

Close Reading Guidelines for Informational Text

When you're reading a text, assume that every word and phrase carries meaning. If you're unsure of what something means, do a close reading.

If it's a difficult word . . .

- Look carefully at the word. Are there any prefixes, suffixes, or roots you recognize? Think of their meaning.
- Reread the sentences before and after the one containing the difficult word. Do they contain any clues to what the word means? If not, back up and read the entire paragraph; continue and read the paragraph that comes after the tough word.
- Is there a glossary you can consult? Are there any text features, such as charts or photographs and captions, that provide clues to the word?
- Have you seen or heard the word or phrase? In what situation? Can you recall what the word or phrase meant in the specific situation?

Dig Deeper

- Can you connect the word or phrase to information that came before it? To what you know and have learned from the preview, from other books, or in another class?
- Why do you think the writer uses this particular word or phrase?
- How does this word or phrase relate to the tone, main idea, or theme of the text?
- What is the significance of this word or phrase in relation to other ideas in the sentence or paragraph?

If it's a difficult sentence, paragraph, or section . . .

- Read each sentence word by word, chunking phrases and making sure you know what each one means. If a particular word gives you trouble, use the strategies above to figure it out.
- Paraphrase each sentence by saying it in your own words.
- Continue rereading and paraphrasing each sentence. When you get to the end of a paragraph, retell it for yourself. If you can't retell several details, then reread the paragraph and try retelling it again.
- Continue rereading and retelling paragraphs. When you get to the end of a section, retell it for yourself. Try to think of the main idea of the section.

Dig Deeper

- Consider the themes of the text. How does the sentence, paragraph, or section relate to them?
- Why do you think the writer includes this sentence, paragraph, or section in the text?
- How does this sentence, paragraph, or section connect to the title?
- How does this sentence, paragraph, or section connect to other parts of the text?
- What inferences can you make from this sentence, paragraph, or section?

Recap What You Understand

- Try restating some main ideas and a theme. If you can do this and recall details, then you've attained your close reading goal.