Close Reading Workshop 1 • Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts

Learning Targets
• Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
• Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and defined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
• Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
• Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
• Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums, determining which details are emphasized in each account.
• Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
• Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
• Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Close Reading for Meaning
What does learning to read closely mean? As readers, we should not just consider the subject or topic of a text. We must consider the author’s diction and the connotations associated with the words the author chooses.

As a reader, consider the importance of specific words in order to analyze how the author uses language to communicate a message. For example, an author may use diction that would appeal to or be accessible to a specific audience. Additionally, the author will use words with strong connotations in order to appeal to an audience’s emotions.

In this workshop, you will read three different texts and will practice close reading using strategies that will help you make meaning of the text. Your teacher will guide you through the first activity. In Activity 2, you will work in a collaborative group to read and respond to the text. For the third activity, you will work independently to apply close reading strategies to determine meaning in a new text.

Activity 1
Guided Practice
You will read the text in this activity at least three times, focusing on a different purpose for each reading.
First Reading: First Impressions

Read the following passage silently. Your focus for this first reading is on understanding the meaning of the passage. As you read, practice **diffusing** the words you may not know by replacing unfamiliar words with synonyms or definitions for the underlined words. Use the definitions and synonyms to the right of the paragraphs to help your understanding.

In addition, practice **marking the text** by stopping after each paragraph to underline the most important sentence and circle the most important word in the sentence that you underlined.

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**Text Excerpt**

From *The Americanization of* by Edward Bok (1921)

by Edward Bok

1 Whatever **shortcomings** I may have found during my fifty-year period of Americanization; however America may have failed to help my transition from a foreigner into an American, I owe to her the most priceless gift that any nation can offer, and that is opportunity.

2 As the world stands to-day, no nation offers opportunity in the degree that America does to the foreign-born. Russia may, in the future, as I like to believe she will, prove a second United States of America in this respect. She has the same **limitless** area; her people the same **potentialities**. But, as things are to-day, the United States offers, as does no other nation, a limitless opportunity: here a man can go as far as his abilities will carry him. It may be that the foreign-born, as in my own case, must hold on to some of the **ideals** and ideas of the land of his birth; it may be that he must develop and **mould** his character by overcoming the habits resulting from national shortcomings. But into the best that the foreign-born can retain, America can **graft** such a wealth of inspiration, so high a national idealism, so great an opportunity for the highest **endeavor**, as to make him the fortunate man of the earth to-day.

3 He can go where he will: no traditions **hamper** him; no limitations are set except those within himself. The larger the area he chooses in which to work, the larger the vision he demonstrates, the more eager the people are to give support to his **undertakings** if they are convinced that he has their best **welfare** as his goal. There is no public confidence equal to that of the American public, once it is obtained. It is **fickle**, of course, as are all publics, but fickle only toward the man who cannot maintain an achieved success.
4 A man in America cannot **complacently** lean back upon victories won, as he can in the older European countries, and depend upon the glamour of the past to sustain him or the **momentum** of success to carry him. Probably the most alert public in the world, it requires of its leaders that they be alert. Its appetite for variety is **insatiable**, but its appreciation, when given, is full-handed and whole-hearted. The American public never holds back from the man to whom it gives; it never **bestows** in a **niggardly** way; it gives all or nothing.

5 What is not generally understood of the American people is their wonderful idealism. Nothing so completely surprises the foreign-born as the discovery of this trait in the American character. The impression is **current** in European countries—perhaps less generally since the war—that America is given over solely to a worship of the American dollar. While between nations as between individuals, comparisons are valueless, it may not be **amiss** to say, from personal knowledge, that the Dutch worship the **gulden** infinitely more than do the Americans the dollar.

6 I do not claim that the American is always conscious of this idealism; often he is not. But let a great **convulsion** touching moral questions occur, and the result always shows how close to the surface is his idealism. And the fact that so frequently he puts over it a thick **veneer** of **materialism** does not affect its quality. The truest approach, the only approach in fact, to the American character is, as Sir James Bryce has so well said, through its idealism.

7 It is this quality which gives the truest inspiration to the foreign-born in his **endeavor** to serve the people of his adopted country. He is mentally **sluggish**, indeed, who does not discover that America will make good with him if he makes good with her.

8 But he must play fair. It is essentially the straight game that the true American plays, and he insists that you shall play it too. Evidence there is, of course, to the contrary in American life, experiences that seem to give ground for the belief that the man succeeds who is not **scrupulous** in playing his cards. But never is this true in the long run. Sooner or later—sometimes, unfortunately, later than sooner—the public discovers the trickery. In no other country in the world is the moral **conception** so clear and true as in America, and no people will give a larger and more permanent reward to the man whose effort for that public has its roots in honor and truth.

9 “The sky is the limit” to the foreign-born who comes to America **endowed** with honest endeavor, ceaseless **industry**, and the ability to carry through. In any honest endeavor, the way is wide open to the will to succeed. Every path beckons, every **vista** invites, every talent is called forth, and every efficient effort finds its due reward. In no land is the way so clear and so free…

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**insatiable**: unable to be satisfied

**niggardly**: stingily; not generously; miserly

**gulden**: the basic currency of the Netherlands prior to 1999

**veneer**: a deceptive show; a fake cover

**endeavor**: effort or work toward a specific goal or purpose

**scrupulous**: principled; morally right

**endowed**: supplied or equipped with
Check Your Understanding
Choose one paragraph of the excerpt. Explain the relationship between the sentence that you underlined and the main idea of the paragraph. Also, explain how your understanding of the word you circled is important in terms of the meaning of the paragraph as a whole.

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context
Now that you have read the passage silently, listen and follow along as the passage is read aloud. As you read, highlight the words and/or phrases that are examples of powerful, important, or emotional diction that communicates the writer’s attitude. Diffuse these words/phrases for comprehesion.

After your teacher has read the passage aloud the second reading, look up the words or phrases that you highlighted and find several that describe America or the character of Americans. Make inferences about the connotations of these words and phrases in the chart below.

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Check Your Understanding
Now that you have diffused unfamiliar terms and identified and analyzed Bok’s diction, write a brief summary of the central idea as presented in the first two paragraphs of the text. Explain how Bok’s use of connotative diction in these paragraphs contributes to this central idea.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning
Now read the passage again, this time with the focus of reading to respond to the Key Ideas and Details interpretive questions. As your class discusses the text, annotate in the margins your responses to each question and highlight or underline the textual evidence that supports your answer. During discussions, you may also want to revise your annotations to reflect a new or different meaning of the text.

Background Information: This text is an excerpt from Edward Bok’s Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography published in 1921, The Americanization of Edward Bok: An Autobiography of a Dutch Boy Fifty Years After. Bok was born in the Netherlands and immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, at age six. While Bok was editor of the Ladies’ Home Journal, it became the first magazine in the world to have one million subscribers. He wrote his autobiography upon retiring after 30 years as Editor.
From
The Americanization of Edward Bok (1921)
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Check Your Understanding
Now that you have read closely and worked to understand the Key Ideas and Details of this text, choose one of the assertions Edward Bok makes about America or Americans and discuss whether or not you think the assertions that he made in 1920 are still true today.

Synthesizing Your Understanding
Now that you have read the passage three times and studied its vocabulary, language, and ideas, synthesize your understanding by applying the SOAPSTone strategy to this text. You have worked with all the elements of this strategy in previous reading workshops.

Introducing the Strategy: SOAPSTone
SOAPSTone is a strategy for analysis of a text to understand an author’s craft. Using this strategy, the reader discusses and identifies the speaker, the occasion, the audience, the purpose, the subject, and the tone.

S—Speaker
Who is the speaker? Be more detailed than just identifying the individual by name. What is his or her position? What information about the speaker helps you understand his or her perspective? What characteristics of the speaker help you understand the meaning of the text?

O—Occasion
What is the occasion? Make inferences based on what you know about the time and the place of the piece. A piece of writing may be prompted by a larger occasion (an environment of ideas, attitudes, and emotions that surround a larger issue) and/or an immediate occasion (an event or situation that catches the writer’s attention and triggers a response.)
Close Reading of Informational/Literary Nonfiction Texts (continued)

A—Audience
Who is the audience? What inferences can you make about the people who will read this text? Is it a specific person, a targeted group, or a general audience? How do you know?

P—Purpose
What is the purpose? What points is the author trying to make? What does he want the audience to feel or experience?

S—Subject
What is the general focus of this text, stated in a few words or phrases?

Tone
What is the author’s attitude toward his subject? How does his use of connotative diction convey this tone?

Writing Prompt: Based on your current understanding of the passage, summarize the central idea and explain how Edward Bok uses connotative diction to develop his ideas and convey tone. Be sure to:
• Identify a central idea in a topic sentence.
• Provide several pieces of textual evidence that support your analysis.
• Include commentary about the author’s use of connotative diction.
Collaborative Practice

Ellis Island, in Upper New York Bay, was the busiest immigrant inspection station in America’s history. Immigrants had to pass medical tests and legal inspections before they could enter the United States. During its peak years, Ellis Island often processed more than the 5,000 immigrants per day for which the facilities were designed.

First Reading: Overview and Parts
Write a brief overview of the content of the chart. Describe the graph with as much detail as possible. What does it demonstrate? Which details seem important or interesting?

Second Reading: Reflect and Interpret
What does the chart mean? What inferences can you make from the details? What conclusions can you draw from the information presented? How do you know?

Third Reading: Questions
What unanswered questions do you have about the chart? How and where would you find these answers?
Political Cartoon About Immigration
Published in 1921

First Reading: Overview and Parts
Write a brief overview of the content of the cartoon. Describe what is being pictured as accurately as possible. Which details seem important or interesting?
Second Reading: Reflect and Interpret
What is the tone and purpose of the cartoon? How do you know? What inferences can you make from the details? What conclusions can you draw?

Third Reading: Questioning the Text
What unanswered questions do you have about the cartoon? What open-ended questions could you ask to spark a discussion about the cartoon?

Writing Prompt: Now that you have carefully examined one print text and two visual texts about American immigration, write an essay to explain how at least one of the visuals connects to Edward Bok’s autobiography. Be sure to
• Create a thesis that explains a connection between two texts.
• Provide support from both texts.
• Include a conclusion that follows from your major points.
ACTIVITY 3
Independent Practice

First Reading: First Impressions

Read the passage silently to yourself. As you read, think about the meanings of the underlined words and diffuse the vocabulary by replacing the underlined words with synonyms or definitions. Use the definitions included, your knowledge of words, and context clues to help you make meaning of the text.

In addition, stop after each paragraph and mark the text by underlining the most important sentence and circling the most important word in the sentence that you underlined.

Essay

“America I Believe In”

by Colin Powell

1 I believe in America and I believe in our people.
2 Later this month, I will be participating in a ceremony at Ellis Island where I will receive copies of the ship manifest and the immigration documents that record the arrival in America of my mother, Maud Ariel McKoy, from Jamaica aboard the motor ship Turialba in 1923. My father, Luther Powell, had arrived three years earlier at the Port of Philadelphia.
3 They met in New York City, married, became Americans and raised a family. By their hard work and their love for this country, they enriched this nation and helped it grow and thrive. They instilled in their children and grandchildren that same love of country and a spirit of optimism.
4 My family’s story is a common one that has been told by millions of Americans. We are a land of immigrants: A nation that has been touched by every nation and we, in turn, touch every nation. And we are touched not just by immigrants but by the visitors who come to America and return home to tell of their experiences.
5 I believe that our greatest strength in dealing with the world is the openness of our society and the welcoming nature of our people. A good stay in our country is the best public diplomacy tool we have.
6 After 9/11 we realized that our country’s openness was also its vulnerability. We needed to protect ourselves by knowing who was coming into the country, for what purpose and to know when they left. This was entirely appropriate and reasonable. Unfortunately, to many foreigners we gave the impression that we were no longer a
welcoming nation. They started to go to schools and hospitals in other countries, and frankly, they started to take their business elsewhere. We can't allow that to happen. Our attitude has to be, we are glad you are here. We must be careful, but we must not be afraid.

7 As I traveled the world as secretary of state, I encountered anti-American sentiment. But I also encountered an underlying respect and affection for America. People still want to come here. Refugees who have no home at all know that America is their land of dreams. Even with added scrutiny, people line up at our embassies to apply to come here.

8 You see, I believe that the America of 2005 is the same America that brought Maud Ariel McKoy and Luther Powell to these shores, and so many millions of others. An America that each day gives new immigrants the same gift that my parents received. An America that lives by a Constitution that inspires freedom and democracy around the world. An America with a big, open, charitable heart that reaches out to people in need around the world. An America that sometimes seems confused and is always noisy. That noise has a name: it's called democracy and we use it to work through our confusion.

9 An America that is still the beacon of light to the darkest corner of the world.

10 Last year I met with a group of Brazilian exchange students who had spent a few weeks in America. I asked them to tell me about their experience here. One young girl told me about the night the 12 students went to a fast food restaurant in Chicago. They ate and then realized they did not have enough money to pay the bill. They were way short. Frightened, they finally told the waitress of their problem. She went away and she came back in a little while saying, “I talked to the manager and he said, ’It’s ok.’” The students were still concerned because they thought the waitress might have to pay for it out of her salary. She smiled and she said, “No, the manager said he is glad you are here in the United States. He hopes you are having a good time, he hopes you are learning all about us. He said it’s on him.”

11 It is a story that those young Brazilian kids have told over and over about America. That's the America I believe in, that's the America the world wants to believe in.

Second Reading: Vocabulary in Context
After reading the passage to yourself, listen and follow along as the passage is read aloud. As you read, note the sentences you underlined and the words you circled as important. You may want to underline different sentences this time.

After Reading
Take the time to annotate your underlined sentences. Write about the meanings and the effect of the sentences on your understanding of Powell’s message and his use of connotative diction. Pair with another student, and together choose one sentence from the text that you both consider important or effective. Prepare an annotation to explain your reasoning for the selection.
Check Your Understanding

Now that you have defined unfamiliar terms and identified important sentences and ideas in Powell’s writing, show your understanding of the text by writing a paragraph explaining the significance of one key sentence within the context of the entire excerpt.

Third Reading: Text-Dependent Questioning

Now read the passage again, this time with the focus of reading to respond to the interpretive questions in the Key Ideas and Details.

Background Information: This text is an essay written by Colin Powell, the statesman and four-star general who became the first African American secretary of state—under President George W. Bush, from 2001 to 2005. Powell spent 35 years in the military, rising from ROTC in college to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the first Gulf War. He has worked in the administrations of six Presidents. His essay is a part of a series featured on National Public Radio called “This I Believe.”

Essay
“The America I Believe In”
by Colin Powell

1 I believe in America and I believe in our people.
2 Later this month, I will be participating in a ceremony at Ellis Island where I will receive copies of the ship manifest and the immigration documents that record the arrival in America of my mother, Maud Ariel McKoy, from Jamaica aboard the motor ship Turialba in 1923. My father, Luther Powell, had arrived three years earlier at the Port of Philadelphia.
3 They met in New York City, married, became Americans and raised a family. By their hard work and their love for this country, they enriched this nation and helped it grow and thrive. They instilled in their children and grandchildren that same love of country and a spirit of optimism.
4 My family’s story is a common one that has been told by millions of Americans. We are a land of immigrants: A nation that has been touched by every nation and we, in turn, touch every nation. And we are touched not just by immigrants but by the visitors who come to America and return home to tell of their experiences.
5 I believe that our greatest strength in dealing with the world is the openness of our society and the welcoming nature of our people. A good stay in our country is the best public diplomacy tool we have.

6 After 9/11 we realized that our country’s openness was also its vulnerability. We needed to protect ourselves by knowing who was coming into the country, for what purpose and to know when they left. This was entirely appropriate and reasonable. Unfortunately, to many foreigners we gave the impression that we were no longer a welcoming nation. They started to go to schools and hospitals in other countries, and frankly, they started to take their business elsewhere. We can’t allow that to happen. Our attitude has to be, we are glad you are here. We must be careful, but we must not be afraid.

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11 It is a story that those young Brazilian kids have told over and over about America. That’s the America I believe in, that’s the America the world wants to believe in.
Check Your Understanding
Now that you have read closely and worked to understand the Key Ideas and Details of this text, discuss how Colin Powell uses anecdotes (brief stories) to illustrate his ideas about America.

Synthesizing Your Understanding
Use the SOAPSTone strategy to bring together your thinking about the important elements of this essay.

S—Speaker
Who is the speaker? Be more detailed than just identifying the individual by name. What is his or her position? What information about the speaker helps you understand his or her perspective? What characteristics of the speaker help you understand the meaning of the text?

O—Occasion
What is the occasion? Make inferences based on what you know about the time and the place of the piece. A piece of writing may be prompted by a larger occasion (an environment of ideas, attitudes, and emotions that surround a larger issue) and/or an immediate occasion (an event or situation that catches the writer’s attention and triggers a response.)

A—Audience
Who is the audience? What inferences can you make about the people who will read this text? Is it a specific person, a targeted group, or a general audience? How do you know?

P—Purpose
What is the purpose? What points is the author trying to make? What does he want the audience to feel or experience?
5–Subject
What is the general focus of this text, stated in a few words or phrases?

Tone
What is the author’s attitude toward his subject? How does his use of connotative diction convey this tone?

Writing Prompt: Based on your current understanding of the passage, analyze how Colin Powell’s tone and purpose is conveyed through his use of connotative diction. Be sure to:
• Identify the purpose of the text in a thesis statement.
• Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support your analysis.
• Include commentary that evaluates and draws inferences from the text.
ACTIVITY 4

Synthesis Questions

Your teacher may choose or ask you to choose one of the following assessment tasks as a way of showing your understanding of the texts you have read.

Writing Prompt: Compare and contrast the tone and purpose of Edward Bok’s autobiography to that of Colin Powell’s essay. Revisit the work you have done with both texts, and consider the connotative diction used by each author. Which text is more effective at achieving its purpose? Support your claim with evidence from at least one of the visuals as well as both texts.

Debate/Discussion: Conduct a Socratic Seminar. Review and revise the open-ended questions that you wrote about the political cartoons and the other texts you read. Now that you have analyzed multiple texts about immigration in America, work with a group to create three or four more open-ended, text based questions connected to these texts. Remember your questions should not have a “yes” or “no” answer but should encourage a rich discussion. With your questions and your annotated texts in front of you, engage with your peers in a Socratic Seminar to share your questions and respond to the other students’ questions.

Multimedia Presentation: Edward Bok, an immigrant, and Colin Powell, the son of immigrants, are both examples of how immigration has contributed to and enriched this country. Conduct research on at least one more example of a famous or successful person who is (or was) a first or second-generation American. Create a biographical presentation using presentation software to share your findings.

Reflection

Think about what you have learned from your close reading and analysis of the text passages you have read in this workshop.

1. How did Edward Bok and Colin Powell each use positive, inspirational diction to express their attitude about America?

2. How can you use what you have learned in this workshop to help you as you encounter challenging texts in the future? What strategies helped you as a learner during this workshop? When and why would you use these strategies in the future?