

Reading and Responding to a Short Text

30 minutes, 3 stages

When you read, you bring your own experiences and knowledge to the text. Two readers can interpret the same story, poem or article differently depending on what they already know and what matters to them. Learning to notice your own interpretation, compare it with others, and support it with evidence from the text helps you become a more thoughtful reader ([Outcome](#), [Outcome](#)).

Stage 1: Preview and Read (10 min)

Read the short text below. Before you start, spend two minutes looking at the title and the first sentence. What do you expect the text to be about? Write one or two sentences predicting what you think will happen or what the main idea might be ([Outcome](#)).

Now read the full text slowly:

The Lighthouse Keeper

Marcus had tended the lighthouse for thirty-one years, climbing the same spiral stairs every evening to light the beam that guided ships past the rocks. Tonight, the light swept across the dark water as it always had, a steady signal that had not failed once in three decades. But at the base of the tower stood a young engineer from the coast guard, holding a clipboard and a small black device. She had come to install the new automated system that would run the light without anyone climbing the stairs at all. Marcus thought of his father, who had kept this same lighthouse before him, and his grandfather before that, hauling oil up these same steps long before electricity reached the coast. "You won't need to come up here anymore," she said, watching him check the lamp one last time. Marcus said nothing. He turned, walked down the spiral stairs, and did not look back.

After you finish reading, write down one thing that happened in the text that you found important or surprising. ([Outcome](#))

Stage 2: Identify Explicit and Implicit Ideas (12 min)

Answer the following questions in your notebook:

1. **Explicit information:** What is Marcus's job, and how long has he done it? Readers can identify explicit and implicit information in the text to support their interpretations.
2. **Implicit information:** Why do you think Marcus walks down the stairs and does not look back? What does the text suggest without saying it directly? ([Outcome](#))
3. **Your interpretation:** How do you think Marcus feels about the automated system replacing his work? Point to one or two words or sentences from the text that support your answer. ([Outcome](#))
4. **Your prior knowledge:** Have you ever had to stop doing something that was important to you, or seen someone else go through that? How does that experience shape the way you read this story? ([Outcome](#))

Stage 3: Reflect on Technique and Meaning (8 min)

The author chose to end the story with Marcus walking down the stairs without looking back, rather than showing what happens next. This choice affects the mood and meaning of the text ([Outcome](#)).

Write a short paragraph (4 to 6 sentences) answering this question: What feeling or impression does the ending create? Does the author's choice to stop the story there make the text more powerful, or would you prefer to know what Marcus does after he leaves? Explain your reasoning.

Self-check

1. Can you identify one piece of information that is directly stated in the text and one piece of information you had to infer or figure out yourself?
2. Can you explain how your own experiences or prior knowledge shaped the way you understood Marcus's character or the story's meaning?