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Appendices

How to Use This Book

This book has four sections:

- strategies for close reading and writing
- close reading lessons with informational/explanatory texts
- close reading lessons with opinion/argument texts
- close reading lessons with narrative texts

The first section provides general **strategies for close reading and writing**. These strategies can be used when working with any text to create new lessons for close reading and writing.
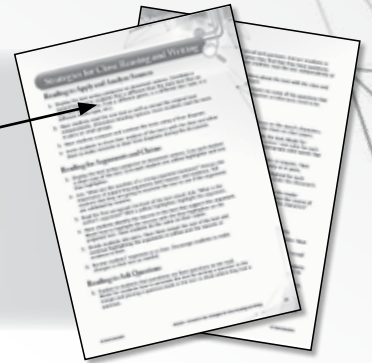
Each lesson begins with a list of **standards** that are addressed. The specific **areas of focus** and **materials** are listed after the overview in each lesson.

The **overview** discusses the type of text used in the lesson and the ways in which the standards connect to the text passage. The overview also provides a brief description of the reading and writing activities in the lesson.
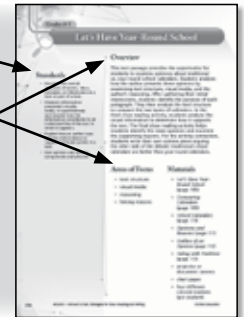
Each lesson contains a **text** that is appropriate for the grade span. A variety of text types are in this resource. Be sure to make at least one copy of the text for each student. It may also be helpful to display the text using a projector or document camera. For shorter texts, you may choose to rewrite the text on chart paper so that class can annotate it together.

The lessons begin with a **first reading** of the text, where students give their initial impressions, thoughts, and questions about the text. The teacher prompts students to record notes about specific aspects of the text, such as words they find confusing, or concepts they think are related to the text. Students record these notes directly on the text.
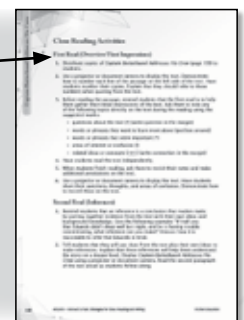
The procedure for the **second, third, and fourth readings** vary greatly, depending on the text and areas of focus. Before beginning the lesson, teachers should informally assess their students' knowledge and skills so that they can tailor the lesson to fit the needs of their students. All of the reading activities are self-contained and may be taught in any order. It is not necessary to complete all four reading activities, so teachers may choose those that are most relevant to their students' instructional needs.
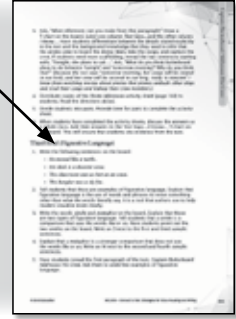
Each lesson finishes with a **culminating writing activity**. Students produce a piece of writing that matches the type of text in the lesson (informational, argument, or narrative). These writing tasks require students to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired through the close reading activities. Some writing activities focus on the use of the text as a resource. In other writing activities, students use the text passage as a mentor text.
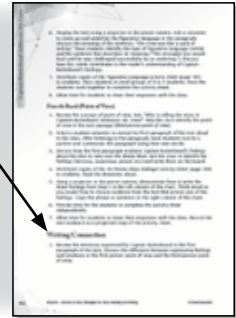
Student activity sheets support students during the close reading and writing activities.
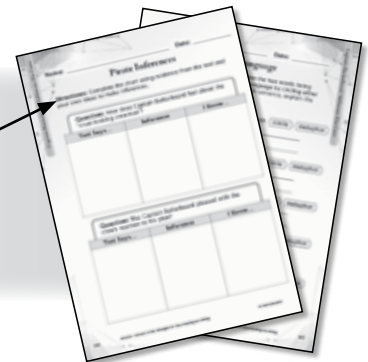
Strategies for Close Reading and Writing

These strategies are embedded throughout the lessons within this book. They can also be used when working with texts outside of what is provided in this book.

Reading to Apply and Analyze Sources
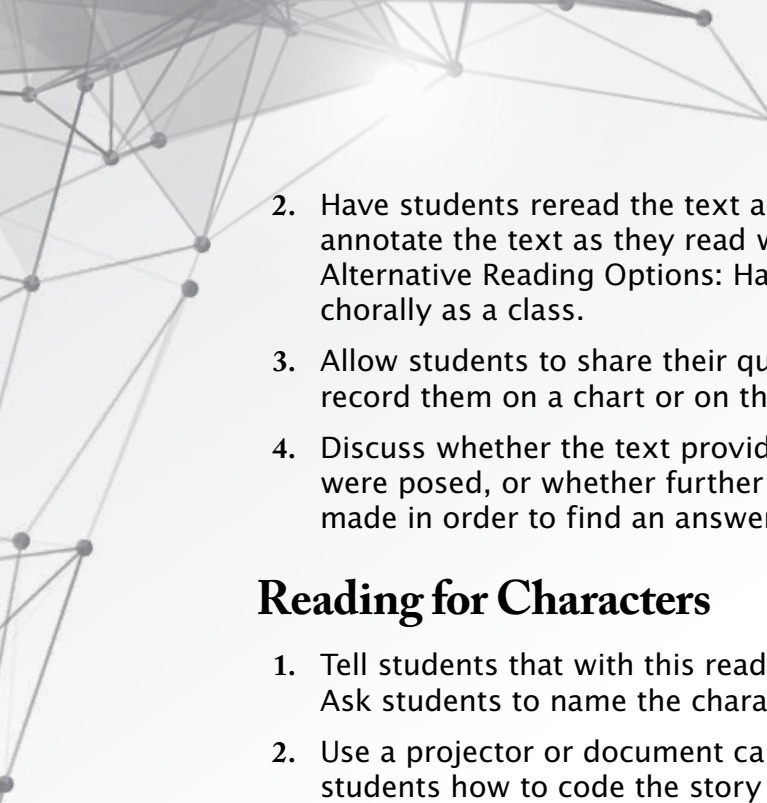
1. Display the text using a projector or document camera. Distribute a supporting text to students that is different than the main text (has an alternate perspective, from a different genre, is a different text type, is a different media type, etc.).

2. Have students read the new text as well as reread the original text independently. Alternative Reading Options: Have students read the texts in pairs or small groups.

3. Have students compare and contrast the texts using a Venn diagram.

4. Invite students to share their analysis of the texts with the class and allow them to make revisions to their Venn diagrams during the discussion.

Reading for Arguments and Claims

1. Display the text using a projector or document camera. Give each student a clean copy of the text. Give each student one yellow highlighter and one blue highlighter.

2. Ask, "What are the qualities of a strong argument (opinion)?" Discuss the importance of supporting arguments with reasons and evidence. Tell students that they are going to examine the text to see if the arguments are validated by reasons.

3. Read the first paragraph (section) of the text aloud. Ask, "What is the author's argument?" With a yellow highlighter, highlight the argument.

4. Have students identify the reasons in the text that support this argument. Model how to highlight the reasons with the blue highlighter on the projected text. Have students do the same on their copies.

5. Divide students into pairs. Have them reread the rest of the text and continue highlighting the arguments in yellow and the reasons or evidence in blue.

6. Review students' responses as a class. Encourage students to make changes to their text as needed.

Reading to Ask Questions

1. Explain to students that sometimes we have questions as we read. Model for students how to annotate the text by writing a question in the margin and placing a question mark in the text to show where they had a question.

2. Have students reread the text aloud with partners. Instruct students to annotate the text as they read when they find that they have questions. Alternative Reading Options: Have students read the text independently or chorally as a class.

3. Allow students to share their questions about the text with the class and record them on a chart or on the board.

4. Discuss whether the text provides answers to some of the questions that were posed, or whether further investigation or inferences need to be made in order to find an answer.

Reading for Characters

1. Tell students that with this read they will focus on the story's characters. Ask students to name the characters as you list them on chart paper.

2. Use a projector or document camera to display the text. Model for students how to code the story with different colors—one color for each character. Students should highlight with the appropriate color words that describe each different character.

3. Provide each student with different colored markers or crayons. Have students code the text as they reread it independently or in pairs.

4. Have students share the words or phrases they highlighted for each character and record their words on the chart paper under the character's name.

5. As a class, discuss how the words used in the text help the reader understand the characters (how the characters change over the course of the text, how the characters are described visually, how the characters' emotions are conveyed, etc.).

Reading to Connect Information

1. Display a copy of the text using a projector or document camera.

2. Have students reread the text chorally. Alternative Reading Options: Have students read the text independently or in pairs.

3. Select two sentences that have a connection (e.g., description) and reread them aloud to the class.

4. Ask, "What is the connection between these two sentences?" Help students understand the connection. Draw an arrow between the two sentences to show the connection.

5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 to show another example of a connection in the text.

6. Have students work in pairs or independently to draw arrows between other connections in the text.

7. Invite students to share their connections and record their thoughts on the displayed text. Allow students to make additional arrows and/or notes as others share.

Connect to Opinion/Argument Text

As soon as they begin to speak, children learn to express their desires and opinions. They negotiate for later bedtimes, extra desserts, and the exclusive use of a favorite toy. They communicate their opinions about food, activities, and relationships. They often try to exert control over the decisions in their lives by using persuasive argument techniques on their parents and peers. As they grow and mature, children learn to express their arguments and opinions in the form of written text as well. Opinion/argument texts have a wide variety of formats and applications in our daily lives.

What Is Opinion/Argument Text?
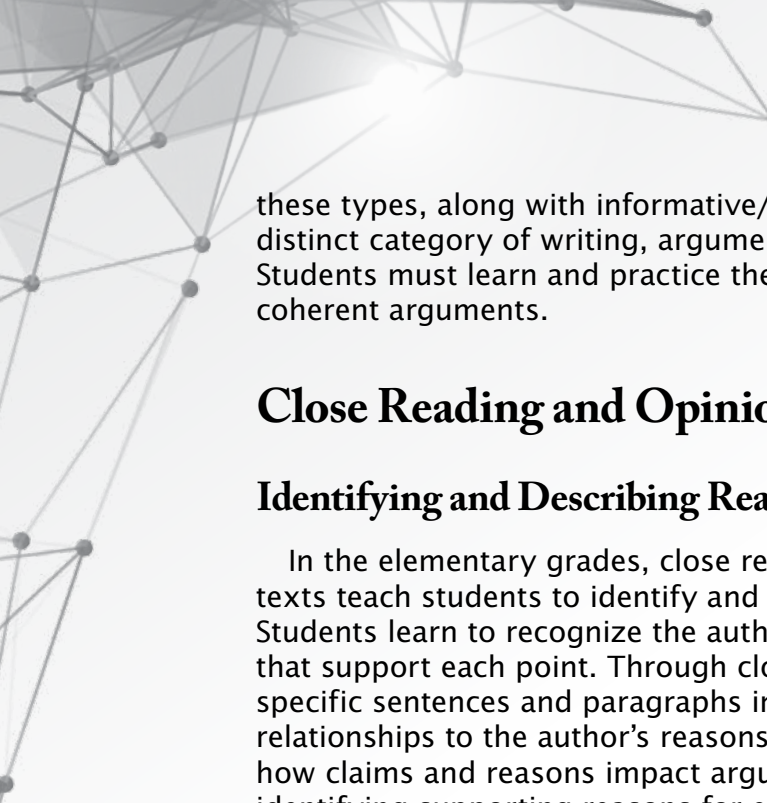
An opinion/argument text is one that attempts to convince or persuade readers. These texts generally express opinions or arguments and provide supporting reasons and evidence. Opinion/argument texts come in many forms, including letters, speeches, and editorial columns. These texts express opinions, communicate claims, and market products. For example, politicians write opinion speeches to persuade constituents to vote for them. Companies write advertisements to convince consumers to buy their products. All arguments share one main objective—to convince people to believe the viewpoints expressed by the author or speaker.

There are three types of opinion/argument texts: exposition, response, and discussion, according to Keir (2009, 8). Exposition refers to texts that present arguments and supporting reasons or evidence about one side of a question or issue without acknowledging opposing viewpoints. Response texts analyze and evaluate specific events or objects, such as performances, artwork, literary texts, etc. These texts provide opinionated reviews and evaluations, along with recommendations. Discussion texts address both sides of an issue or debate and include reasons and evidence supporting both viewpoints. After weighing both sides of an issue, discussion texts often give an opinion favoring one side over the other.

Opinion/Argument Text and Today's Standards

The College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading list the skills for reading opinion/argument texts under the category of Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Anchor Standard 8 says students should be able to, "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence" (NGA and CCSSO 2010a). This standard only applies to reading informational text. It does not apply to reading literature.

The College and Career Readiness Standards for Writing outline three text types and purposes for student writing. Opinions/arguments are one of

these types, along with informative/explanatory texts and narratives. As a distinct category of writing, arguments require specific skills and knowledge. Students must learn and practice these skills in order to produce clear and coherent arguments.

Close Reading and Opinion/Argument Text

Identifying and Describing Reasoning

In the elementary grades, close reading activities for opinion/argument texts teach students to identify and describe an author's line of reasoning. Students learn to recognize the author's main points and isolate the reasons that support each point. Through close reading activities, students analyze specific sentences and paragraphs in texts to determine their purposes and relationships to the author's reasons. Close reading also helps students see how claims and reasons impact arguments. By dissecting arguments and identifying supporting reasons for each point, students learn how authors use language and text structure to write effective opinion/argument texts.

Evaluating Arguments

Middle school students move beyond identifying and describing claims and reasons in argument texts to evaluating arguments. In order to evaluate arguments, students must trace the claims authors make to their reasons and evidence. They must use critical-thinking skills to determine whether the reasons are logical and the evidence is valid. Close reading activities at this level are designed to help students distill the main points and reasons from the text and analyze their validity.

Evidence

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of analyzing argument texts is evaluating the author's supporting evidence. By definition, opinion/argument texts are designed to convince or persuade readers. Students who are college and career ready are able to accurately assess the validity of the arguments they encounter, from TV commercials to America's founding documents. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of arguments, students must determine if the supporting evidence is relevant and sufficient. Close reading activities at the high school level help students differentiate between relevant and irrelevant evidence in texts, identify false or inaccurate claims, and assess the credibility of sources.

Writing Opinion/Argument Text

The close reading of opinion/argument texts improves students' writing skills, as well as their reading comprehension skills. After reading and analyzing a variety of argument texts, students recognize the difference between effective and ineffective arguments. They learn the importance of clearly stated claims, supporting reasons, and valid evidence.

Mentor texts also expose students to different formats and styles of argument texts. While some argument texts present only one side of a debate, other texts address both sides. Students learn to anticipate readers' reactions to claims and address possible concerns and biases up front. They internalize the importance of maintaining a formal style and objective tone when writing argument texts. They also see the powerful impact made by strong concluding statements. Close reading not only enhances the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, but it also facilitates a deeper understanding of the elements that make opinion/argument texts effective and convincing.

Text-Dependent Questions and Prompts to Support Close Reading and Writing of Opinion/Argument Texts

The following text-dependent questions and prompts cover some of the broad areas of focus in literacy. When planning close reading and writing activities, these questions and prompts should be tailored to fit the selected text passages.

Identifying and Describing Reasoning

- What is the author trying to tell the reader? What specific reasons does he/she give to support this point in the text?

- How many reasons does the author provide to support his/her claim that _____? Describe each reason.

- Why does the author claim _____ in the text? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

- What is the author's opinion about _____? How do you know?

Evaluating Arguments

- Which claims in the text are supported by reasons? Which are not?

- Does the author use sound reasoning to support his/her claim that _____? Justify your answer with support from the text.

- Does the author make any claims that are not supported by reasons or evidence? If so, which ones?

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the author's claim. Support your opinion with examples from the text.

- Are the main points in the text sufficiently supported with reasons and evidence? Provide examples to support your answer.

Evidence

- What evidence does the author provide to support the point that _____?

- Evaluate the evidence presented to support the argument that _____. Is the evidence relevant?

- How does the author validate his/her claim in the text? Is this evidence sufficient? Be sure to refer to the text in your answer.

- What sources does the author use to provide evidence in support of his/her claim? Are these sources credible? Why or why not?

- Does the text include any irrelevant evidence? Be sure to include examples from the text in your response.

- Do you trust the reasoning behind the author's argument/claim? What elements of the text make you feel this way?

Let's Have Year-Round School

Overview

This text passage provides the opportunity for students to examine opinions about traditional vs. year-round school calendars. Students analyze how the author presents these opinions by examining text structure, visual media, and the author's reasoning. After gathering their initial impressions, students identify the purpose of each paragraph. They then analyze the text structure to compare the two types of calendars. In the third close reading activity, students analyze the visual information to determine how it supports the text. The final close reading activity helps students identify the main opinions and examine the supporting reasons. For the writing connection, students write their own opinion piece arguing the other side of the debate: traditional school calendars are better than year-round calendars.

Standards

- Describe the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.
- Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases.

Areas of Focus

- text structure
- visual media
- reasoning
- linking reasons

Materials

- *Let's Have Year-Round School* (page 105)
- *Comparing Calendars* (page 109)
- *School Calendars* (page 110)
- *Opinions and Reasons* (page 111)
- *Outline of an Opinion* (page 112)
- *Siding with Tradition* (page 113)
- projector or document camera
- chart paper
- four different colored markers (per student)

5. Discuss students' summaries as a class. Then, call attention to the text structure. Make sure students see how the first three paragraphs highlight the problems with the traditional school calendar, the fourth paragraph explains the benefits of year-round school, and the fifth paragraph addresses one of the counteropinions and presents a conclusion.

6. Distribute copies of the *Comparing Calendars* activity sheet (page 109) to students. Use a projector or document camera to display the activity sheet. Reread the first paragraph and model how to add information to the chart.

7. Provide time for students to complete the activity sheet independently.

8. Review the opinions the author presents in favor of the year-round school calendar and against the traditional school calendar. Talk about how this text uses a compare and contrast text structure.

Third Read (Visual Media)

1. Ask, "Why do some informational texts include charts, graphs, maps, and other graphics?" Explain that these visuals provide additional details.

2. Display the text using a projector or document camera. Direct students' attention to the chart. Make sure students understand how to read the chart.

3. Distribute copies of the *School Calendars* activity sheet (page 110) to students. Using a projector or document camera, display the activity sheet. Read the directions aloud.

4. Place students with partners. Provide time for pairs to complete the activity sheet.

5. Review the answers as a class. Have volunteers share their responses.

6. Ask, "How else could the author have presented this information? Why do you think the author chose this format?" Discuss how the visual presentation complements the text.

Fourth Read (Reasoning)

1. Write the following paragraph on chart paper: *Summer vacations are too long. These long breaks hurt students' education. It is not necessary to have such a long vacation. It would be better to have several shorter vacations spread out over the school year.* Read the text aloud to the class.

2. Ask, "Does this paragraph make a compelling argument for a year-round school calendar? Why or why not?" Help students understand that supporting reasons make arguments more effective.

3. Distribute copies of the *Opinions and Reasons* activity sheet (page 111) to students along with four different colored markers. Display the activity sheet using a projector or document camera. Read the directions aloud to the class.

4. Have the class reread the first paragraph of the text. Ask, "What point does the author make in this paragraph?" Help students identify the main opinion and record it on the activity sheet. For example, *"The traditional school calendar hurts students' education."*

5. Ask students to identify the reasons that support the opinion. Have them choose one of the markers and highlight the reasons. List the reasons underneath the main opinion on the activity sheet.

6. Explain that each argument and its supporting reasons will be highlighted in the same colors. Place students with partners. Have them work together to complete the activity sheet.

7. Review the main opinions and supporting reasons as a class.

Writing Connection

1. Ask, "Do you think the author of *Let's Have Year-Round School* makes a good argument?" Have students discuss their opinions in small groups.

2. Tell students that no matter what they personally believe, they will write an opinion piece in support of the other side of the issue.

3. Brainstorm opinions and reasons that support the traditional school calendar. List these on chart paper.

4. Distribute copies of the *Outline of an Opinion* activity sheet (page 112) to students. Provide time for students to complete the activity sheet independently.

5. List transition words and phrases *(for instance, for example, in addition to, furthermore, additionally)* on a sheet of chart paper. Explain that these help readers connect the ideas in texts.

6. Distribute copies of the *Siding with Tradition* activity sheet (page 113) to students. Provide time for students to write their own opinions. Remind them to use at least three linking words or phrases from the class chart.

7. Have each student read his or her opinion aloud to a partner. Encourage students to give their partners two compliments and one suggestion for improvement.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Comparing Calendars

Directions: Record the opinions from the text in the columns below.

Opinions Against the Traditional School Calendar	Opinions in Support of the Year-Round School Calendar

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

School Calendars

Directions: Answer the questions below using the information from the text.

1. How many months of vacation does the traditional school calendar have?

   _____

   List the vacation months: _____

   _____

   _____

2. How many months of vacation does the year-round school calendar have?

   _____

   List the vacation months: _____

   _____

   _____

3. How does the use of the chart help you understand the text?

   _____

   _____

   _____

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Opinions and Reasons

Directions: Reread the text one paragraph at a time. Write the main opinion in each paragraph in the Opinions box. Then, list the reasons the author gave to support each opinion in the Reasons box.

Opinions	Reasons
Paragraph 1	
Paragraph 2	
Paragraph 3	
Paragraph 4	
Paragraph 5	

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Outline of an Opinion

Directions: List three main opinions in support of the traditional school calendar. List at least two reasons to support each opinion.

Opinion #1: _____

_____

_____

Reasons: _____

_____

_____

Opinion #2: _____

_____

_____

Reasons: _____

_____

_____

Opinion #3: _____

_____

_____

Reasons: _____

_____

_____

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Siding with Tradition

Directions: Use your notes from *Outline of an Opinion* to write an opinion piece in support of the traditional school calendar. Include at least three transition words or phrases.

_____

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