

This week we will be working on one of the most valuable writing skills: the ability to read, understand, retain, and examine any piece of writing that you encounter. In order to be able to write sophisticatedly about a text you have to understand what it is telling you. In many English classes this is called “close reading;” however the ability to scrutinize a text is valuable for all texts that you encounter. Close reading means to read consciously or actively, and it can go through many stages, and may require more than one read through a text. Most often, when you are asked to do a close reading at the college-level, your instructor expects you to pay attention to how one small section of the text “works” and how that small section connects with the text as a whole. This week’s major paper will ask you to practice these skills, but before you begin writing, you will need to be a diligent, active and close reader.

Before You Begin Writing

In order to practice close reading, be sure to actively read Paulo Freire’s essay, “The Banking Concept of Education,” for Wednesday’s class. As we have discussed, in order to be an active reader, you will need to underline important points, make notes in the margins, look-up words, ask questions, etc. By annotating your text you will help to remind yourself which parts of the text are important and interesting as you consider how you will write about the text for this formal assignment. As you go along, or after you have finished the essay, **you will need to create a reverse outline of the text.** Essentially, this means that you will be creating a numbered list of the purpose and main idea of each paragraph. **You will need to bring a typed copy of this reverse outline to class on Wednesday.** As you read, consider important questions about the text. Often asking questions of a text can help us get to the heart of its meaning. So think about questions that pop into your head while reading. Here are a few examples: What did you expect when you first encountered the text? Were your ideas changed or challenged by the time you finished? What was the author’s main goal in creating the text? Was he/she effective in getting the point across to you? How does the structure of the text impact your personal interpretation? What is your individual interpretation?

Goals and Outcomes

After working with Freire’s text, you will be ready to do some more sustained writing and close reading. As we have talked about, a close reading can be thought of as an analysis that moves from the small details of a text to larger issues having to do with that text. In this assignment, we are asking you to choose a small section of any major text we have read in class up to this point—maybe one or two paragraphs—and do a close reading of your selection, to be followed by an explanation of how these details relate to the text as a whole. Whatever text you choose, make sure to use your annotations, reverse outlines, close reading proposal, and our class discussions as a way to guide your writing. By the end of structured study time on Wednesday, you will need to have identified your close reading section and have brainstormed some ideas about its relevance, what happens in it, how it works, etc. **Please have a tutor or instructor sign-off on the proposal handout we will give you and turn it in with your rough draft on Thursday.** Here are some questions to get you started:

- Is your passage using any interesting metaphors or rhetorical devices?
- Does your passage give you any clues about how the author/speaker feels about a certain issue? Focus not just on the content of the sentence or statement, but also on how it is written or stated.
- What is the context of the passage? What is it explaining, why is it there?
- How do you respond to the passage? What makes you have that response?
- How does the passage connect to the larger essay? Does it discuss themes or arguments that are mentioned elsewhere? Does it conflict? (Answering this question will allow you to generate your claim!)

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 3 full pages, typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, title, proper heading, 12-point Times Roman font, MLA format, proofread and edited, stapled
Close Reading Proposal Worksheet to be submitted with the final draft

Due: Monday, July 27 at 9:00 AM