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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.



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 literary 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.

# Fishing With Grandpa Leon

Read the realistic fiction.

Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

Ronan was beside himself with excitement. He was ten years old and Grandpa Leon was finally going to take him fishing. Grandpa Leon claimed to be ‘a fishing expert, practically a professional angler’. He told Ronan that he’d caught giant marlin and huge tuna, and that he had many adventurous stories to tell. He promised he’d supply all the fishing gear: rods, reels, hooks, bait, buckets and plenty of food, too. All Ronan had to do was to be ready promptly at 6am.

As it happened, it was good Grandpa Leon brought plenty of food because grandfather and grandson had plenty of time to eat it. The fish simply weren’t biting. “They’re napping,” he informed Ronan, knowingly.

No nibbles left plenty of time for Grandpa Leon’s elaborate fish stories. In fact, it was during one of those tall tales that Ronan suddenly felt a sharp tug on his line.

“I’ve got something really huge!” he shouted.

“Hold tight, I’ll help,” Grandpa Leon replied, reaching over and grabbing the rod. Together, they tugged on the line that held what promised to be a colossal, prize-winning fish. Finally, they reeled in their catch – a tattered leather suitcase, heavy with sand.

“How about that, Ronan – the first suitcase of the day!” Grandpa Leon exclaimed, adding, “You can’t say it wasn’t a big catch!”



## Text Marking

Identify the characters in the story.



Circle the two characters.



Underline some details about each character.

# Fishing With Grandpa Leon

▶ Answer each question. Give details from the realistic story.

1 Which best describes what an **angler** does (paragraph 1).

- ▶ A Tell stories.
- ▶ B Supply food.
- ▶ C Draw angles.
- ▶ D Fish with rods and reels.

What helped you answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Which best describes Grandpa Leon?

- ▶ A He is confident and cheerful.
- ▶ B He is cranky and strict.
- ▶ C He is very famous.
- ▶ D He doesn't like to joke around.

What helped you answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 Summarise the fishing experience, as seen through Ronan's eyes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 What was surprising about Grandpa Leon's reaction to catching a suitcase?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Character Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Fishing With Grandpa Leon

Read the realistic fiction.  
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.


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"How about that, Ronan – the first suitcase of the day!" Grandpa Leon exclaimed, adding, "You can't say it wasn't a big catch!"



★ ★ Text Marking ★ ★

Identify the characters in the story.

○ Circle the two characters.

— Underline some details about each character.

14 Close Reading Fiction Ages 10+ SCHOLASTIC

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 1: Fishing With Grandpa Leon

- 1 D; *Sample answer:* I picked D because it's the only answer that makes sense, and I found a context clue in the first paragraph.
- 2 A; *Sample answer:* I picked A because Grandpa Leon seems upbeat and hopeful about the fishing trip.
- 3 *Sample answer:* I think Ronan would say that the trip had many long boring stretches because the fish weren't biting, but he was entertained by Grandpa Leon's stories and did enjoy making the first 'catch'.
- 4 *Sample answer:* He acted as if the suitcase itself was a prized catch and didn't seem the least bit disappointed.

2 Character Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Operation Pied Piper, 1940

Read the historical fiction.  
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

As Britain's biggest cities suffered enemy bombing in the Second World War, the government decided to evacuate city children to the countryside for their own safety. Most children had no idea where they were going or whom they would live with. When they arrived at their destination, carrying only their gas mask, identity card and a small bag, it was up to the billeting officer to find a host who could give them a home.


One rainy autumn night, Mr Wilkinson knocked briskly at the door of Miss Burrows. She opened it to find him standing there with two evacuees. The smaller girl was clinging to her sister's coat. Both looked tired and anxious, and were shivering in their drenched clothes.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Burrows. "Two drowned rats, if I'm not mistaken! You'd better come in, girls, and dry yourselves by the fire," she went on. "What are your names?"

"I'm Vera, Miss," answered the older girl, trying to sound braver than she felt. "And this is Eve."

"You'd better call me Auntie Joy," said Miss Burrows, gently. "I'm sure we'll all get along if you mind your manners, don't make any trouble and remember to do as you're told." She sounded both kind yet stern, and Eve eyed her warily, wishing heartily her mother was there to hide behind.

Closing the door behind Mr Wilkinson, Miss Burrows turned to look at the children. "How long is it since their last meal?" she wondered. Whiskers trotted over to meet the strangers. Eve timidly stroked the furry cat and smiled – possibly for the first time all day.



★ ★ Text Marking ★ ★

Identify who the story is about.

○ Circle the adult characters.

□ Box the child characters.

— Underline details about each character.

16 Close Reading Fiction Ages 10+ SCHOLASTIC

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 2: Operation Pied Piper, 1940

- 1 D; *Sample answer:* I picked D because I could tell that the story was told in the third person.
- 2 B; *Sample answer:* I picked B because I understood in paragraph 1 that children were evacuated for their own safety, and refugees are also people who are escaping from danger and need a safe place to stay.
- 3 *Sample answer:* I think Miss Burrows is a kind, gentle and caring person, but also quite strict.
- 4 *Sample answer:* The opening paragraph provides some historical background about the time and place where the story is set.