

Engaging the text: prose Poetry, Literary Program.

What does it mean to engage?

Framework: Appreciation, Critique, Construction.

APPRECIATION involves figuring out what the author is saying and demonstrating a clear understanding of their argument and how they develop and defend it. Appreciation does not require that you agree with the reading. Instead, it requires that you clearly state the author's argument or plot. What are the conflicts in the story? How are the conflicts developed? The element of engagement is crucial; you can't have a critical conversation about (or with) an author until you spend some time really thinking about the author is communicating.

CRITIQUE involves assessing what the author is saying. Critique should not involve a total rejection or dismissal of the reading. Instead, it should involve raising some critical questions and or exploring the benefits or limitations of the text.

CONSTRUCTION involves applying the concepts from the reading to your own thoughts, areas of interest, or experiences. This element is especially important for engaging. Construction is about doing something with the author's text.; applying it, translating it, to function in unexpected ways, taking it in new directions.

This engagement will result in deeper and more complete introductions which demonstrate the student's preparation and understanding of the material presented. It also allows the student to develop nuances and subtleties of the text, which might be missed on a cursory analysis of the reading. Encouraging students to reflect on the pauses, pacing and emphasis of words and phrases will aid in the audience's appreciation of what is being read and how it is presented.

ENGAGING CRITICALLY

What it is: Students engage critically when they make judgements (your input is vital) about a text based on systematic analysis. The kind of judgements they make will depend on their approach to the text which brings with it assumptions about the nature of texts and ways of reading them. For example, one approach could be to see the text as reflecting reality and address issues of truth in that depiction. Another approach would be to see the text as a product of power relationships in terms of what lies at the center and what is marginalized, evaluating the text in terms of how it suppresses certain interests and intervening to promote others. Critical engagement involves making judgements and recognizing the critical framework through which these judgements are made.

Why it is important Students critical skills will help them evaluate the multiplicity of texts that they encounter in their lives. This will allow them to understand what is valued in society and their culture, so providing certain kinds of access and rewards, to themselves as well as to society as a whole. To steer through the sometimes diverse values they encounter and the speed of change of today's world, they also need to understand how we can make value judgements and how values change over time.

STAGE 1

Students distinguish between fact and opinion. Determine character, setting, and plot.

STAGE 2

Students interpret texts and justify opinions. Explain why words, phrasing, and punctuation were used to create meaning in the text. Students recognize that texts can influence a position responders. They analyze and evaluate texts.

STAGE 3

Students recognize that texts can influence and position responders. They analyze and evaluate ideas and values in texts.

STAGE 4

Students explore the different ways texts can be interpreted. They identify ways in which composers position the audience to accept particular views and perspectives and make judgements about these.

STAGE 5

Students critically analyze and evaluate the ways in which the texts represent different ideas and perspectives. They recognize the effect of context on meaning.

STAGE 6

Students synthesize ideas and distinctive qualities in texts and apply different systems of analysis to develop perspectives on texts. They evaluate texts and perspectives against cultural and literary values to arrive at an informed personal understanding.

State of NSW, Department of Education 2016.

So, what do you look for in the script?

Look for imagery. What does the author describe, and what adjectives create an impression or mood about those images?

Look for setting. Does the time and/or place affect the plot? Why did the author make those choices?

Look for specific details. What words does the author choose and why were those specific words chosen? Do the words create a tone or mood?

Look for point of view. Why does the author choose a certain point of view? What impressions can be created by using that point of view?

Look for actions of the characters. Why does the author have characters do certain things and not others? What is the author suggesting about their motivation and impact?

Look for character reliability. Do the characters say what they mean?. Can the character be trusted to tell the truth to or about others? Why do the characters say what they do?

Look for symbolism. Does the author want us to see the double meanings of objects, and if so, what could they mean? What would be the purpose in suggesting a symbolic usage?

Look for figurative language. Does the author use hyperbole, understatement, irony? What is the point of using these techniques?

Look for characterization. Does the author use direct or indirect characterization or both, and why? Are the characters static or dynamic, and what does that suggest about their belief in their behavior?

Look for the theme. What is the moral of the story and how do you know? How does the author develop the theme?