

Reading and Responding to Texts

Grade 9 English Language Arts: strategies for understanding and reacting to what we read, watch and hear

Before You Read: Set Yourself Up

- Preview a text's intent, content and structure before diving in
- Choose a reading rate and strategy that fits how familiar the topic is
- Use visual and textual cues to skim and scan for information fast
- Check structural features like headings, captions or menus to read efficiently

Your Background Shapes Your Reading

Prior Knowledge

What you already know and have experienced changes how you read a text. Two readers can take away different meanings from the same story, poem or article because they bring different lives to it.

Explicit vs Implicit

Some ideas are stated directly (explicit). Others are suggested and must be inferred (implicit). Strong readers identify both and listen to how classmates interpret the same text differently.

Responding: Meaning and Artistry

Character Motives

Analyze why characters make choices and what that reveals about people, including ourselves

Theme and Point of View

Identify the central message and whose perspective shapes the telling

Personal Connection

Relate themes, emotions and experiences in a text to issues that matter to you

Literary Techniques

Notice irony, symbolism, perspective and proportion, and discuss how they build meaning

Character Development

Judge whether a character's behaviour stays consistent or whether change feels believable

Mood and Impression

See how language choices and the plot-setting-character mix create a dominant feeling

Comparing Texts Across Forms

1

Pick two texts

Choose oral, print or media texts, ideally from different eras, genres or mediums

2

Compare characters

Look at a main character in each text and note similarities and differences

3

Track plot and theme

Compare how plot and theme develop across the two texts

4

Test the narrator

Consider how a change in narrator might shift the overall meaning

5

Evaluate effectiveness

Judge believability of plot and setting, credibility of characters, and how conflict resolves

Putting It All Together

Reading well means previewing a text with purpose, drawing on your own experience, spotting explicit and implicit ideas, and responding to theme, character and technique. Comparing texts across genres and eras sharpens your judgment about what makes a story or article work, and listening carefully to others' interpretations, including evaluating a presenter's credibility and evidence, builds a fuller picture of any text.

Think of a book, show or article you strongly agreed or disagreed with. What in your own background shaped that reaction, and how might someone with a different background have read it?