Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Reading & Writing Strategies

**Reading Strategies**

**#1 Seven Reading Comprehension Strategies[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**1.** Plan and Monitor**:** controlling one’s mental activities; focusing on the readers’ awareness and control of their comprehension. When engaged with this strategy, you use planning skills—how to preview texts and how to set a purpose for reading and make predictions. You also know how to clarify ideas by using fix-up strategies and how to clarify vocabulary by using context clues and other word-level fix-up strategies.

**2.** Determine Importance**:** identifying essential ideas and information. This is the ability to separate the wheat from the chaff in text. You know how to identify stated and implied main ideas, how to summarize texts, and how to note the personal relevance of ideas and information.

**3.** Ask Questions**:** interrogating texts for a variety of purposes, such as checking one’s understanding, querying the author about his or her writing, and discerning relationships among ideas and information within a text.

**4.** Make Inferences**:** linking parts of texts that authors did not link explicitly. Using what one already knows to form links across sentences and paragraphs. Often known as “reading between the lines.”

**5.** Make Connections**:** using what is known to enrich authors’ meanings; taking what has been learned from one’s own life experiences, other texts, and cultural and global matters to deepen understandings of what the author presents. Otherwise known as “reading beyond the lines.”

**6.** Synthesize**:** putting together ideas from multiple sources; deciding how ideas go together in a way that is new; figuring out how what one is reading and learning fits together in a way not thought of before. Readers’ draw conclusions, form generalizations, and make comparisons across texts.

**7.** Visualize**:** forming sensory and emotional images of textual contents, especially visual images. Recognize that one is having an emotional response while reading and identify what the author did to invoke that response.

**#2 Annotating Text Strategies[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**Coding text:** a method of margin marking to interact with text as you read. This strategy can be applied to a variety of text types and all content areas.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Confirms what you thought | \* | Strikes you as very important |
| X | Contradicts what you thought | 🡪 | Is new or interesting to you |
| ? | Puzzles you | R | Reminds you of something |
| ?? | Really confuses you | A | Answers a question you had |

**Revealing patterns**: Annotations might focus on grammatical patterns, sound patterns, imagery, or structural design of the text. Annotations in the form of underlines and marginal comments are most appropriate.

**Underlining meaningful passages**: Can be used for discussion and greater independence in reading. Students mark text as they wish. Next explain what was marked and why as a way to begin a critical reading discussion or written task.

**#3 Summarizing a Text: *Somebody-Wanted-But-So[[3]](#footnote-3)***

The *Somebody-Wanted-But-So* strategy summarizes key events of text. Determine the main character(s) and put that name in the *Somebody* column, *What* they wanted, *But* what happened that kept them from getting what they wanted and *So*, the eventual outcome of that particular conflict. With a long text, there may be several SWBS rows, connected with transition words (then, and, etc.).

Ex: “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out” by Shel Silverstein

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Somebody**  Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout | **Wanted**  Wanted to avoid taking the garbage out | **But**  But the garbage piled up to the ceiling, out the door, and up to the sky | **So**  So her neighbors moved away, and no friends would come to play |
| **THEN** | | | |
| **Somebody**  Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout | **Wanted**  Wanted to take the garbage out | **But**  But by then it was too late | **So**  So Sarah met an “awful fate” |

**#4 Ask Questions to Understand Stories[[4]](#footnote-4)**

Select a few questions to answer as you read. Fill in additional details when done reading.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Who is telling the story? * What is the narrator’s point of view; i.e. is the story being told as it happens? Recalled from past events? As an internal monologue? Dramatic monologue? * To what extent can you trust the narrator? * What do you know about the characters? * What do these things tell you about the characters? * What is the relationship between the setting and the characters/story? * What are people in the story *not* talking about? * If there is more than one narrator, what is the relationship between them and what purpose do these multiple narrators serve? * What shape or diagram best describes the action and/or structure of the story? * How would it change the story if...e.g., the narrator changed from first to third person? The point of view changed from one character to another? The narrative started before/after the crucial event? A different narrative structure (e.g., journal format, internal monologue) was used? The narrator changed from man to woman (or vice versa)? * How would you describe the voice and how it influences the tone of the story: e.g., formal or informal? * Why does the narrator want to tell this story? * What is the narrator’s attitude toward their subject/character/story? * What, if anything, is influencing the shape and function of the text/story (e.g., cultural tradition)? | * Why does the author \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (e.g., shift time frames, change narrators, incorporate different types of texts—poems, letters, journals—within their story) * How does the character change in response to their experiences in the story? * What are the sources of conflict or tension in the narrative? * How do your perceptions of the character(s) change as the story progresses? * Does your answer to the question “What is this story about?” remain the same throughout your reading? If not, at what point does it change? * What factors most influence your response to and interpretation of this story? (e.g., past experiences you’ve had? Cultural bias? Gender? Socioeconomic status? Other?) * How does the historical setting/context affect this story’s outcome/meaning/   style?   * What must you know in order to understand this story? * What is the relationship between this and other works by this author—or other writers/works in this genre? * Which character do you most identify with and why? * What would \_\_\_ be saying/thinking in their head as \_\_\_ talks about \_\_\_? * Why did the author tell the story as they did? (e.g., in first person, from that character’s point of view, from present looking back? What was their “authorial intent”?) * If a character has come condition—physical, psychological, emotional—what effect does that have on the story & our perception of the character? |

**#5 The Traits of an Effective Reader Reading a Literary Text[[5]](#footnote-5)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DEVELOPING INTERPRETATIONS**   * Identify problems, gaps, ambiguities, conflicts, symbols and/or metaphors in the text * Analyze the text to pose explanations that bridge gaps, clarify ambiguity & resolve textual problems. * Use the context to connect analytical explanations to a “bigger picture”   **The advanced response interprets to analyze & think critically about texts.**   * Directly answers the question by employing problem-solving techniques –using specific evidence, clues & “on target” information. * Examples, quotes & events are cited from the text and strongly connected to the analysis. * Responds beyond the question to engage the bigger picture by creating framework of historical significance, cultural importance or universal theme. | **INTEGRATING FOR SYNTHESIS**   * Put information in order to explain the text’s process or chronology. * Compare/contrast characters, story lines, events & primary and secondary sources in order to make defensible judgments and interpretations. * Recognize & describe cause-and-effect relations. * Integrate personal experience, background knowledge and/or content knowledge with the text to create a “synthesis” of text plus knowledge.   **The advanced response integrates textual material and other types of knowledge to create a synthesis of ideas.**   * Directly, specifically & concretely performs the synthesis application directed by the question by using synthesis language. * Uses well-chosen examples that have a strong parallel development if the question demands it. * Responds beyond the question, integrating several layers of knowledge into a harmonious whole. | **CRITIQUING FOR EVALUATION**   * Experiment with ideas in the text * Express opinions about the text * Raise questions about the text * Make good judgments about the text by using a synthesis of material derived from multiple sources. * Challenge the ideas of the author by noting bias, distortion and/or lack of coherence. * Contrast the accuracy of textual information with other sources & form solid, defensible critiques.   **The advanced response evaluates to assert a strong voice in the text.**   * Directly and thoughtfully answers the question, using evaluation terminology effectively & precisely to indicate the reader’s critique of the text. * The examples are well developed, placed in context & connected well to other ideas. * Responds beyond the parameters of the question to critically engage the text & its ideas in a solid, defensible judgment. |
| **DECODING CONVENTIONS**   * Decode the writing conventions of grammar, punctuation, word recognition & sentence structure. * Recognize the organizational conventions of the author, title, the characters, the theme, the conflict & the resolution of stories and plays. * Identify the genre conventions of the types of modes appropriate to each literary genre, the distinctions between genres, & the expectations the readers have for genres.   **The advanced response uses conventions information to form a confident “thinking frame” of a text.**   * Directly answers the question using text structure language in specific & precise ways. * Selects well-chosen and well-supported examples to illustrate understanding of conventions. * Responds “beyond” the question by enlarging the initial thinking frame. | **ESTABLISHING COMPREHENSION**   * Use strategies to “squeeze” meaning out of the text. * Identify the plot, the major (round) characters and minor (flat) characters, the “turning moments,” and main themes of the text. * Distinguish between significant and supporting details and events for plot, characters, main ideas & main themes. * Summarize and paraphrase with purpose to move toward making inferences & interpretations.   **The advanced response demonstrates a purposeful, expansive and knowledgeable comprehension of the text.**   * Directly answers the question using comprehension terms to indicate precise understandings. * Selects well-chosen examples to illustrate in-depth comprehension. Examples are well developed using clear, specific language & terms. * Responds “beyond” the question by increasing comprehension of the text into inferential & interpretative levels. | **REALIZING CONTEXT**   * Identify the time period and its accompanying social realities in the text. * Identify the setting of the text and its relationship to social factors. * Identify the vocabulary reflective of the context. * Recognize the writing mode, tone & voice of the author or source selected with respect to the context. * Recognize the cultural aspects of the text.   **The advanced response realizes context & sees inferential meanings & intended purposes, both implicit & explicit.**   * Directly & specifically answers the question to demonstrate understanding of inferential meaning * Selects well-chosen examples to illustrate understandings of contextual issues. * Goes beyond the question’s limits and extends into in-depth understandings of contextual relationships. |

**Writing Strategies**

**#1 Write for Different Purposes**

Students will write for different purposes. What are you trying to do? Select the most effective text type to accomplish your purpose.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Communicate | Author wants to express ideas | Personal letters, business letters, notes, email |
| Inform | Author wants to give you information | Writing reports, explaining how to do something; describing an event, object or place |
| Persuade | Author wants you to do, buy, or believe something | Advertisements, speeches, expressing an opinion |
| Entertain | Author wants to amuse you or for your to enjoy the writing | Writing stories, plays, poems, jokes, comics, songs |
| Learn content material | Author is gathering information in an organized manner | summarizing, journal entries, graphic organizers |
| Reflect | Author gives a topic serious thought or consideration | writing about personal events, autobiography |
| Respond to literature | Author is expressing own ideas after reading a text | analyzing authors’ intentions, text evaluations |
| Demonstrate knowledge | Author uses evidence to show skill set or understanding | classroom assessments |

**#2 Writer’s Checklist[[6]](#footnote-6)**

Formal academic writing will usually be assessed with the following questions in mind. Before submitting work, ask yourself:

* Are ideas in text clearly presented and fully developed?
* Is the text easy to follow and logically organized?
* Are words used effectively and precisely?
* Are sentences varied to promote fluency, rhythm and natural speech patterns?
* Does the text capture appropriate tone or mood to make maximum impact on the reader?
* Are there spelling, usage and grammar errors?
* Is the written product legible, attractive and accessible?

**#3 Three-Step Observation on a Writing Task[[7]](#footnote-7)**

1. **What Worked**

* Create a checklist of the elements that went well overall
* Consider categories like analysis, organization and language usage

1. **What Did NOT Work**

* Create a table that shows what you did
* Identify how you will modify work for future assignments

For Example:

What did NOT work

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What I DID: Instead of *praising*... | What I WILL do: Try *commenting* |
| Seamus Heaney is the greatest poet I’ve ever read... | Seamus Heaney’s reputation as one of the twentieth century’s great poets stems form his willingness to confront issues that challenge his readers to question their beliefs. |
| Winnie is the most inspiring person I’ve ever read about. | Winnie’s determination in the face of repeated loss makes her a memorable character, one whom readers can’t help but respect |
| What I DID: Instead of *summarizing*... | What I WILL do: Try making *conclusions* |
| Winnie’s mother abandoned her when she was little, so she went to live with her aunts. | Winnie’s abandonment at a young age might have scared her more deeply than she shows in the book; it might account for her protective attitude toward Pearl. |

1. **What Needs Work** (some categories to think about)

* Conventions: consider characteristics of an essay, a journal entry, a letter, etc.
* Word choice: words must be precise and show precision.
* Idea development: transitional words, punctuation, quotes/examples selected, controlling the main idea—idea must be worthy of your reader’s attention and showcase your knowledge. Once you say something is important, you must explain *why* it is important and provide supporting examples or details.
* For testing—Pacing: pace your time during a written exam to give each part of the exam roughly an equal amount of time.

**#4 Timed Writing Approach[[8]](#footnote-8)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. *Read the prompt*: you must answer the prompt. | 9. *Write to express, not impress*: keep vocab and syntax within your zone of competence to explain clearly. |
| 1. *Do what the prompt suggests*: if the prompt says discuss “the character’s effect on action **or** theme,” be sure to select ONE element to focus on. | 10. *Demonstrate you understand style*: show the reader how the author has created a desired effect. This shows you are aware of the creative process. |
| 1. *Think before you write*: plan your response (no arrows to follow or crammed margins to read). | 11. *Maintain a sense of simplicity*: the best writers say much, but say it very succinctly. |
| 1. *Make a strong first impression*: build an artistic opening and don’t parrot the prompt word for word. | 12. *Let your writing show ideas and insights*: best essays expand to a wider perspective. |
| 1. *Begin your response immediately*: don’t begin with a generalization “There are many great novels...” Try for a creative opening that sets up your thesis. | 13. *Write legibly*: If a reader can’t read your ideas, you marks won’t reflect what you can truly express in the written form. |
| 1. *Use clear transitions*: keep a flow to your essay and keep paragraphs organized. Don’t digress. | 14. Let your work stand on its own merits: Avoid penning “pity me” notes (“I have a cold” or “I was sick last night”) |
| 1. *Avoid plot summary*: your thesis—not the plot—should dictate your organization. You are proving an assertion, not telling a story. | 15. *Always address the meaning/theme of the work early*: All prompts imply this, so work into intro or thesis. All you discuss will ultimately be based on the author’s meaning |
| 1. *Don’t use canned quotes or critics’ comments if they don’t fit*: use only material that fits your thesis. | 16. Use strong, specific supporting evidence: For every generalization, use details or quotes from the work. |

**#5** **Traits of effective and ineffective writers[[9]](#footnote-9)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Effective Writers** | **Ineffective Writers** |
| **Before You Write** | |
| * Determine what you already know and need to learn * Read the directions. * Establish a purpose or question you are trying to answer through your writing. * Ask others—classmates or teacher—if you do not understand what you are supposed to do. * Gather any tools, ideas or materials you might need and determine how best to use them. (Notes, handouts, etc.) * Provide a quiet, studious environment in which to think, read and write. * Establish appropriate and reasonable goals for the assignment, taking into consideration the demands of the text, your personal writing goals and the time needed to write this particular text. * Identify the type of text or genre so you know how to write it. * Generate ideas using a range of strategies; these ideas involve not only the subject but strategies you will use to write about it. | * Begin writing without asking yourself what you know or need to learn. * Ignore or barely look at the directions. * Do not establish a purpose or because you did not read the directions, establish an incorrect purpose; write with no question to answer. * Do not ask for help. * Lack the tools, ideas, or material that would help you be an effective, informed reader. * Try to work in an environment filled with distractions. This includes a laptop with excess programs open. * Do not evaluate the demands or difficulties of your writing assignments. You just jump in and start writing without a goal or purpose in mind. * Treat texts equally, writing them without consideration of audience, conventions or voice. * Make no effort or do not know how to generate ideas about a topic. |
| **While You Write** | |
| * Continually check what you write against the assignment, the text about which you are writing and the question you are trying to answer through your writing. * Check for understanding as you write; if you get lost, you use various strategies to help you understand. You are a reflective, resourceful writer. * Make connections between what you are writing and your own experiences and knowledge. * Ask questions to help you generate examples, details or connections. * If writing about a text—poem, book, film or image—you return to it, rereading it to better understand it & find supporting details for the ideas explored in your response. * Make notes and generate other possible approaches as you write, checking to see if they would improve the response you are writing. * Evaluate and revise as necessary those essential aspects of effective writing: voice, organization, clarity, ideas, conventions, mechanics. | * Never or rarely check the topic or the text about which you are writing; you charge on, more concerned with finishing than doing it correctly or well. * Pay no attention to whether you understand what you are writing about; if you get lost you do not use strategies to help you get unstuck. * Do not make any connections; you may not see what you are reading as related to yourself or anything else. * Do not ask questions, which results in writing that lacks necessary information and useful examples. * If writing about a text, you do not reread it. * Make no notes; do not consider alternative approaches. * Make no effort to evaluate or revise; you just get it down so you have something to turn in. |
| **After You Write** | |
| * Check for understanding and success, asking such questions as, “Do I understand what I wrote? Did I achieve my stated purpose in this piece of writing?” If necessary, you return to the text or consult others who can help you improve what you wrote. * Reread the topic or assignment so you can be sure you met the requirements. * Edit for clarity. * Edit for correctness. * Reflect on what you did and how you did it so you can learn and do better on future writing assignments. | * Do not check for understanding or consult others if you did not understand this assignment. * Do not revisit the topic; this may keep you from realizing you went off-topic. * Do not edit for clarity. * Do not edit for correctness. * Do not reflect on what you did. Make no effort to think about what worked or why. |

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