TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

Text-dependent questions are a central component of close reading. When developing text-dependent questions, teachers should draw on the knowledge they have gained from completing the previous tools in this resource: *Selecting Text, Text Annotation Protocol,* and *Text Cover Sheet.*

The use of text-dependent questions is intended to guide students in how to think about what's important in the text —in the message/information, in the style and structure, and how the text connects to other texts. Text-dependent questions are not simply literal questions about information and facts from the text. While these questions should be asked to ascertain students' basic comprehension, text-dependent questions go beyond just asking about the surface ideas and details by also tapping into the craft, structure, and theme/purpose of the text as well as students' evaluation and judgments of the text. Text-dependent questions require students to draw inferences from and make connections among the details and ideas of the text. Furthermore, it is important that text-dependent questions are based on important, not trivial, ideas from the text. According to the NEA (2013, p. 19), typical text-dependent questions will ask students to engage in the following tasks:

- Analyze paragraphs on a sentence-by-sentence basis and sentences on a word-by-word basis to determine the role played by individual paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words

- Investigate how meaning can be altered by changing key words and why an author may have chosen one word over another

- Probe each argument in persuasive text, each idea in informational text, each key detail in literary text, and observe how these build to a whole

- Examine how shifts in the direction of an argument or explanation are achieved and the impact of those shifts

- Question why authors choose to begin and end as they do

- Note and assess patterns of writing and what they achieve

- Consider what the text leaves uncertain or unstated

As there is no single, best way to develop text-dependent questions, teachers should use and adapt a process that works for their purposes and contexts. The next section describes one process that can help teachers think about and create text-dependent questions for any given text.

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS GUIDE

There are various types of text-dependent questions that are aligned to different purposes in the close reading process. Here is an example of general text-dependent questions from Timothy Shanahan's *What is Close Reading?* article.[8] These questions can help guide teachers in creating more specific text-dependent questions for students to use during their close reading of a particular text.[9] A printable handout of these questions is available in the "Tools and Exemplars" section.

[8] See www.shanahanonliteracy.com/2012/06/what-is-close-reading.html.

[9] For more detailed information, see the handout *More on Planning for Close Reading & Text Dependent Questions* in the "Tools and Exemplars" section.

1ˢᵗ reading: What is says.	• What is the text saying?
2ⁿᵈ reading: How it says it.	• How did the author organize it? • What literary devices were used and how effective were they? • What was the quality of the evidence? • If data were presented, how was that done? • If any visual texts (e.g., diagrams, tables, illustrations) were presented, how was that done? • Why did the author choose this word or that word? Was the meaning of a key term consistent or did it change across the text?
3ʳᵈ reading: What it means.	• What does this text mean? • What was the author's point? • What does it have to say to me about my life or my world? How do I evaluate the quality of this work—aesthetically, substantively? • How does this text connect to other texts I know?
General follow-up questions for any of the text-dependent questions are.	• How do you know? • What in the text tells you that? • What's the evidence?

As noted earlier, when creating text-dependent questions, teachers should refer to their previously completed tools from this resource. The goals of the lesson (from the *Text Cover Sheet*) should guide teachers in creating a coherent set or sequence of effective questions that facilitate students' close reading.

AN EXAMPLE

To illustrate the use of the *Text-Dependent Questions Guide*, an example is provided below with the narrative text, "Eleven" (Cisneros, 1991). Text-dependent questions for the first reading are based on key ideas and details of the text. For the second reading, the questions focus on the style and structure of the text. Lastly, in the third reading, the questions are based on the theme and the students' evaluation of the text. In this example, the teacher wrote down all the questions she thought could be used for this text. In a lesson, she may select a subset of the questions based on knowledge of her students, the context, and the purpose of the lesson. If the teacher needs more evidence of student thinking, she should ask one or more of the follow up questions listed above.

Text-Dependent Questions – 1st Reading

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Who are they?

Who does "you" refer to?

Why doesn't the narrator feel like she's 11?

What makes the narrator feel like she's still 10?

What makes the narrator feel like she's 5?

When does the narrator think that you act like you're 3?

What does the narrator think being 11 is like?

When does the narrator feel like she's really 11?

How does the narrator feel about turning 11?

Text-Dependent Questions – 2nd Reading

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Why does the author use "they" without telling you exactly who "they" are?

Why does the author use "you" throughout the text?

Why does the author use the word "and" to begin these sentences?

Why is "and" used so many times?

What's the purpose of using this "like" at the beginning of the sentence?

How is the word "like" being used in Para. 4?

What's the author's purpose in using "tree trunk" and "wooden dolls"?

Why does the author sometimes write short sentences here (and elsewhere in the passage), then sometimes write really long sentences?

Text-Dependent Questions – 3rd Reading

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are — underneath the year that makes you eleven.

What are the themes of this text?

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five.

What does this last sentence mean? How do you know that?

And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

How does this paragraph support the themes?

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

How does the use of similes support the themes?

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

What does being "smart" or "stupid" have to do with growing up?

Do you agree with this point that the author makes?

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS COVER SHEET

For teachers who would like to have all their text-dependent questions organized together, they can write their questions on the *Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet*. A printable template of the cover sheet is provided in the "Tools and Exemplars" section. An example of an informational text using the *Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet* is also provided in that section.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is the process in which teachers and students use ongoing evidence of learning to adjust instruction or learning tactics during a lesson or in immediate subsequent lessons.[10] Below is a synopsis of the formative assessment process:

(1) Establishing clear Learning Goals for the lesson and associated Success Criteria;

(2) Sharing Learning Goals and Success Criteria with students and making sure they understand what goals and criteria entail;

(3) Planning strategies to elicit evidence of learning during the lesson (what students will say, do, make or write);

(4) Interpreting the evidence as close to the actual time of the lesson as possible to make judgments about where students are in relation to the lesson Learning Goals;

(5) Deciding on appropriate pedagogical action to move students' learning closer to the desired goal;

(6) Involving students in the process through peer and self-assessment.

In close reading, student responses to text-dependent questions are the primary source of evidence teachers use to gauge how students are engaging with the text and the degree to which they are accomplishing the reading goals. For example, to gain information about where students are in relation to one of the goals for close reading of the text "Eleven"—understand the narrator's emotions and why she has those feelings—teachers will pay attention to student responses to the questions: Why doesn't the narrator feel like she's 11? What makes the narrator feel like she's still 10? What makes the narrator feel like she's 5? How does the narrator feel about turning 11? Interpreting responses will provide teachers with an indication of students' current learning status with respect to the goal. With this information, teachers can decide on what deliberate act of teaching[11] to employ so as to move students closer to the goal. For example, modeling through a think-aloud, providing feedback, and prompting are some of the deliberate acts of teaching that teachers can use in response to evidence of student learning.

When students are aware of the learning goals, they can also assess how well they are meeting the goal or provide feedback to their peers about their responses to the text-dependent questions. Of course, students need to be taught how to engage in both self-assessment and peer feedback.

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[10] The formative assessment process and its inclusion in lesson planning are introduced and explained in detail in earlier resources from of this series.

[11] The deliberate acts of teaching are addressed in more detail in an earlier resource of this series.

TOOLS AND EXEMPLARS

This section contains printable guides and templates for the tools described in this resource. It is organized into three parts: guides, templates, and completed examples.

GUIDES

CCSS THREE-PART MODEL FOR MEASURING TEXT COMPLEXITY
This handout provides more detailed information about the three aspects of the CCSS model for measuring text complexity.

TEXT ANNOTATION PROTOCOL
This handout provides a convenient list of the steps for studying and annotating the selected text in preparation for close reading.

TEXT STUDY GUIDE FOR TEACHERS
This handout provides more information about the levels of text structures (from word to discourse level). Included in this handout is a checklist of questions teachers can ask themselves as they annotate the text.

MORE ON PLANNING FOR CLOSE READING & TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS
This handout provides more detailed information on planning for close reading and text-dependent questions.

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS GUIDE
This handout provides a convenient list of generic questions that can be used to guide teachers in creating their own text-depended questions about the text they select for close reading.

TEMPLATES

SELECTING TEXT TOOL
The purpose of this tool is to determine if a particular text is appropriate to use with a particular set of students for the close reading process.

TEXT COVER SHEET
This cover sheet provides a template to record information about the selected text during a teacher's study of it. The information recorded here provides an overview of the text, which can be used to inform lesson planning. The *Text Cover Sheet* should be used in conjunction with the *Text Annotation Protocol.*

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS COVER SHEET
This cover sheet provides a template for recording text-dependent questions based on the text cover sheet (including goals and Standards) and the text annotations.

COMPLETED EXAMPLES

INFORMATIONAL TEXT EXAMPLES

The tools described in this resource were applied to *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* by Sarah Thomson (2010), an informational text appropriate for students in grades 2-3. They are placed together to show teachers the complete set of templates to use when planning for close reading.

Following the *Text Annotation Protocol* for *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*, this teacher recorded her annotations for steps 3 and 4 on two separate pages. Also, this teacher chose to record the text-dependent questions she wrote on the *Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet* (instead of writing them in the margins of the text). Note that *Where Do Polar Bears Live?* is a picture book, and the original text is accompanied by illustrations of polar bears and the arctic landscape. The text used in these annotated examples does not have any illustrations.

CCSS Three-Part Model for Measuring Text Complexity[12]

Organized by CRESST, UCLA, 2014

I. **Qualitative Dimension: (best determined through human judgment)[13]**

- Levels of meaning (literary texts) or purpose (informational texts):
  - Single to multiple levels of meaning
  - Explicit to implicit purpose, which may be hidden or obscure

- **Structure**
  - Simple to complex
  - Explicit to implicit
  - Conventional to unconventional (chiefly literary texts)
  - Events related in or out of chronological order (chiefly literary texts)
  - Traits of a common genre or subgenre to traits specific to a particular discipline (chiefly informational texts)
  - Simple to sophisticated graphics
  - Graphics unnecessary or merely supplementary to understanding the text to graphics essential to understanding the text and may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text

- **Language conventionality and clarity**
  - Literal to figurative or ironic
  - Clear to ambiguous or purposefully misleading
  - Contemporary, familiar to archaic or otherwise unfamiliar
  - Conversational to general academic and domain-specific

- **Knowledge demands: cultural/literary knowledge (chiefly literary texts)**
  - Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required to cultural and literary knowledge useful
  - Low intertextuality (few if any references/allusions to other texts) to high intertextuality (many references/allusions to other texts)

- **Knowledge demands: content/disciplinary knowledge (chiefly informational texts)**
  - Everyday knowledge and familiarity with genre conventions required to extensive, perhaps specialized discipline-specific content knowledge required
  - Low intertextuality (few if any references to/citations of other texts) to high intertextuality (many references to/citations of other texts)

II. **Quantitative: (typically measured by computer software)[14]**

- **Word length or frequency**

- **Sentence length**

- **Text cohesion** (the linking of ideas within a text)

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[12] For more detailed explanations of this model, please refer to Appendix A of the ELA & Literacy CCSS document.

[13] The following information on the qualitative dimension comes directly from Figure 2: Qualitative Dimensions of Text Complexity in Appendix A of the ELA & Literacy CCSS (p. 6). The CCSS adapted this information from several sources.

[14] Software aligned to CCSS grade level text complexity designations include, for example, the Lexile Framework for Reading, developed by MetaMetrics, Inc. (www.lexile.com).

III. Reader and Task Considerations: (best assessed by teachers using their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject)

- **Reader motivation:** self-efficacy as a reader, reading purpose, and level of interest in the content

- **Reader knowledge:** knowledge of vocabulary, topic, language, discourse, and comprehension strategies

- **Reader experiences:** translatable experiences for meaning making

- **Task purpose:** type of reading to be done related to intended outcome; e.g., skimming, reading to learn (e.g., studying), reading for enjoyment, following directions, etc.)

- **Task complexity:** level of cognitive demand

- **Task-related question complexity:** level of critical and creative thinking

Text Annotation Protocol

1) First, read to get the "big picture" of the text. Get a general sense of what the text is about, being sure to note aspects of the text that catch your attention.

2) Next, read through the text to note its major themes or ideas, levels of meaning, as well as the author's purpose (some of these concepts are more relevant to either literary or informational texts).

3) On your third reading, annotate the text for types of language that the author uses, such as key words, types of sentence structures, visual components, and text cohesion strategies. Note the reasons why the author uses these features in relation to the text's purpose or theme. Also annotate any images, or other forms of visual representation included with the text (e.g., data charts and diagrams accompanying science or social studies texts), noting the information they contain and the ways they may augment student understanding of the text. Look for the devices and features that stand out or are used repeatedly by the author.

4) Finally, read through the text a few more times with your students in mind. Based on what you have already noted and annotated, determine which aspects of the text you want your students to pay attention to. Also, make annotations about which aspects of the text may be challenging for specific individual students or groups of students (e.g., English learners). The annotations made in your final reading may end up being a synthesis of your earlier annotations of the text where you noted the author's use of language and sentence structure.

Text Study Guide for Teachers

Created by CRESST, UCLA, 2014

When annotating text or filling out the cover sheet, teachers pay attention to language demands of the text and text features. Paying attention to the text's language demands is important for all students and it is essential for English learners.

Below is a list of questions that teachers can ask themselves as they annotate text in preparation for close reading with students. The list is not exhaustive, but it should provide teachers with ideas about which features make the text complex and challenging to the reader. Once teachers have identified areas of the text that are challenging to the intended group(s) of students, they will need to think of strategies that support students in understanding these features in relation to students' reading, comprehending, and learning from text.

TEXT FEATURES
Vocabulary & Expanded Word Groups
☐ What words may be unfamiliar to students?
☐ Academic (general, content-specific, specialized/technical)
☐ Figurative
☐ Antiquated
☐ Multiple meaning
☐ Derived words (e.g., nominalizations)
☐ Other
☐ What phrases may be unfamiliar to students?
☐ Noun phrases
☐ Adverbial phrases
☐ Prepositional phrases
☐ Other
☐ Are literary devices (mainly for literary texts) used?
Sentence Structure
☐ Which sentences might pose comprehension problems to students? Why?
☐ Are the sentences long because of complex syntax?   (Complex syntax can include embedded clauses, gerunds, and other clause or phrase structures; see above section on phrases.)
☐ Are there nominalizations in the sentences?   (Nominalizations—converting a verb into a noun, e.g., "instruct" to "instruction"—allow for more information to be packed into seemingly simple sentences.)
☐ What are the connections made in and between sentences?   (e.g., causal connectors like "because" or "however"; conjunctions such as "and" or "yet")
☐ What cohesive devices are used to connect ideas?   (e.g., references like "it" or "they"; temporal connectors like "when" or "first")
☐ Are the cohesive devices complex and/or unclear?
☐ Are cohesive devices used to connect ideas within a sentence, between sentences, and/or across paragraphs?

Paragraph Structure & Purpose
☐ Do paragraphs have a "standard" organization?
☐ If so, does each paragraph contain a topic sentence (usually for informational text)?
☐ If not, how are the paragraph(s) written and how are the sentences organized within the paragraph(s)?
☐ What are the functions of the paragraph (e.g., to introduce, to support, to conclude)?

Text Structure, Organization, & Purpose
☐ How is the text organized? (e.g., chronologically, cause and effect, compare and contrast, etc.)
☐ What is the genre of the text? (Text organizational structures are related to certain genres of text. See examples below.)
☐ For informational text, is there an introduction, thesis statement, and/or conclusion?
☐ For literary text, what is the plot structure (e.g., rising action, climax, falling action)?
☐ For literary text, is the plot chronological? Or does it jump around?
☐ Do visual texts (e.g., graphs, tables, diagrams, illustrations, etc.) accompany the written text?
☐ To what degree do the visual texts aid comprehension of the written text?
☐ To what degree do the visual texts correspond with the written text?

Functions, Design, & Context
☐ What are the functions of the text? (e.g., to explain, to describe, to tell a story (narrative), to argue or persuade, etc.)
☐ What is the author's purpose for writing the text? (e.g., Is there a theme, an argument, or point of view exposed by the author?)
☐ What is the author's tone in the text? (e.g., authoritative, exploratory, humorous, etc.)
☐ Is the text presented in a "considerate" (i.e., reader friendly) or "inconsiderate" manner? ("Considerate text" is well-written, well-organized, visually presented in a clear manner (e.g., use of white space), all of which aid readers in comprehension. "Inconsiderate text" is poorly written and organized and presented visually in a manner that is difficult to read, all of which require more work from readers to comprehend the text.)
☐ How complex are the ideas and the content found in the text?

Knowledge
☐ What is students' prior knowledge of the content? Prior knowledge includes students':
☐ Life experience (which may be helpful to connect to in literary texts)
☐ Cultural/literary knowledge (mostly relevant for literary texts)
☐ Content-area/disciplinary knowledge (mostly relevant for informational texts)

More on Planning for Close Reading & Text-Dependent Questions

Timothy Shanahan recommends at least three readings of a text, in which the main purpose for each reading is aligned with the three main categories of the ELA Anchor Standards for Reading: Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. The table below provides a synopsis of Shanahan's approach.

READING	PURPOSE	TEACHER ACTIVITIES
Pre-Reading	Exploring students' prior knowledge; setting teachers' purpose with using the text; previewing and contextualizing the text	• Make pre-reading activities brief • Give students some information to promote interest and enthusiasm about reading the text without giving away too much about it
1st Reading What the text says (Key Ideas and Details)	Comprehending the main gist of the text (e.g., retelling the plot, answering questions on the key ideas and details of the text)	• Through text-dependent questions, guide students to consider important key ideas and details from the text • Work to clarify any confusions students may have about the text's content/message • Use text-dependent questions to frame student discussions around the text in order for students to gain a firm understanding of the content/message
2nd Reading How the text is worked (Craft and Structure)	Understanding how the author wrote the text to convey specific ideas and emotions (e.g., organization of text, literary devices, quality of the evidence, data/visual presentation, word choice)	• Through text-dependent questions, guide students to think about how the text works to communicate ideas and the author's purpose • Student discussions resulting from these questions should lead to students' understanding of how the text works, which will inform the deeper implications of text (e.g., purpose and theme; see below)
3rd Reading What the text means (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas)	Going further/deeper with the text from the information gleaned from earlier readings (e.g., meaning/purpose/theme, author's point, readers' evaluations, comparisons with other texts, judgments about the text)	• Through text-dependent questions, guide students to think about what this text means to them and how it connects to other texts or events • Students need to evaluate the quality of the text and to connect their experiences to the text

Text-Dependent Questions Guide

Organized by CRESST, UCLA, 2014

1st reading: *What is says.*	• What is the text saying?
2nd reading: *How it says it.*	• How did the author organize it? • What literary devices were used and how effective were they? • What was the quality of the evidence? • If data were presented, how was that done? • If any visual texts (e.g., diagrams, tables, illustrations) were presented, how was that done? • Why did the author choose this word or that word? Was the meaning of a key term consistent or did it change across the text?
3rd reading: *What it means.*	• What does this text mean? • What was the author's point? • What does it have to say to me about my life or my world? How do I evaluate the quality of this work—aesthetically, substantively? • How does this text connect to other texts I know?
General follow-up questions for any of the text-dependent questions are:	• How do you know? • What in the text tells you that? • What's the evidence?

See www.shanahanonliteracy.com/2012/07/planning-for-close-reading.html. Also see "Additional Resources" for information and a link to Shanahan's blog.

Selecting Text Tool

Title and source: _____

Author: _____ Grade Level and area: _____

Factors Affecting Text Challenge	Notes
Age appropriateness Consider: • word recognition demands (sight words & decoding) • age of the main character(s) • prior knowledge assumed by the text • maturity required to deal with the themes • familiarity of contexts, settings, and subject matter • likely interests, motivation, and experiences of readers	
Complexity of ideas Consider: • accessibility of the themes • implied information or ideas (requiring readers to infer) • irony or ambiguity • abstract ideas • metaphors and other figurative or connotative language • technical information • support from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, and so on	
Structure and coherence of the text Consider: • flashbacks or time shifts • narrative point of view • mixed text types • connections across the text • examples and explanations • competing information • length of paragraphs • unattributed dialogue • use of headings and subheadings	

Syntactic structure of the text Consider: • sentence length • the balance of simple, compound, complex, or incomplete sentences • use of passive voice or nominalization • repetition of words or phrases • changes in verb tense	
Vocabulary difficulty Consider: • unfamiliar vocabulary • technical and academic terms, non-English words, and proper nouns • sentence-level and/or visual support • contextual clues • the use of a glossary or footnotes	
Length of the text	

Estimated reading year level:	Notes:
———	

This tool is adapted with permission from the Ministry of Education, New Zealand website, www.nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/NZC-Updates/Issue-19-April-2012/Framework-for-estimating-text-difficulty.

Text Cover Sheet

Created by CRESST, UCLA, 2014

Title of text: _____

ELA & Literacy Standards

Other Content-Related Standards

Reading Purpose and Text Content

Goals

Reading & Literacy

Content

Big Picture/Gist of text
Text Purpose/Levels of Meaning

Text and Language Challenges and Connections
Vocabulary
Text Features and Structure
Specific Knowledge Required
Text Connections

Text-Dependent Questions Cover Sheet

Text-Dependent Questions (TDQ)
1) TDQ for students' first reading
2) TDQ for students' second reading
3) TDQ for students' third reading

Selecting Text Tool - *Where Do Polar Bears Live? by Sarah L. Thomson*

Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014

Title and source: Where do Polar Bears Live? (from CCSS Appendix B)

Author: Sarah L. Thomson

Grade Level and area: 2nd Grade, Reading

Factors Affecting Text Challenge	Notes
Age appropriateness Consider: • word recognition demands (sight words & decoding) • age of the main character(s) • prior knowledge assumed by the text • maturity required to deal with the themes • familiarity of contexts, settings, and subject matter • likely interests, motivation, and experiences of readers	• *Most of the words are easily decodable though many may be unfamiliar and slow down students' reading fluency as they sound them out* • *The characters are animals—one a baby and the other its mother (a relationship students can relate to)* • *The text assumes some knowledge of the Arctic climate (or cold weather climates)* • *The themes and subject matter are appropriate and probably interesting for 2nd graders (the cub romps around in the snow)*
Complexity of ideas Consider: • accessibility of the themes • implied information or ideas (requiring readers to infer) • irony or ambiguity • abstract ideas • metaphors and other figurative or connotative language • technical information • support from illustrations, diagrams, graphs, and so on	• *Most of the information is straight forward (no abstractions or ambiguity)* • *There are some comparisons made that assume prior knowledge, e.g., "the size of a cocker spaniel" and "no bigger than a guinea pig"* • *The picture book includes images that can help orient students*
Structure and coherence of the text Consider: • flashbacks or time shifts • narrative point of view • mixed text types • connections across the text • examples and explanations • competing information • length of paragraphs • unattributed dialogue • use of headings and subheadings	• *The text includes time shifts indicated by time order words—this could be confusing for some students, particularly English learners, if they are not familiar with these words* • *The text is informational but includes a series of action events that together are structurally similar to narrative text*
Syntactic structure of the text Consider: • sentence length • the balance of simple, compound, complex, or incomplete sentences • use of passive voice or nominalization • repetition of words or phrases • changes in verb tense	• *The text has a combination of sentence types, including sentences starting with contextual information* • *There is little passive voice in the text so students should be able to connect the subject with the action or characteristic described* • *The sentences are not overly long*

Vocabulary difficulty	• The vocabulary includes mostly everyday language
Consider: • unfamiliar vocabulary • technical and academic terms, non-English words, and proper nouns • sentence-level and/or visual support • contextual clues • the use of a glossary or footnotes	• There are some subject-specific terms, e.g., fur and blubber, and specific verbs describing action, e.g., pokes, sniffs, tumbles
Length of the text	• This text is short and somewhat dense

Estimated reading year level: 2	Notes: *Because of the context of this informational text, the Arctic, students in my classroom would probably have some trouble visualizing the scenes described in the text without the support of the images in the book. These pictures of the Arctic and polar bears will be important to use to stimulate students' background knowledge, especially for those who haven't ever experienced snow. It is a good choice for close reading for my students, as there is a lot of information they can extract from the text and discuss, and some complex sentence structures to work through. Some students may need additional scaffolding while they decode unfamiliar words.*

Text Annotations - *Where Do Polar Bears Live? by Sarah L. Thomson*

Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014

The following example shows annotations from a teacher's third reading (step 3 in the *Text Annotation Protocol*) in which she makes notes about the types of language that the author uses, such as key words, types of sentence structures, and text cohesion strategies. The teacher also comments on the reasons why the author uses these features. Note that the information gathered from the teacher's first and second readings of the text are recorded in the *Text Cover Sheet* (see page 41).

Text Annotation Example #1 (third reading)

Text	Annotation
This island is covered with snow. No trees grow. Nothing has green leaves. The land is white as far as you can see.	• *Orientation to place: gives the reader a picture of where the events are occurring. Simple, declarative sentences. Mostly 3rd person with one 2nd person reference* • *Generous use of topic vocabulary in the form of nouns referring to "place," e.g., island, snow, trees, leaves, land* • *Verbs are generally action or "to be" verbs*
Then something small and round and black pokes up out of the snow. A black nose sniffs the air. Then a smooth white head appears. A mother polar bear heaves herself out of her den.	• *First indication of time and movement with the use of the words "then" and "pokes"* • *The text has descriptive details to draw the reader in before explaining what is happening, i.e., that there is a mother polar bear coming out of her den* • *With the beginning description of movement comes the use of highly descriptive action verbs: sniffs, heaves, scrambles* • *Regular use of prepositional phrases to expand simple sentences*
A cub scrambles after her.	• *Present tense action*
When the cub was born four months ago, he was no bigger than a guinea pig. Blind and helpless, he snuggled in his mother's fur. He drank her milk and grew, safe from the long Arctic winter. Outside the den, on some days, it was fifty degrees below zero. From October to February, the sun never rose.	• *Background information* • *This first sentence includes information before the subject in the form of a dependent clause starting with "when"* • *This section includes the first use of past tense* • *The reader is asked to imagine an earlier scenario with the same "characters" and in the same place but when the cub was a newborn* • *Place word "outside"*
Now it is spring—even though snow still covers the land. The cub is about the size of a cocker spaniel. He's ready to leave the den. For the first time, he sees bright sunlight and feels the wind ruffle his fur	• *Present tense, more scene-setting about the cub* • *Time-order word "now"*
The cub tumbles and slides down icy hills. His play makes him strong and teaches him to walk and run in snow.	• *Present tense action plus background*

Like his mother, the cub is built to survive in the Arctic. His white fur will grow to be six inches thick—longer than your hand. The skin beneath the cub's fur is black. It soaks up the heat of the sun. Under the skin is a layer of fat. Like a snug blanket, this blubber keeps in the heat of the bear's body.	• *Information related to how the polar bear's physical from and behavior allow it to survive in the cold Arctic*

The next example shows annotations from the teacher's fourth reading of the text with her students' learning status and interpretive goals in mind (step 4 in the *Text Annotation Protocol*). During this read through, the teacher determined which aspects of the text she wanted her students to attend to, either because the text features would be challenging for her students or because those features would be critical for overall text comprehension.

Text Annotation Example #2 (fourth reading)

Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014

Where Do Polar Bears Live?

by Sarah L. Thomson, Illustrated by Jason Chin (2010)

(from CCSS Appendix B)

adjectives and precise verbs requiring the reader to imagine the visual scenarios related to setting and action [text related to this is highlighted in blue.]

This island is covered with snow. No trees grow. Nothing has green leaves. The land is white as far as you can see.

Then something small and round and black pokes up out of the snow.

some complex sentences that start with contextual information requiring students to make connections between ideas (e.g., linking where, when, and what) [text related to this is highlighted in green]

A black nose sniffs the air. Then a smooth white head appears. A mother polar bear heaves herself out of her den.

A cub scrambles after her.

When the cub was born four months ago, he was **no bigger than a guinea pig**. Blind and helpless, he snuggled in his mother's fur. He drank her milk and grew, safe from the long Arctic winter

prepositional phrases expanding descriptions and requiring the reader to connect actions with particular environments and actors (the polar bears) [text related to this is highlighted in red]

Outside the den, on some days, it was fifty degrees below zero. From October to February, the sun never rose.

time order and sequencing words requiring students to keep attuned to the series of events [text related to this is highlighted in purpled]

Now it is spring—even though snow still covers the land. The cub is **about the size of a cocker spaniel**. He's ready to leave the den. For the first time, he sees bright sunlight and feels the wind ruffle his fur.

The cub tumbles and slides down icy hills. His play makes him strong and teaches him to walk and run in snow.

Like his mother, the cub is built to survive in the Arctic. His white fur will grow to be six inches thick—longer **than your hand**. The skin beneath the cub's fur is black. It soaks up the heat of the sun. Under the skin is a layer of fat. Like a snug blanket, this blubber keeps in the heat of the bear's body.

analogies and comparative language requiring the reader to consider similarities and differences, at times, based on their prior knowledge [text related to this is in bold]

Polar bears get too hot more easily than they get too cold. They stretch out on the ice to cool off.

Text Cover Sheet - *Where Do Polar Bears Live?*

Completed Example - CRESST, UCLA, 2014

Title of text: Where Do Polar Bears Live? By Sarah L. Thomson

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ELA & Literacy Standards

CCSS

Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1)

Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.2)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.4)

Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6)

Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.8)

Other Content-Related Standards

Next Generation Science Standards

- For any particular environment, some kinds of organisms survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. (3-LS4-3)

- The environment also affects the traits that an organism develops. (3-LS3-2)

- Being part of a group helps animals obtain food, defend themselves, and cope with changes. Groups may serve different functions and vary dramatically in size. (3-LS2-1)

Reading Purpose and Text Content

Goals

Reading & Literacy

- Analyze how the author uses details to describe the polar bears' environment

- Analyze the author's use of specific words and phrases to convey the time sequence and the growth of the cub

- Integrate information from images and text to comprehend the text. *Teacher note: either use images from the picture book or find other relevant images*

Content

- Understand some environmental conditions in the Arctic

- Understand why polar bears can survive in these environmental conditions

Big Picture/Gist of text

This text describes the early stages of life of polar bears, including why they have certain physical features and behaviors, in relation to the Arctic environment. This information is conveyed in part through describing the experiences of a particular baby polar bear that is being cared for by its mother.

Text Purpose / Levels of Meaning

There is a focus on how polar bears' physical characteristics and behaviors (e.g., hibernations) are designed (i.e., adaptations) to survive the harsh Arctic climate. In conveying the experiences of these polar bears, the author draws several stark contrasts: first there is the barren lifeless landscape, and then there are the bears; there is the heaving mother and the scrambling baby, and there is the tiny baby and larger growing bear.

Text and Language Challenges and Connections

Vocabulary (Possible unfamiliar and/or topic-specific words and phrases)

- Words/phrases that are likely to block student access to the text (could be taught ahead of time): "cocker spaniel," "guinea pig," "fifty degrees below zero," "the long Arctic winter," "the sun never rose"

- Words/phrases that are important but are defined explicitly in the text (could query after a reading): "blubber"

- Words/phrases that might be understood from context (could ask why these words were treated differently but the author): "like a snug blanket," "den," "cub," "Arctic"

- Words that might be problematic for ELs : "fur," "pokes," "like his mother," "sniffs," "appears," "heaves," "scrambles," "snuggled," "ruffle," "tumbles," "survive," "soaks"

Text Features and Structure

- This explanation moves between the present and past tenses

- The use of descriptive details about the setting, physical characteristics, and actions

- The use of language that signals time and sequence

Specific Knowledge Required

N/A

Specific Knowledge Required

Related to:

Content of the story: polar bears, the Arctic, organisms/animals surviving in different environments, animals growing up, babies and their mothers

Style of the story: stark contrasts depicted, use of vivid descriptions of action

Text-Dependent Questions (TDQ)

1) TDQ for students' first reading

    (a) What is the text saying?

    (b) How would you describe the place where the polar bears live?

    (c) What have you learned about polar bears from the text and images?

2) TDQ for students' second reading

    (a) What is the author communicating in the first paragraph? Why is this information important?

        • *What kinds of words and phrases does the author use to communicate these ideas?*

    (b) What actions take place in the text?

        • *Can you explain how these actions are sequenced?*

        • *What words and phrases does the author use to provide clues for you to understand this sequence?*

    (c) Where does the text communicate to you things that happened to the polar bears before the current action?

        • *What were those things that happened? How do they relate to the polar bears' environment?*

        • *Does this information help you better understand what's happening with the polar bears in the text now? How?*

3) TDQ for students' third reading

    (a) What is the relationship between the polar bears' features and their functions?

        • *Why do polar bears have the features they have?*

        • *How is the polar bear adapted to survive in the Artic?*

    (b) In what ways does the mother polar bear help the baby polar bear survive?

    (c) Do you think you could survive in the Arctic? Why or why not?

    (d) What is the author's point?

    (e) What else have you read that reminds you of this story? In what way is it similar or different?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources contain a variety of information that supports CCSS-aligned instructional planning as teachers select and analyze texts for close reading.

ELA & Literacy CCSS, Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf
The three appendices of the ELA & Literacy CCSS provide additional information and supporting materials for educators implementing the CCSS in their classrooms. In particular, Appendix A describes the research that underpins the Standards. Appendix A is where the Model for Determining Text Complexity is found.

National Education Association: Common Core State Standards
http://www.nea.org/home/46653.htm
The National Education Association (NEA) is the nation's largest professional employee organization. NEA is committed to advancing the cause of public education, and it's members work at every level of education. NEA's Common Core State Standards website provides information to prepare educators to implement the Standards, including the Common Core State Standards Toolkit, a document that has updated links to many websites and resources.

New York Department of Education: Engage NY
http://www.engageny.org/english-language-arts
The New York State Department of Education has developed ELA modules for grades 3-12 that are available to educators on their website. These modules focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high-quality texts. Modules may include several units and each unit may include a set of sequenced, coherent progressions of learning experiences that build knowledge and understanding of major concepts. The units include daily lesson plans, guiding questions, recommended texts, scaffolding strategies, examples of proficient student work, and other classroom resources, such as worksheets and handouts that students can use to help them closely read text.

The New Zealand Curriculum Online
http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/
This website, maintained by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, contains a variety of resources for teachers, parents, and administrators. Curricular resources are available, as well as information on pedagogy and instruction, standards, professional development, community involvement, child and adolescent development, and language acquisition.

The Reading and Writing Project
http://readingandwritingproject.com/
The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project is a research and staff development organization housed at Teachers College, Columbia University. It was founded and is directed by Lucy Calkins, The Robinson Professor of Children's Literature at Teachers College. The mission of the Reading and Writing Project is to help young people become avid and skilled readers, writers, and inquirers. The organization has developed state-of-the-art tools and methods for teaching reading and writing, for using performance assessments and learning progressions to accelerate progress, and for literacy-rich content-area instruction. Thousands of teachers regard the Reading and Writing Project as a continual source of professional renewal and education.

Student Achievement Partners
http://www.achievethecore.org/
Founded by three of the contributing authors of the Common Core State Standards, Student Achievement Partners supports effective, innovative implementation of the Standards, with the goal of accelerating achievement for all students. The organization brings together educators and researchers to develop evidence-based practices and tools that are made openly available at no cost to states, districts, schools, and teachers, who are encouraged to take these resources and make them their own.

TextProject
http://www.textproject.org/
TextProject, Inc. is a non-profit corporation that formalizes a decade-plus of ongoing work by its founder, president, and CEO Dr. Elfrieda H. Hiebert, a nationally-renowned professor of education and researcher in the field of reading. The website provides information and materials to bring beginning and struggling readers to high levels of literacy through a variety of strategies and tools, particularly the texts used for reading instruction. TextProject's three priorities in support of its mission are: creating products and prototypes for student reading programs, primarily based on the "TExT model" of text complexity; providing teacher support resources and classroom reading activities; and supporting and disseminating related research.

Timothy Shanahan
http://www.shanahanonliteracy.com/
Timothy Shanahan is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of urban education at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he is Director of the Center for Literacy and chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. His research emphasizes reading-writing relationships, reading assessment, and improving reading achievement. His blog provides information for teachers and parents on teaching and assessing reading, writing, and literacy.

Understanding Language: Persuasion across Time and Space
http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/ela_pdf/ELA%20Lesson%202.pdf
Understanding Language, centered at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education, develops knowledge and resources that help content-area teachers meet English Language Learners' language needs in the context of the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. In particular for ELA, the Understanding Language group has developed a unit on informational text to illustrate how CCSS-aligned tasks can be used to support ELA instruction and language development for ELs at the middle school level. The lesson found in the above link is an example of a close reading lesson with informational text for middle school students, including English learners.

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