

Close Reading Exemplar Checklist

- ❑ **CITATION FOR COMPLEX TEXT(S) UNDER INVESTIGATION:** State the author(s) and text(s) under investigation.
- ❑ **GOALS FOR THE LESSON:** While there's no right answer to the age-old debate between designing the exemplar with the end in mind versus finding one's way to the core understanding the lesson is supposed to impart, briefly articulating the ultimate goals of the lesson within the exemplar is helpful in order to analyze whether the questions and tasks students are asked to answer and perform will actually lead to this conclusion.
- ❑ **CONNECTION TO THE CCSS:** In similar fashion, regardless of whether particular standards were intentionally targeted at the outset of the design process or whether identifying the standards that were covered emerged organically after the exemplar was complete, the principle CCS Standards stressed within the lesson should be highlighted and their role within the exemplar briefly explained.
- ❑ **DAYS FOR THE LESSON:** Close Reading Exemplars depart most dramatically from other typical lessons in the amount of time devoted to unpacking a relatively small volume of actual text. For close reading exemplars to be successful teachers and students must patiently examine complex texts to allow their full meaning to be explored.
- ❑ **FULL TEXT OF THE READING SELECTION:** Close reading exemplars present the full text of the reading selection with academic vocabulary whose meaning cannot be determined from context defined in the margin in a student friendly fashion.

DAILY LESSON STRUCTURE: Each day of the lesson should include the following elements:

- ❑ Present the day's portion of the text (with non-context dependent academic vocabulary glossed in the margin) for reading and re-reading to improve fluency and expose all students to the text. Teachers can decide whether the first reading is silent and the second out loud or if students should first hear the text and then silently grapple with it on their own.
- ❑ Spell out a series of text-dependent questions and tasks for students to answer and perform (tasks could include paraphrasing, creating their own text-dependent questions, etc). These discussion and writing based activities, be they whole class, in small groups or pairs, or even individually based, should be geared towards providing students a rich grounding in the text to further their understanding.
- ❑ Assign formative (or on the last day cumulative) writing assessments that asks students to report what they have learned that day or synthesize evidence and ideas from the lesson to come to a deeper understanding of the text. The assessment can be expository, argumentative, even narrative, but should demonstrate the student's critical command of the material read and discussed.
- ❑ **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:** Close reading exemplars typically offer additional student enrichment, support, and content materials that relate to the text under study but are not central to understanding it. These optional activities explore tangents and avenues that are perhaps only hinted at in the primary text selection which nevertheless would further serve to deepen student learning through the prism of one or more of the CCS standards.