributed to the classroom experiences of our development team; the Common Core Standards; the PARCC ELA Curriculum Frameworks; the Tri-State Quality Review ELA Rubric; and the research on text complexity and text-dependent questioning from Student Achievement Partners.



HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

This unit is in the format of a **Compressed File**. Files are organized so you can easily browse through the materials and find everything you need to print or e-mail for each day.

The materials are organized into three folders:

UNIT PLAN AND TEXTS

- Unit Plan
- Models
- Texts

The *model questions and worksheets* are meant only to illustrate the process, **NOT** to shape textual analysis. *It is essential that both teachers and students develop questions based on their own analysis and class discussion.* Teachers are encouraged to develop their own questions in the blank worksheets to use with students when modeling the process.



TEXTS are formatted with spacing and margins to support *teacher and student annotation*. Students should be encouraged to mark up their texts (electronically or in print) as they search for details. *Paragraphs and lines are numbered* for referencing in writing and discussion. *Editable glossaries* are provided at the bottom of each page. While some words have already been bolded and glossed, teachers are encouraged to use the editable features for choosing words they wish to focus on or gloss, and to differentiate word support for their students.

HANDOUTS

- Guiding Questions Handout
- Reading Closely Checklist
- Text-Centered Discussion Checklist

WORKSHEETS

- Analyzing Details Worksheet
- Questioning Texts Worksheet



WORKSHEETS and **CHECKLISTS** have been created as *editable PDF forms*. With the free version of Adobe Reader, students and teachers are able to type in them and save their work for recording and e-mailing. This allows students and teachers to work either with paper and pencil or electronically according to their strengths and needs. It also allows teachers to collect and organize student work for evaluation and formative assessment.

If you decide to **PRINT** materials, please note that you can print them at *actual size*, without enabling the auto-fit function. All materials can be printed either in color or in black and white.



UNIT OUTLINE

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING CLOSE READING

- The teacher presents an overview of the unit, discussing the purposes and elements of close reading.
- Students are oriented to the idea of attending to details through examining images.
- Students use guiding questions to look closely for details in a text.
- Students use guiding questions to look closely for details in a multi-media text and write a few sentences explaining something they have learned.
- Students use guiding questions to independently explore a multi-media website.

PART 2: QUESTIONING TEXTS

- The teacher models how to use the Questioning Texts Worksheet to guide a process for close reading, and then pairs practice on a text they have read.
- Students listen to a new text and use the Questioning Texts Worksheet to guide their reading.
- The teacher guides the class through an analysis of the text using the Analyzing Details Worksheet.
- Students develop their own text-specific questions with which to analyze the text.
- Students write 1-3 sentences explaining their analysis of the text and list supporting textual details.

PART 3: ANALYZING DETAILS

- Students listen to and then closely read and analyze a new text.
- The teacher guides and supports students in a comparative discussion of the texts.
- Students develop a comparative question in groups and individually write a paragraph answering their question.
- Students independently read texts using a guiding question.

PART 4: EXPLAINING UNDERSTANDING

- The teacher introduces the final culminating text-centered writing and comparative discussion.
- Students listen to three related texts and discuss them as a class.
- Students select (or are assigned) one of the texts to discuss with a small group and then analyze independently.
- Students use their analysis to independently write a detail-based explanation of one of the texts.

PART 5: DISCUSSING IDEAS

- The teacher leads students in a reflective conversation about productive, text-centered discussions.
- Students discuss their analysis in groups and independently prepare for leading a text-centered discussion by crafting a comparative text-dependent question.
- Students lead and participate in text-centered discussions with other students who have analyzed different texts.

READING CLOSELY GRADE 12 UNIT TEXTS

AUTHOR	DATE	PUBLISHER	L	NOTES
Text #1: Sorrow Teeming With Light (Painting), Peanuts (Comic Strip), and Construint (Sculpture)				
Gabriel Shaffer	2012	Gabriel Shaffer	NA	Painting on collage featuring aspects of technology and myth.
Charles Schultz	Mid-20th century	Fantagraphics Books	NA	Peanuts comic strip depicting classic scene of Charlie attempting to kick a football held by Lucy.
Efrai	2008	epSos.de (Flickr)	NA	Sculpture of a boy using colored building blocks.
Text #2: A Case for a Tragic Optimism (Informational Text)				
Viktor Frankl	1946 & 1984	Washington Square Press	1250L	An excerpt in which Frankl discusses human nature in terms of "swine" and "saints".
Text #3: Search for meaning (Video)				
Viktor Frankl	1983	Viktor Frankl Insititute	NA	Frankl lectures at a conference in Toronto, extolling the virtues of overestimating man.
Text #4: Time-Life Photos (Website)				
NA	NA	Time	NA	Website containing photos and descriptions of human life throughout history.
Text #5: Thirst - Ch 24: Dhammapada (Sacred Text)				
The Buddha	c.350 BCE	Produced by Tom Weiss	1190L	24th chapter of a Buddhist scripture explaining the cause of rebirth in terms of thirst.
Text #6: We Grow Accustomed to the Dark (Poem)				
Emily Dickinson	1862	Commonweal	NA	Typical Dickinson poem, rich with metaphor & universal themes, describing humanity's adaptability to adversity.
Text #7: The Examined Life (Speech)				
Cornel West	July 2, 2011	Zeitgeist Films	1070L	From a documentary, West describes philosophy as preparation for death.
Text #8: The Genealogy of Morals (Philosophical Treatise)				
Friedrich Nietzsche	1887	Doubleday	1230L	Selection from the German philosopher's masterpiece in which he exhorts man to reject the impossible "opposite"
Text #9: Meditations on First Philosophy (Philosophical Treatise)				
René Descartes	1641	The Liberal Arts Press	1620L	The French philosopher shows that sin is the result of man's will overreaching his understanding.
Extended Reading: A letter written by Rainer Maria Rilke from Muzot (Letter)				
Rainer Maria Rilke	August 11, 1924	Harper & Row	1840L	A letter in which the German poet comments on how inner space is bigger than outer space.
Extended Reading: Emile or On Education (Philosophical Treatise)				
Jean Jacques Rousseau	1762	J. Néaulme	1130L	Philosophical treatise on nature of human beings and education.