


Common Core Instruction for ELA & Literacy Text-Dependent Questions, 6-12 ELA Teachers

 Area V Regional Superintendents of Schools
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Module 1:
**Common Core Instruction
for ELA & Literacy**

Text-Dependent Questions
Audience: 6 – 12 ELA & Content Area Teachers

Expected Outcomes

- ▶ Become familiar with the emphasis on reading instruction that stays closely connected to the texts.
- ▶ Understand the importance of *argument* and *evidence* in the Common Core State Standards.
- ▶ Identify some examples and non-examples of classroom practices that encourage students to return to the text for text-based answers and evidence.
- ▶ Become aware of resources in *the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* and *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core*.

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Emphasis on citing textual evidence

Reading Anchor Standard 1

- ▶ Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing Anchor Standard 9

- ▶ Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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Emphasis on argument & evidence

- ▶ **Writing Anchor Standard 1**
 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- ▶ **Speaking & Listening Anchor Standard 3**
 - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, use of evidence and rhetoric.
- ▶ **Speaking & Listening Anchor Standard 5**
 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence....

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Emphasizing text-based answers

- ▶ Model close reading.
- ▶ Select works that are worth teaching in depth.
- ▶ Create interesting sequences that draw students into the texts.
- ▶ Pre-teach vocabulary and/or background and scaffold the texts to make them accessible to students without pre-teaching the *content* of the texts.
- ▶ "Step back" and allow the readers space and time to experience the texts unmediated.
- ▶ Students have rich and rigorous conversations which are dependent on students reading a central text.
- ▶ Set up questions so students make their own judgments and back them up with evidence from the text.

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Blank Slide

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Nurturing close reading

Examples

- ▶ Scaffolding supports the text.
- ▶ Pre-reading activities allow the text to unfold itself to the reader, preserving the reading experience.
- ▶ Questions lead students deeper into the text and cause them to pay closer attention to it.
- ▶ The classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the text.

Non-examples

- ▶ Scaffolding supplants the text.
- ▶ Pre-reading activities pre-empt or deflate the reading experience
- ▶ “Connection” questions and discussions lead away from the text.
- ▶ Activities are not text-based.

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Differentiate between

- ▶ Classroom activities that support content standards (e.g., language, literature, social studies, science) aimed at building students’ knowledge base.
- ▶ Classroom activities that support reading standards aimed at enabling students to enlarge their knowledge base through unassisted reading.

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From “Winston Churchill Braces Britons to Their Task”

I say to the House as I said to ministers who have joined this government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many months of struggle and suffering.

You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs - Victory in spite of all terrors. Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival.

I take up my task in buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. I feel entitled at this juncture, at this time, to claim the aid of all and to say, “Come then, let us go forward together with our united strength.”

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Non-examples

- ▶ Scaffolding that supplants the text, essentially replacing the need to read it.
 - Read Churchill's call-to-arms to the House of Commons, where he warns Britons that the war ahead will be long and difficult, but that victory is crucial to their survival.
- ▶ Pre-reading activities that pre-empt or deflate the reading experience.
 - Look for Churchill's powerful phrases: "blood, toil, tears, and sweat"; "monstrous tyranny"; and "lamentable catalogue of human crime."
- ▶ Questions that lead the reader away from the text to other trains of connections, never to return.
 - Where else have you heard a variant of the phrase "blood, sweat, and tears"? What ordinary, everyday experiences might fit the phrase?
- ▶ "Reading" activities that are not text based.
 - Write about a time you used powerful words to persuade someone.
 - Make a map showing the situation in Europe in the spring of 1940.

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Examples of pre-reading activities that support the text, allowing it to unfold to the reader

- Pre-teach vocabulary
 - selected academic vocabulary (e.g., *ordeal*, *grievous*, *lamentable*, *suffered*);
 - clarify other terms (e.g., *minister*);
 - remind students to use context (e.g., *juncture*)
- Clarify the situation in Europe and Britain up to May 1940, setting the stage for students to "discover" Churchill's intent and argument, as well as understand his references.
- Offer advance organizers and other scaffolding that enable the students to experience the complexity of the text (rather than avoid it).

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Example of scaffolding, advance organizer

Main idea of paragraph 1	
Details that support or develop and main idea	
Words that stand out	More common words for the same idea

[same boxes for paragraphs 2, 3, 4...]

Main idea of the piece as a whole?

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Text-dependent Reading Anchor Standards

- For instance, address these Reading Anchor Standards
- ▶ 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development....
 - ▶ 3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of the text.
 - ▶ 5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text ... relate to each other and the whole.
 - ▶ 8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning....

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Questions encourage a closer read

- Use evidence from the text to support answers.
- ▶ What is Churchill's purpose in this speech, and what makes it so powerful?
 - ▶ What does each paragraph contribute to the main idea?
 - ▶ What reasons does Churchill give to support his proposed policy?
 - ▶ How does Churchill's word choice develop his main ideas?

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Reading Anchor Standard 7 Showing the film

- ▶ Students read the text first, then view film or listen to audio.
- ▶ Then, they come back to the text.
 - 7.RI.7 Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words.)
 - 7.RL.7 Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium....



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Activity: Planning for close reading

- ▶ Read one of the other passages on the handout. With a partner or two, come up with a few classroom practices/prompts that would nurture close reading and elicit text-dependent questions. Refer to the lists on Slide 7.
- ▶ Come up with a few non-examples, as well.



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How did we do?

- ▶ *What is meant by the shift toward greater emphasis on text-based answers?*
- ▶ *What are a couple of classroom practices that inadvertently deflect students from close reading?*
- ▶ *What are a couple of classroom practices that nurture close reading and a focus on text-dependent questions?*

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Suggested follow-up activities

- ▶ In grade level teams, develop lesson(s) focused on a text selection that include
 - An interesting sequence as a “hook” that derives from the text itself (rather than extraneous experiences, etc.)
 - Pre-reading activities and scaffolding that make the text more accessible to students who might find it very challenging – and still preserve the reading experience for them.
 - Uses journal or discussion prompts that cause students to return to the text for a close reading.
 - Poses questions that prompt students to respond with evidence-based answers.

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