



Back-to-Basics: Close Reading and Academic Writing Skills

Let's face it; tests are always changing, and those changes make our heads spin. But the fact remains (and we all know this) that close reading and academic writing skills help students to become academically and culturally sound. So, that's why we call this two-day training "Back-to-Basics." If our children can read well and write well, then preparing students for high-stakes testing will be less difficult.

Breathe. Remember why you became an English Language Arts teacher. Let this two-day workshop provide you with training on the teaching of close reading and literary analysis, also known as response to literature. From the very simple model of the Cinderella paragraph to Advanced Placement® interpretations, this guide reveals an academic approach to writing about literature. This workshop is the English Language Arts teacher's foundational workshop that segues nicely to our expository, argumentation, and narrative modes of discourse.

The standards-based curriculum guide aligns with both the Common Core State Standards and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Through the gradual release of responsibility model, teachers learn how Jane's prewriting strategies teach students that "Writing is about Thinking." Scaffolding of skills starts with student-centered terminology, color-coding, and Web-off-the-Word™, Schaffer's breakthrough approach to commentary and vocabulary development. The thinking and writing process continues with editing, revising, and proofing techniques. From writing an effective prompt to common terminology to cognitive processes to final draft essays, this workshop is designed to assist the English language arts teacher with strategies and techniques that yield successful writers and the added bonus: close readers! Woven throughout the two-day training are also close reading strategies, because we all know that writing and reading go hand-in-hand. Topics for the reading section include strategies and activities pertaining to denotation, connotation, and tone; multiple-choice reading stems; annotating texts using the JSWP color-coding, creating a dialectical journal, vertical approaches to reading, and questioning strategies, to name a few.

Agenda

Part I

- Introduction and The Methodology
- Brief History and Jane's Philosophical Points
- The Formula Issue Laid to Rest; Enter "Weaving"
- Gradual Release of Responsibility Format for JSWP
- Organization, Logic, and Voice: The Response to Literature Model Paragraph
- Avoid Starting from Scratch Each Year: Common Terminology for Students
- Topic Sentence
- Concrete Details
- Commentary
- Teaching Students Literary Jargon: How to Talk the Talk and Walk the Walk
- Concluding Sentence
- Color-Coding for Cognitive Recognition and Development
- Chunking
- Different Ratios for the Different Types of Writing

Part II

- The Thinking and Writing Process of a Literary Analysis
- Gathering Concrete Details and Discerning the Best Ones to Use
- The T-Chart: Arranging Ideas
- Web-off-the-Word™ (WOW) Commentary Development
- Topic Sentence Revisions
- Concluding Sentences That Impact a Paragraph
- Teaching Tone
- Verbal Sound Values
- The Shaping Sheet for Grammar, Style, Revisions, Editing, and Proofing
- Varying the Types of Sentences, Lengths of Sentences, and Sentence Openings
- Transitional Words and Thoughts
- Close Reading: Sentence Openings of Famous Authors
- Simplifying Syntax
- Introduction to Weaving

Part III

- Prompts and Practice:
- The Three Parts to an Effective Writing Prompt
- Developing Prompts (Bring a Topic for a Literary Prompt)
- Collaborative Writing (Working Through the Thinking Process Together)
- Core Literature
- Skill Progression Charts
- Novel and Drama Records

Part IV

- Engaging Students in the Act of Reading
- Text-based Writing with Embedded Quotations
- Writing a Thesis Statement

Part V

- Thematic Statements
- Introductions and Conclusions
- Introduction to Style Analysis
- Google Docs Template for Response to Literature
- The Teacher's Toolbox
- Rubrics and Scoring Guides
- Making Corrections
- One-to-One Conferencing
- Timelines, Portfolios