Close Reading

In literary criticism close reading describes the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text. Such a reading places great emphasis on the specific over the general, paying close attention to individual words, syntax, and the order in which sentences and ideas unfold as they are read (Wikipedia).

Passages can come from primary sources, poems, songs, an article or book, picture book, speech, or textbook.

Dr. Richard Paul and Dr. Linda Elder of the Foundation for Critical Thinking suggest 5 levels of close reading to engage students in thinking critically about a brief passage. Consider using the levels and prompts to engage students in critical thinking in classroom activities such as,

- **Think-Pair-Share** – With students seated in teams of 4, have them number them from 1 to 4. Announce a discussion topic. Give students at least 10 seconds of think time to THINK of their own answer. Using student numbers, announce discussion partners. Ask students to PAIR with their partner to discuss the topic or solution. Finally, randomly call on a few students to SHARE their ideas with the class.

- **Socratic Seminar** – a form of inquiry and debate between individuals with opposing viewpoints based on asking and answering questions to stimulate rational thinking and to illuminate ideas.

- **Writing**

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<th>Level</th>
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<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>Read a brief passage, paraphrasing the text sentence by sentence.</td>
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| Explain the Main Point (Thesis) | 1. State the main point of the paragraph in one or two sentences in your own words.  
2. Elaborate on the main point you just wrote. In other words, ………  
3. Give an example of the meaning by tying it to a concrete situation in the real world.  
4. Create a picture, diagram, metaphor, analogy, to connect it to other meanings you already understand. |
| Analysis       | 1. What is the author’s purpose?  
2. What question is the author trying to answer?  
3. What information does the author use in his reasoning?  
4. What is the most fundamental inference or conclusion in the passage?  
5. What is the author’s most basic concept?  
6. What assumptions is the author making in the passage??  
7. What are the implications of the authors reasoning?  
8. What is the author’s point of view with respect to the issue? |
| Evaluation     | 1. Does the author clearly state his meaning?  
2. Is the author accurate in his claims?  
3. Is the author sufficiently precise in providing details?  
4. Does the author introduce irrelevant material?  
5. Does the author look at the complexities in the issue or subject?  
6. Are there contradictions?  
7. Does the author consider other relevant points of view?  
8. Does the author take a one-sided approach? Is he fair? |
| Role-Play      | Enter the mind of the author and speak as if you are the author answering questions about the text. |

Paul, Dr. Richard and Elder, Dr. Linda “The Thinkers Guide to How to Read a Paragraph” The Foundation for Critical thinking 2006