

CORE ACTION 2:

Employ questions and tasks that are text dependent and text specific.

Text Dependent Questions

Require students to answer using evidence from the text; cannot be answered without reading the text

Text Specific Questions:

Require students to delve into the particular complexities of the text at hand; are based solely on that text, not generalizable (e.g. not “What are the main idea and details of the text?”)

Steps for Addressing Core Action 2

1. Use the High Quality Text Criteria to ensure that this is an appropriate text to spend time on. Is the text worth close study and class time?
2. Determine the essential understanding(s) of the text. (What do you really care about students knowing and understanding -essential- when they finish reading this text?)
 - A. Write the essential understanding in a clear, concise, and very specific sentence at the top of the document. This is where your questions about the document should lead. The more specific you are, the better. Your essential understanding is often the basis of your final writing prompt or task. It may change slightly as you work with the text, but you need a clear starting place.
3. Qualitatively analyze the text. What about this specific text will be most complex for students?
4. What vocabulary should I attend to? How will I do this?
5. Are there areas of difficult, unusual, interesting syntax? Because varied syntax can present difficulties for students, how can I write a question or task that attends specifically to this?
6. Determine key ideas that develop the essential understanding and create a series of open-ended questions to bring the reader to an understanding of these as they work through the reading.
 - A. Begin with questions that orient students to the text and have more literal answers.
 - B. Then develop more highly inferential questions or those requiring synthesis of multiple areas of the text.
7. Locate most powerful academic words; integrate questions and discussion around these words.
8. Find difficult sections of text and craft appropriate questions; these might include particularly dense information, tricky transitions or places that offer a variety of possible inferences. If there are areas wherein multiple ideas are presented, find a way to have students stop and decipher the ideas in the reading.
9. Refer back to social studies standards and CCSS. Which standards might you be able to meet with this document? Consider things like tone/mood, multiple texts or points of view, etc.
10. Develop a culminating activity around the essential understanding(s). A good task should reflect mastery of one or more of the standards, involve writing, and be structured to be completed by small groups or by students independently.

Step 5: Vocabulary

1. With what vocabulary will students MOST struggle? Circle them.
2. Which of these terms is ESSENTIAL to understanding the text? Star them.
3. For the ESSENTIAL terms, which have adequate context clues for which you could build a question or activity for students to determine the meaning? (underline the context clues). Write a question to help students make meaning of this essential word.
4. For the ESSENTIAL terms without adequate context clues, which might you spend time teaching (important academic vocabulary that will transfer to other readings)? Make a list of these words. Discuss how you might teach them with a vocabulary strategy.
5. For the words left over (essential, not enough context clues, not worth explicit teaching), provide students with a grade-level appropriate synonym? Add a synonym to the right side-bar or in parentheses next to the word.

Possible Question Stems for Vocabulary

What words and phrases (context clues) in paragraph ___ help you to understand the meaning of the word ___?

How do the words ____, ____, ____, and ____ help you to better understand the author's use of the word ____?

The word ___ appears in line/paragraph ____. If the word were changed to ____, how would the meaning of the passage change? What other words and phrases would need to be changed? What would you change them to?

The word/phrase _____ on line __ has multiple meanings. What does this word often mean? How is it used differently in this context? How do you know?

The word/phrase ___ on line __ is important to understanding the author's point of view. What word or phrase could you substitute for this word/phrase to demonstrate a different point of view?

What insert # words from the text are most important to understanding the author's point of view (or tone or mood of the text)? Explain your choices using evidence from the text.

Based on the author's language, is the tone of this text _____, _____, or _____. Use words and phrases from the text to justify your answer.

(for use with an important transition word – e.g. consequently, despite, however, etc.) What does the word ___ on line ___ tell us about the author's structure of this text? Why is this word important to notice? Use evidence to explain your answer.

What words/phrases in paragraph(s) ____, help you to understand the author's transitions between ideas? Explain.

(for use with a faraway or unclear antecedent of an unclear term, e.g. it, they, the problem, etc.) Find the word ___ in line _____. To what is this referring exactly? How do you know?

The Latin root _____ means _____. How does knowing the meaning of the root help you to understand the meaning of the word _____?

Possible Question Types for Vocabulary (SBAC-like items)

Reread this sentence from, *The Great Fire*.

Interspersed in these residential areas were a variety of businesses—paint factories, lumber-yards, distilleries, gasworks, mills, furniture manufacturers, warehouses, and coal distributors.

The word *interspersed* contains the prefix *inter-*, which is also used in words like *interaction*, *interplanetary*, and *international*. Based on the word *interspersed* in the quoted sentence, where were the businesses located?

- A. Around the edges of the residential areas
- B. Far from the residential areas
- C. Among the residential areas
- D. Alongside the residential areas

Read this sentence from *Diamonds in the Sky*.

Nanodiamonds are stardust, created when ancient stars exploded long ago, disgorging their remaining elements into space.

Based on the context of the sentence, what is the most precise meaning of the word disgorging?

- A. Scattering randomly
- B. Throwing out quickly
- C. Spreading out widely
- D. Casting forth violently

Reread this sentence from the passage:

The answer was to make the roads and sidewalks out of wood and elevate them above the waterline, in some places by several feet.

Which word in the sentence helps the reader determine the meaning of the word “elevate”?

- A. out
- B. above
- C. waterline
- D. feet