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TO THE TEACHER

Close reading refers to a “careful and purposeful reading” of a selection of text with the goal of discovering deeper comprehension and understanding of the material. This activity book helps students develop close reading skills that should further prepare them for college and career readiness.

The evolution of close reading is rooted in secondary-level learning, especially in preparing students for college-level courses. However, with the advent of Common Core State Reading and Language Arts Standards, it has become evident that close-reading skills are just as necessary for the elementary- and middle-school levels. It is not enough to expect students to develop close-reading skills on the high-school level. Instead, it is now necessary for students to develop these skills from kindergarten through elementary school as well.

These skills are essential since many high-quality texts don’t provide an easy way to uncover their meanings. The goal is for “deep comprehension.” This is a necessity as students graduate from lower-level to more complex and high-quality texts, which typically happens as they graduate from elementary school to secondary school and on to higher education. This book provides a foundation to help students develop those close-reading skills.

This activity book focuses on close reading excerpts from Joy Hakim’s *Freedom: A History of US*. This lively and richly layered history text provides excellent opportunities for both learning close-reading skills and revealing a deeper understanding of U.S. history as conveyed by the full text. This activity book’s goal, first and foremost, is to provide supplemental activities to *Freedom: A History of US* that teach skills that can translate into any area of reading and that also immerse students in a fuller understanding of the entire *Freedom: A History of US* text.

Secondarily, these activities can be used as stand-alone exercises in learning close-reading techniques. The myriad activities can be adapted by teachers and applied to many types, forms, and subject areas of readings.

The book is designed to correspond to the various units in the second half of *Freedom: A History of US*, targeting the high-school level and covering material in President Obama’s second inaugural address and units 9–17 of the text. Although the activities in this book are geared to address high school U.S. history classes, with some adaptation, they can be used on the middle-school level, as well.

Each unit has two to five selected readings. Teacher information pages, located at the beginning of each reading, include a synopsis of the reading, alignment with specific Common Core State Reading Standards in Literacy for History/Social Studies (grades 9–12), and suggested answers. The following student pages provide the text of the close-reading excerpt and a mixture of reflective and challenging activities and questions.

Common Core State Standards

Activities for each unit are aligned to Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies for Grades 9–12. Overall standards themes covered in the activities include “Key Ideas and Details,” “Craft and Structure,” and “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.”

How to Use the Activities

Activities may be used in several ways. You may elect to use the activities as warm-ups prior to students’ reading the corresponding unit in the book. You may also want to use the activities as a follow-up, in-depth look at each unit after your students have finished reading, or you may wish to use them as stand-alone exercises to focus on close-reading techniques. If desired, the excerpts and their accompanying activities may be assigned as homework.

Time Allotted

Completion of activities and questions for each reading should take approximately 20 minutes. Time required may increase or decrease, depending on the reading level of students.

Strategies Used

Several close reading strategies are employed in this book. These deal with the following concepts:

compare and contrast: A strategy that has students analyze various aspects of a reading or situation for similarities or differences.

craft and structure: How the author uses syntax and order to effectively convey a reading’s message.

evidence: Something that proves a particular point or idea. Students read in order to find evidence that corroborates an argument or position stated in the reading.

five-word summary: A strategy that has students identify the five most important words in an excerpt and then defend their choices in a short paragraph.

frame of reference: Information and values that help show how judgments or conclusions are made. With these activities, students analyze how the frame of reference impacts the writing.

inference: A conclusion drawn using evidence and reasoning. Students make conclusions based on evidence from within the excerpt.

irony: Describes a situation that seems to be intentionally contrary to what is expected; a point made by intentionally using language that expresses the opposite of one’s meaning, sometimes for humorous effect. In questions dealing with irony, students look for and analyze instances of irony.

liberal understanding: The use of one’s own viewpoint to make conclusions about an excerpt.

metaphor: A descriptive word or phrase used to represent or explain something else. Students analyze the excerpt for metaphors and analyze those comparisons.

paradox: A statement that appears to contradict itself but ultimately proves to be true. In these activities, students read through the selection to identify instances of paradoxes.

point of view: A perspective taken by an author when evaluating or presenting a conclusion. Students draw conclusions about the point of view of the author of the excerpt.

primary source: A historic source that comes directly from the past, from someone who witnessed firsthand the period or events the source relates; an eyewitness account. Students read primary and secondary sources contained in the excerpt and use them to help answer the questions and complete the activities.

pull quote: A quotation “pulled” from the body of a passage and displayed as a graphic element within the text to “hook” the reader. For these activities, students are asked to identify one key quotation and explain why it should be used as a pull quote.

“read with a pencil”: A close-reading strategy that asks students to mark key points and annotate text.

rhetoical précis: A four-sentence, detailed synthesis of an informational text.

simile: A figure of speech that compares two different things using the words “like” or “as.” Students analyze the excerpt for similes and analyze those comparisons.

syntax: The manner in which an author uses and arranges words to form sentences. In these activities, students read through a selection looking for the topic sentence as well as key words that demonstrate the main theme.

thesis: A statement or premise to be maintained or proven as the central idea of a work.

vocabulary: Students determine the definitions of terms based on their context in the reading and then pair the terms and definitions using either matching or word banks.

word picture: A graphic or vivid description in words. In these activities, students analyze the author’s choice of words and how they create a “picture” or “portrait” of an event or era.

“wrecking the text”: A close-reading strategy in which the student rewrites a passage in his or her own words.

COMMON CORE READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

Grades 9–10

Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5 Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Grades 11–12

Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5 Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

RISE OF THE ROBBER BARONS



So American freedom headed off in a pragmatic direction, in what would be a continuing voyage. It often became a negative thing—an absence of restraints. . . . In the West, that idea of unrestrained freedom encouraged shootouts, wide-open saloons, and horrific lawlessness, as well as the exhilaration of total independence. And American business? In much of the nineteenth century it was wholly without regulation. E. L. Godkin, the liberal editor of *The Nation*, defined freedom as “the liberty to buy and sell, and mend and make, where, when, and how we please.” Which is the way it was for Mattie Silks, a Denver madam who carried a lace parasol and a gold cross and said, “I went into the sporting life for business reasons and no other. It was a way for a woman in those days to make money and I made it.”

Mark Twain calls the era a “Gilded Age.” For the very rich, and for a burgeoning middle class, life is good and will get even better. But for immigrants, minorities, the unlucky, and the unskilled there is often grinding poverty. By 1890, one percent of the population owns more property than all the rest of the nation’s people combined.

Source: Part 9, “Working for Freedom: An Age of Extremes,” paragraphs 3–4.

Activity: Vocabulary

Based on their use in the context above, match the vocabulary words with their definitions.

_____ : dealing with things in a realistic and practical way

_____ : device to maintain control; moderation and discipline

_____ : the power to act as one pleases

_____ : covered thinly with gold leaf or gold paint

_____ : thriving or developing rapidly

Word Bank

liberty	pragmatic
burgeoning	gilded
restraint	

Questions

1. Cite Evidence

The author notes that American business during this period was “wholly without regulation.” What evidence in the selection highlights a lack of regulation?

2. Pull Quotes

In order to attract the reader, editors frequently “pull” and box an important quote from a story. After rereading the selection, identify a significant statement from the reading as a pull quote. Write a short statement in which you justify why you selected that particular statement. Why is it significant?