



The Three Levels of Reading Foundation Lesson

Skill Focus

Levels of Thinking				
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Create
Close Reading		Grammar		Composition
Reading Strategies Inference Literary Elements Character Diction connotation denotation Imagery Theme				Types (modes) Expository analytical The Process of Composition Prewriting generation of ideas Structural Elements Introduction thesis Body use of evidence

Materials and Resources

- Any short fiction, nonfiction, drama, or poetry selection
- 12 x 18 paper (Manila paper works well.)
- Colored pencils, crayons, markers, water colors, etc.
- If desired, bring in “templates” for circles, or students may draw them freehand.

Lesson Introduction

Close reading is a special kind of analytical reading. When readers look at a text this way, they slow down their reading in order to assess the importance of each word, detail, or image, and they make guesses about the meaning of the text as they read. Close readers look beyond the plot for deeper layers of meaning.

Readers who use Pre-AP strategies will discover the three levels of reading as they slow down to notice each aspect of the text. The three levels of reading are

- reading on the line,
- reading between the lines,
- reading beyond the lines.

At the first level, students find meaning directly in the text. As they read, they are mentally answering the questions “Who?” “What?” “When?” and “Where?”

At the second level, students interpret what is in the text. As they read, their key concerns are the following: What does a passage represent, suggest, or personify? What does a certain allusion or metaphor mean? They are also analyzing what they read: interpreting, classifying, comparing, contrasting, and finding patterns.

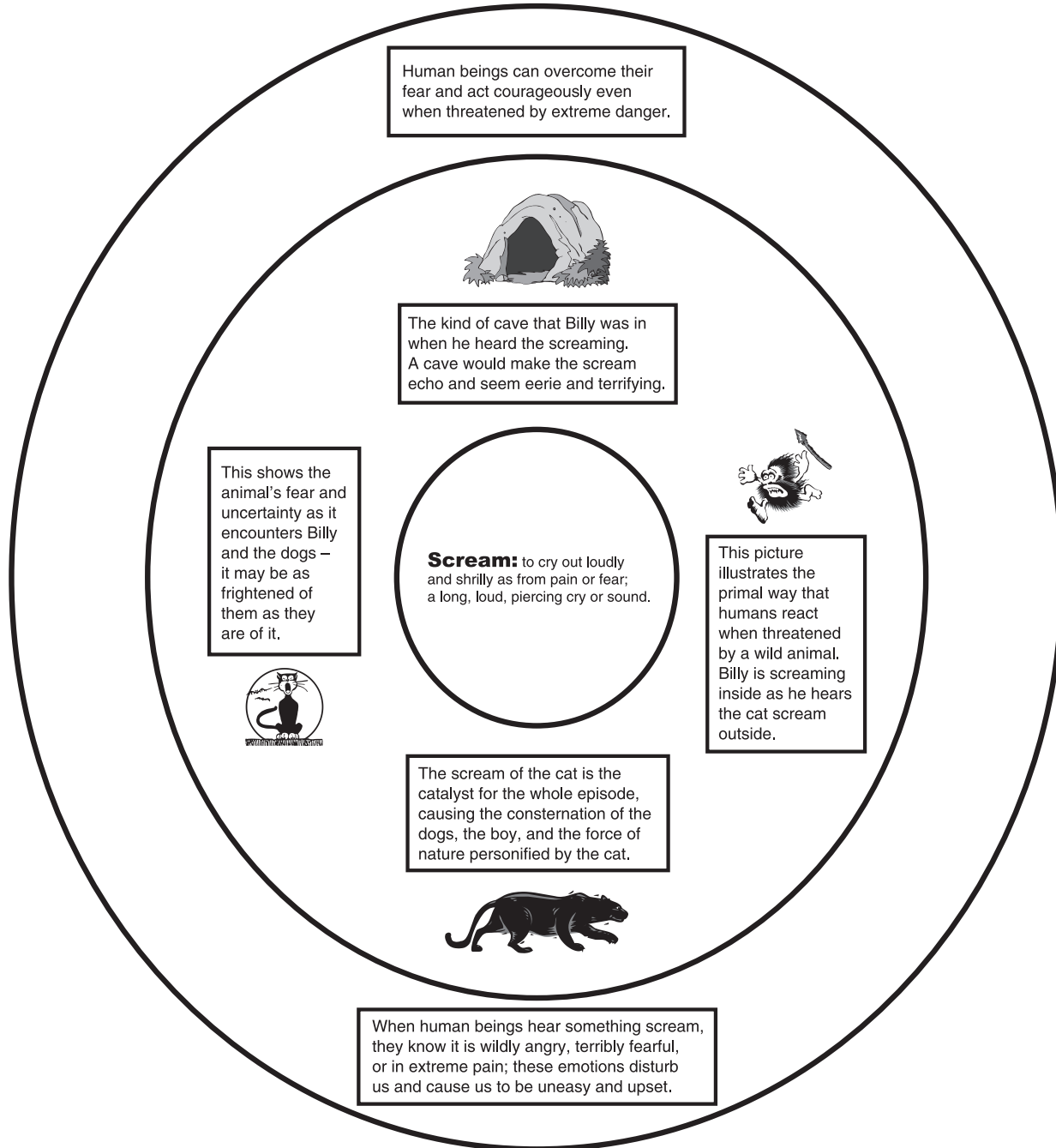
Close Reading

At the third level, students move beyond the text to connect to universal meaning. As they read, they are asking mental questions like “How does this text connect with my life? With life in a larger sense, for all human beings? With my ideas about morality or values? What kind of perceptions about life in general is the author communicating to me? What do I think of those perceptions?” They move from the “What?” of the text to the “So what?” At this level, they connect literature with their own experiences and with universal meaning.

This assignment works best in the middle of or at the end of the study of a work.

Example *Where the Red Fern Grows* (Wilson Rawls)

Close Reading



The short essay would appear on the back of the page.

Rubric

(This assignment is a daily grade.)

90 – 100 These projects show that the student has clearly and effectively

- a. selected a key word
- b. offered a quotation clearly reflecting the word's significance and documented as directed
- c. given multiple definitions of the word
- d. placed the word in the context of the whole work
- e. drawn images/objects that are colorful and reinforce the word's significance
- f. composed two thematic statements derived from that word, tying the word to the whole work
- g. tied the key word to each of the main characters (in the short essay)
- h. made the work neat, colorful, and correct

80 – 89 These projects adequately fulfill the requirements, but are less thorough, less meticulous, less vivid, less insightful than the 90-100 efforts. Some mistakes in grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation are present. A few required elements may be missing or incorrect.

70 – 79 These projects inadequately fulfill the requirements because they are incomplete, incorrect, or hastily and thoughtlessly done. Numerous errors in spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar are present. Several required elements may be missing or incorrect.



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Complete the following activities on the paper provided.

1. Somewhere on the paper, write the title of the work with the author's name below it.
2. Draw three concentric circles on the paper.
3. In the inner circle, concentrate on the concrete level of meaning – level one reading.
 - a. Write prominently the most significant word from the part of the work assigned (middle or last chapter/act/stanza/paragraph, etc.).
 - b. Copy a (the) passage in which the word appears – enough of it to make sense. Document the source of the passage in parenthesis after the quotation.
 - c. Give multiple dictionary definitions of the word (denotation).
 - d. Place the word in the context of what is going on in the work at this point. Explain why this word is important to the meaning of the work.
4. In the middle circle, concentrate on the abstract level of meaning – level two reading.
 - a. Referring to the text, draw four images from the assigned section of the work.
 - b. Write an explanation of the link between the illustrations and the word you selected for the first circle.
5. In the outer circle, concentrate on the “super-abstract” level – level three reading. Going beyond the text, write two thematic statements drawn from the significant word and your illustrations, tying them to the whole work. Your sentences need not use the word itself but should be clearly related to it.
6. On the reverse side of the paper, compose a short essay tying the key word to each of the main characters in the work as a whole.



A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.