

# **Literacy Tools A-Z**

Adapted for S.A.M.S. from Turning Points Literacy Tools

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These tools are also available online at:  
<http://www.turningpts.org/Literacy%20Tools.htm>

# Anticipation Guides

Anticipation makes most pleasant experiences all the more sweeter. This is also true for reading.

Anticipation guides create curiosity for the reader, provides the reader with a purpose, gives a focus to the reading and can be a way for the teacher to be cued into how much scaffolding her students need. The idea is simple. The teacher generates a number of statements based on the reading. Some of the statements are confirmed by the reading, while other statements are contradicted by the reading. Students are asked to evaluate the accuracy of the statements. If there is controversy among the students, all the better. Students from differing opinions can explain their thinking.. After participating in the anticipation guide activity, when the students read the text they bring prior knowledge, purpose and expectations to the reading.

## Sample Anticipation Guide for Portrait of Multicultural Life in Colonial America by Carolyn Kott Washburne

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Name:</b>
<b>Circle your prediction</b>	<b>Anticipation Guide</b>
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	At the time of the Revolution most African Americans fought with the colonists against the British.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	African Americans fought in every battle of the Revolutionary War, on land and sea.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	The colonists (Americans) promised African American slaves their freedom if they fought with them against the British.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	Rich people were able to pay for someone else to take their place as a soldier during the Revolutionary War.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	Women supported American soldiers by organizing boycotts of British products.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	Right after the Revolutionary War women were finally given the right to own property.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	Most of the large American Indian tribes hated the English and fought alongside the American colonists during the Revolutionary War.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	In the very first year of the Revolutionary War over thirty thousand African American slaves escaped from Virginia.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	While women supported the men by making clothing, preparing food, or acting as nurses, they were not allowed to fight in battle.
<b>Agree Disagree</b>	The fighting of the Revolutionary War were shared equally by both rich and poor American colonists.

# Book Buddies

Reading is a social act. Good readers talk about the books they are reading, share titles, and build friendships based on books that are mutually enjoyed. In school, where students are often assigned their reading, the link between reading books and making friends is hardly ever made.

A Book Buddies unit that is a part of a year long independent reading program can help make reading in school a social act. Students from two different classes are buddied up when they choose the same book to read. Keeping a dialogue journal, one student writes entries to her book buddy based on the pages she has recently read. The dialogue journal allows the students to document their conversation about what a book means and about its value.

When included in a strong literacy program where students have been prepared to choose *just right books*, where there has been plenty of good modeling of how to talk about books, and where students have been practicing using effective comprehension strategies, a book buddies program can be a successful way to engage students in reading and contribute towards building a positive school wide culture of friendship and understanding.

## Elements of a Book Buddies Program

- Teacher models how to write dialogue journal entries.
- Students incorporate reading comprehension strategies into dialogue journal entries: predicting, questioning, connecting.
- Students self select reading buddies by selecting an independent reading book.
- Teacher organizes a time schedule that includes in-class time for reading the novel and for writing entries. (Out of class reading time runs the risk of one buddy out pacing the other.)
- Students are given clear expectations on what a high quality correspondence looks like.
- Students understand that neither side of the dialogue will be evaluated in isolation. Instead the combined effort of both students will receive a single evaluation.
- Book buddies are a result of cross classes partnering. (Why write an entry if your buddy's in the same room?)
- Students are reassured that their written dialogue will focus on the text. (Given the complex social dynamics of student peer groups, the dialogue journal can be a safe place for social interaction between students who do not usually interact.)
- If necessary, students receive support at choosing *just right book*. (For independent reading, students should read books where there is evidence of 90+% reading accuracy.)

# Cumulative Writing Projects

Teachers regularly fuss about the fact that students are reluctant to make substantive revisions to their work. The writer Nora Ephron suggests that the capacity to revise is a capacity that can only be realized by a person who has left behind different phases of youth and has acquired some “older, but wiser” personality.

Instead of expecting students to revisit a piece of writing and make significant changes, teachers can think of designing a sequence of tasks that lead the writer along a process of re-visioning her topic. Each of these tasks is considered a discrete piece of writing, but, in effect, they culminate in producing a piece of writing that benefits from diverse perspectives and elaborate, layered thinking—the qualities we find in a much revised piece of writing.

The cynic might say that this approach *tricks* a student into revising. The Zen master might say that that this approach asks the student to revise *before* she begins writing. In truth, this sequence of assignments resembles the creative process used by many professional writers who *rehearse* a topic in many different settings before choosing a particular setting for a final performance.

## Cumulative sequence of writing tasks for memoir project:

1. Timeline of school career (including schools; teachers; best friends; strongest memory)
2. Scrapbook (including “snapshot writing” consisting of six brief “word pictures”)
3. Character Sketch of Memorable Adult
4. Episode Sketch (written as dramatic dialogue)
5. Monologue From the Past
6. “My Life as a Young Student” Memoir
  - First Draft
  - Revised Draft
  - Published Memoir

# Double Entry Journal

So many best literacy teaching practices are all about getting students' fingerprints all over the text. Teachers want students to do more than glide over the text, decoding with ease, but making only limited amounts of meaning. They want students to handle the text, take it apart, manipulate it, look for its heart, find out what makes it tick, chunk it into meaningful bits and then interrogate each bit.

Double entry journals are ways to help students read with an investigating eye. It helps students to slow down and pay attention when they read. (Where did students get the idea that the best readers were the fastest readers?) Double entry journals teach students the critical art of close reading.

## Different Ways to Keep a Double Entry Journal

Left Hand Side	Right Hand Side
Quotes from the text	Visual commentary (drawings, visual analogies, doodles)
Quotes from the text	Written reactions, reflections, commentary, musings ("Hmmm...")
Quotes from the text	Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Text to text</li> <li>➤ Text to Self</li> <li>➤ Text to world</li> </ul>
Observations, details revealed by close reading	Significance
What the text says...	Why the text says this...
Questions: "I wonder why..."	Possible answers: "Maybe because..."
Quotes from texts	Questions (Clarifying & Probing)
Quotes from texts	Social Questions (Race, class, gender inequalities)
Quotes from texts	Memories
Quotes from texts	Naming Literary or Persuasive (Rhetorical) Techniques

# Everyday Texts

Editorials	Consumer Reports	Advertisements
Riddles	Bumper Stickers	Proverbs
Psalms	Sonnets	Eulogy
Idioms	Greeting Cards	Board Games
Police Reports	Epitaphs	Weather Reports
Homilies	Phone Messages	Chat Room
Confessions	Invitations	Recipes
Report Cards	Excuse Notes	Slang Dialogue
Email	Songs	Codes
“How to...”	Instructions	Lab Reports
Horoscopes	Headlines	Maps
Surveys	Diary	Journals
Interviews	Script	Friendly Letter
Notes	Outlines	Narratives
Lists	“To do...”	Logs
Tattoos	Propaganda	Hyperbole
Lies	Cartoons	Parables
Fables	Commercials	Proposals
Legends	Myths	Tall-tales
Testimonies	Depositions	Graffiti
Laws	Parodies	Wills
Haiku	Acrostics	Cinquain
Questions	Jokes	Sketches
Obituary	Wedding Announcements	Movie Reviews
Ransom Notes	“Do’s and Don’ts”	Persuasive Essays
Book Review	Personal Ad	Real Estate Ad
Wanted Poster	Lost and Found	Missing Poster

Each day the average person is bombarded with composed texts, very few of which are included in the typical school’s curriculum. But these “everyday texts” can be valuable resources for teachers. Incorporating these texts into the literacy curriculum gives teachers material with which they can teach students important lessons about reading and writing. Close, critical reading of these familiar “everyday texts” can lead students to new understandings about how texts attempt to construct readers’ attitudes about race, gender, age, class... Producing their own “everyday texts” helps students to become aware of the many considerations and choices the writer encounters as she composes. Working with “everyday texts” reminds students that reading and writing is not just a classroom preoccupation, but is also a vital practice of the citizen in a democratic civil society.

# Flipbooks

Text books swamp kids with data overload. Students need a system and a process to digest the information. They also need to slow down the reading....and to have some way to decide what they are going to *try* to remember. Creating flipbooks is one fun way to help students manage this type of inconsiderate text. It can be adapted to assist a modified SQ3R activity (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review).

Students enjoy folding the three sheets of mimeo (ideally colored) paper into a flip book stapled twice at the top. The teacher (at some point) lets kids decorate the cover. But first the teacher leads/models how to survey pictures, captions, maps and other fun stuff...then asks the students what this piece of the text book is going to be about. This prior to reading activity can take the form of either predictions or questions. Students write down their pre-reading work in the first section.

Then students proceed to read marking down important names and dates...and questions all in the appropriate section. When they have finished reading and note taking, the students should retell using some kind of sentence stem..."In this section I read about Ancient Egypt. I learned that..."

XXXXX	XXXXX
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 20px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;">History of Ancient Egypt</div>	
<b>Pages 70-79</b>	
<b>Survey and Write Predictions</b>	
<b>Very Important People</b>	
<b>Timeline (Key Dates)</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	
<b>Retell</b>	

# Gradual Release of Responsibility

Modeled → Shared → Guided → Independent



Shallow End With  
Flotation Device



Shallow



Deeper



Deepest End

Teacher Ownership → Student Ownership

**Just as we teach swimming by gradually removing supports (scaffolding) from students in order that they learn to be successful independent swimmers, we must teach literacy in the same way. For example, we know that activating prior knowledge allows someone to be a more proficient reader. The question then becomes how do we teach students to activate prior knowledge when they read. The answer? Teach the strategy explicitly using a gradual release of responsibility process.**

- First, by modeling the particular strategy.
- Second, by using the strategy in a large group setting with the teacher directly participating for direction and support.
- Third, by expecting students to use the strategy in small group settings with the teacher stepping back from direct participation in order to monitor the use of the strategy.
- Finally, by expecting each student to use the strategy independently while the teacher is monitoring the work both directly by observing students and indirectly by reviewing student work (logs, response journals, writing.)

**Examples of classroom activities that help students activate prior knowledge:**

- KWL
- Anticipation Guides
- Webbing/ Listing
- Predictions
- Providing students with considerate texts (picture books, historical fictions, videos, visual texts) before using inconsiderate texts (many classroom textbooks).

# Helping the Under-Skilled Reader

As anyone who remembers the first time she puts on ice skates can tell you, the hardest working skater on the ice is the novice. This is an irony we sometimes see in schools: the hardest working student is the student who receives the lowest marks. Making reading easy should be the goal of every teacher.

## Characteristics of the Under-skilled Reader

Areas of Concern	Description	Helpful Support
Fluency	Like the novice foreign language user, the under-skilled reader is ill at ease with the printed word. Small technical issues can throw the reader off stride. The comfort zones are few and far between.	In order to develop the reader's ability to read for understanding, she must be matched to the <i>just right text</i> , just right in interest and just right in readability (90+ accuracy). The student's work energies must be focused on making meaning from texts.
Stamina	The under-skilled reader can manage short passages of text but quickly tires. The reader forgets to breathe properly and gives herself eyestrain by focussing on so many text features: punctuation, graphophonic cues, print formats, and print text supports.	Students must be explicitly taught prior-to-reading strategies such as predicting and surveying. Student needs to be explicitly taught breathing strategies cued by punctuation and paragraph breaks. Reading with an index card can support eye coordination. During reading strategies, such as questioning and visualization, can teach a student to pace herself.
Reading Comprehension	Concentrating so much on decoding and managing the text, the under-skilled reader neglects to make meaning from the text. It is like someone learning a song in a foreign language; repeats the words, but doesn't know what they mean. Reading to the under-skilled reader is mostly a mechanical task.	Students need to see modeled how a skilled reader makes meaning from texts. The teacher plans activities that shift the focus from the mechanics of reading to the semiotics of reading. Reading is an act of interpretation which means that the teacher needs to show students how they can take control of the process.
Schematic Knowledge	The under-skilled reader is not familiar with text structures including narrative patterns, sentence cadences and rhythms, diverse genres and their conventions. This strangeness of the written text denies the reader expectations that would make the reading go easier. Think how hard it is for the untrained ear to hear rap music.	Teachers need to scaffold students not only on the sentence level, but also on a macro level teaching students the architecture of texts. By activating prior knowledge students can prepare themselves by identifying the expectations they bring to reading the text. Teachers build on the existing schematic knowledge students possess.
Practice	The under-skilled reader should more accurately be described as under-practiced. The under-skilled reader <i>can</i> read, if we are referring to the mechanical task of decoding. But without practice the real purpose for reading is never appreciated. Each time she picks up a text, the under-skilled and under-practiced reader finds herself back at the starting line when it comes to owning the capacity to comprehend and generate a reader response.	Practice...practice...practice...practice... Under-skilled students need to be immersed in the reading process. The teacher must intervene to disrupt the vicious circle of lack of confidence leading to avoidance leading to diminished expectations leading to a lack of confidence. Under-skilled readers need to be immersed in the complexity of texts which often remedial programs fail to offer.

# Inventory of Classroom Writing

To effectively plan for the future educators need to constantly assess what the actual experience of school is like for a typical student in the building. Not what the student experience should be, but what is actually experienced. For literacy planning important questions to ask are: *What is the actual experience of a student reader and writer in this school? How much reading and writing does the student actually do? What kinds of reading and writing does the student actually do?* The following inventory for classroom writing is a useful tool to begin collecting some data to answer these questions.

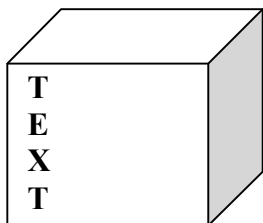
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Choose from the following writing activities and indicate how often a typical student would perform this writing task in your class:

<i>Writing Activity</i>	<i>daily</i>	<i>weekly</i>	<i>biweekly</i>	<i>monthly</i>	<i>never</i>
<b>Note Taking</b>					
Writer's Notebook					
Journal Writing					
Essay Writing					
Summary Writing (a paragraph or more)					
Poetry Writing					
Dialogue/ Script Writing					
Answering Prescribed Questions with a Complete Sentence or More					
MCAS-like Open Response Questions					
Book Reports (2 pages)					
Research Papers (4+ pages)					
Preparations for Oral Presentations					
Memoir Writing					
Letter Writing					
Copying from Board or Book (Definitions)					
Other (Please Specify):					
Other (Please Specify):					

# Jigsaw

Jigsaw activity is especially useful to help a class digest text book materials that are full of information and are not considerate of the student reader. It provides scaffolding for struggling readers and engages all students.



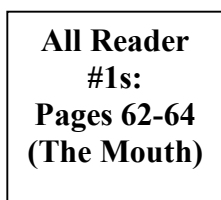
## Job Assignments:

Reader #1: pages 62-64 (The Mouth)

Reader #2: page 65 (The Esophagus)

Reader #3: page 66 (The Stomach)

Reader #4: pages 67-68 (The Small Intestine)



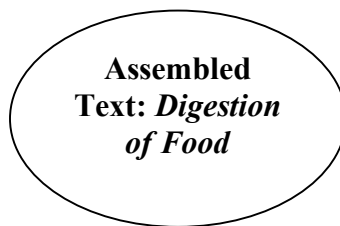
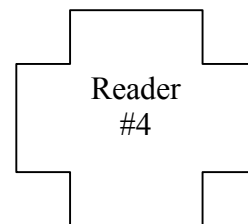
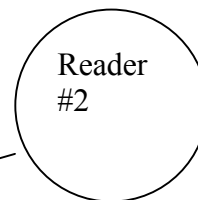
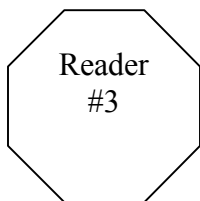
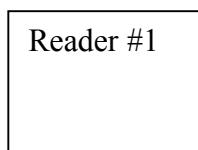
## Job Alikes:

Readers get together in job alike groups to compare notes and ideas and to become experts on their passage:

- Determining What is Important
- Main Idea
- Clear Summary

## Assembling the Reading (synthesis):

Small groups of readers (#1-4) meet to share notes and summaries. Small groups are each given a task which requires the application of all pieces of information gathered from each passage expert (participant).



# Knowing Adolescent Literacy

## **Differentiating Secondary Literacy From Elementary Literacy Programs:**

- Aligning reading and writing development to the developmental changes experienced by adolescents
- Including multiliteracies and multimodalities of composition (web designs, visual literacy, graphic novels etc.) into the literacy paradigm teachers bring to their classrooms
- Linking reading and writing instruction across the curriculum, especially in the context of secondary humanities curriculum
- Teaching (explicitly) code switching to students who are finding themselves increasingly crossing social borders as their world experiences expand
- Preserving the values of a balanced literacy program in a school environment that, as students progress, seeks to become more “academic, intellectual, rigorous.”
- Negotiating polycultural perspectives while coaching students to become effective communicators using Standard American English (SAE)
- Emphasizing situated meaning making as a core element to the longitudinal process of becoming a proficient and critical reader.
- Focusing on critical competence out of the four competencies a proficient reader possesses: decoding competence, semantic competence, pragmatic competence, critical competence (Luke and Freebody).

## Library

Author Study Bin: Sharon Creech

Theme Bin: Fables and Myths

**Picture Books  
Bin:  
Famous Women**

**Genre Bin:  
Graphic Novels**

Lists &  
Trivia  
Books &  
Almanacs

**Picture Books  
Author's Study  
Bin:  
Eve Bunting**

**Teacher's  
Favorites!!!!**

**Author Study Bin:  
Walter Dean Myers**

### Tips for Teachers Building Classroom Libraries:

- Don't put all your books out at the beginning of the year. Kids get bored. Strategic use of 100-150 titles can keep the inventory fresh.
- Location! Location! Location! Don't set up the library in some dusty corner of the room.
- Sell the books...make a display. Learn from booksellers: change displays frequently; use teasers, blurbs, promotions and readers' recommendations...
- All kids, no matter how old and big they are, need a classroom library.
- Know your material...read children's and young adults literature.
- Variety is the spice of life. (Diversity too.)
- Get the kids into the act; they are your helpers, ad people, sellers, bookkeepers, etc...
- Don't buy too many copies of one book. Spend your money to create a dazzling array of choices instead of class sets of a handful of titles. Build the library over time. Choose wisely, don't get left with a bookcase of bios of yesterday's pop sensation.
- Give students time to read independently in class: model the practice and provide them with comprehension supporting activities.
- Treat the books well and the kids will as well.
- Teach book etiquette. Establish norms.
- While you want to create a culture where books are respected, remember that it's a library, not a museum. No "Look, but you better not touch." And especially no, "Only those who have earned the privilege may use these books." It's the reluctant reader that you want to seduce.
- Know your inventory. Keep a simple data system. Find out what's moving and why.
- It's the students' library. Just because you loved Robert Louis Stevenson as a kid, doesn't mean they have to love him. Books aren't spinach: "Read it because it's good for you."
- On the other hand, it doesn't hurt to show off your own passions. Model being a passionate reader.

# Modeling

Probably the most effective way to learn how to do something is to watch someone else do that same task. Watching someone model is how we learned to talk, play sports, hang drywall, make apple pie, and probably even, kiss. (Those mushy movie scenes were good for something.) But it is difficult to learn how to read and write by watching someone read and write. So much of the work takes place behind the eyes.

Good literacy teachers invite students to enter “the world behind the eyes.” These teachers find ways to provide their students with a window into the process of reading and writing. They do this by thinking aloud when they write compositions in front of students and by giving dramatic form to texts when they read out loud to students. Good literacy teachers constantly struggle to make transparent tasks that can appear to many students to be shrouded in mystery and magic. Modeling is important at the upper grades as it is in the lower grades.

## □ Think Aloud (Some tips to remember...)

- Practice makes perfect—the more you do think alouds, the more natural it appears.
- Rehearse your performance, but don't be afraid to improvise; it will appear more authentic.
- The purpose of think aloud is to model how to write which includes the why, the options, and the choices.
- Choose a text that will entertain students.
- During your think aloud make sure you share with students certain tips about writing. (*Notice, students, how if I change the verb “said” with the verb “mumbled” I am cuing to the reader some information about how my character is feeling.*)
- When they observe your thinking aloud while modeling writing, your students should get a sense of what is fun and exciting about writing.
- Think alouds are designed to demystify writing for students, especially reluctant writers.
- Think alouds are also designed to entice students into becoming writers by showing students how it is done and by inviting them at some point to join in the work. (Remember how Tom Sawyer got his crew to help whitewash the fence.)

## □ Read Aloud (Why do it...)

- To demonstrate reading for pleasure...performing reading to reflect the range of human emotions conveyed by the text.
- To demonstrate the use of certain comprehension strategies.
- To expose students to texts slightly above the reading level of students.
- To immerse students in the cadence and conventions of written text.
- To introduce students to new genres, authors and content material.
- To provide models for students. Touchstone texts demonstrate particular elements of the writer's craft.

# Novel in an Hour

As a way to pique the interests of a class of reluctant readers, rip apart a paperback copy of a novel and randomly distribute a complete unnumbered (important!!) chapter to each student. Ask each student to read the chapter and fill out the sheet below. When each student is finished, begin the process of reassembling the novel by asking if any student believes her chapter to be the first. Ask the student to share her sheet. If the class is satisfied with the result, ask the class to figure out what comes next. In about an hour the class will have reassembled the novel. **NOTES:** #1 Many often reluctant students will ask to read the whole novel, from cover to cover, because they are now interested and because they are supported by knowing plot and characters. #2 Regardless how strong the reader is, every student's contribution is equally valuable to reassemble the novel. #3 Use a novel with short, action oriented chapters. Jerry Spinnelli's Frindle has been used with great success.

**Novel in an Hour** \_\_\_\_\_

**The chapter begins with** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Then** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Next** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The problem is** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The chapter ends with** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I think this chapter is** \_\_\_\_\_ **at the beginning of the book.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **in the middle of the book.**

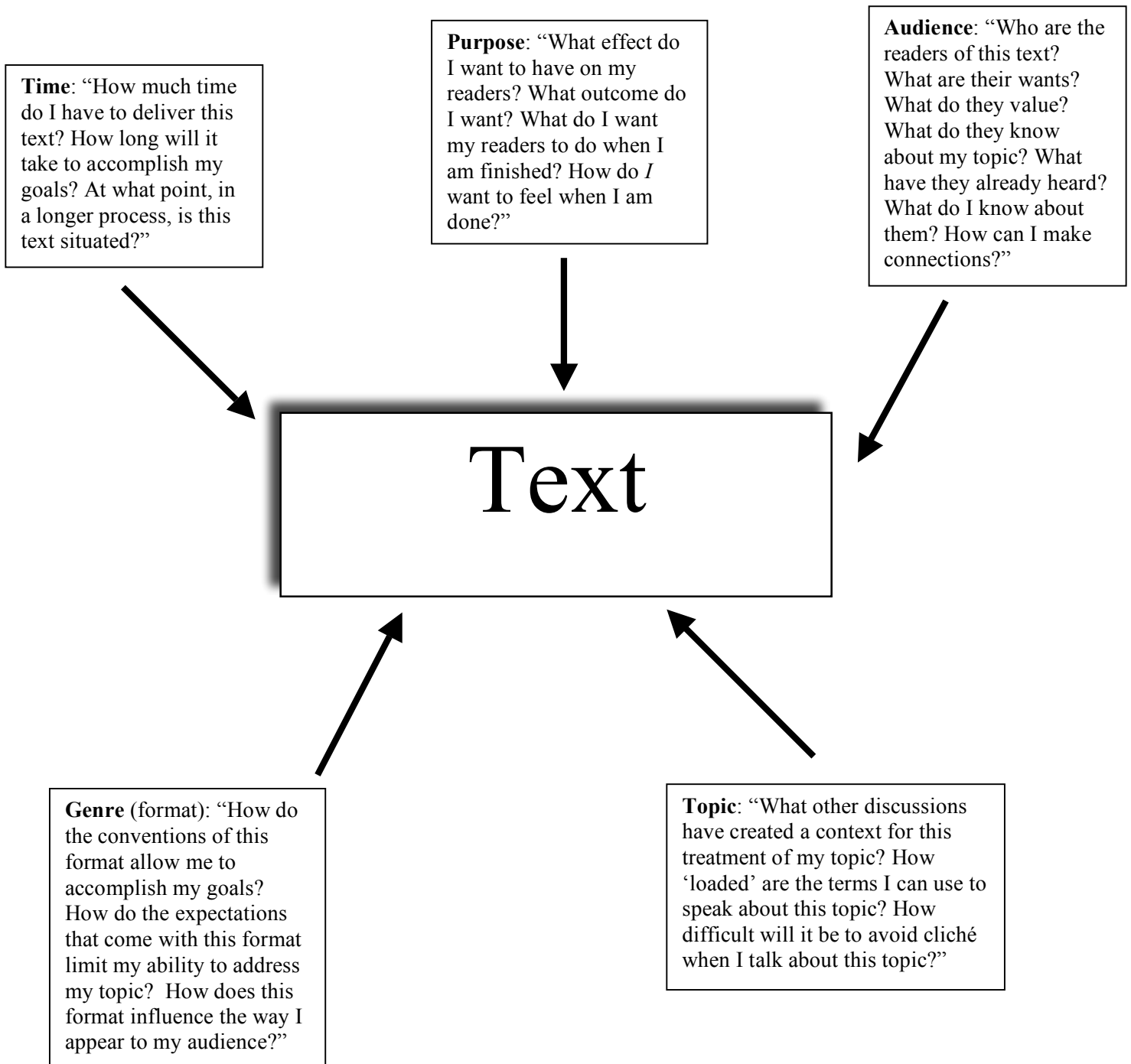
\_\_\_\_\_ **at the end of the book.**

# Origin of Texts

Schools tend to perpetuate a very romanticized idea of writing. Texts originate, according to this idea, in the private imagination, in the intellectual consciousness.

In fact, each day millions of texts are composed and most of these come out looking the way they do as a result of the interaction of forces very much outside of the individual author. The origin of texts, like the origin of species, is very much determined by the environment. Schools need to do a better job at showing students the situational nature of writing.

## Forces at Play in the Composition of Texts



# Poetry Gallery

## Preparations:

Before class the teacher has chosen a selection of 10-15 poems that are age appropriate and engaging for her students. She copies and enlarges each poem and then mounts the poem on a large sheet of poster board or butcher paper. The teacher hangs these poetry displays throughout the classroom at about eye level.

## Activity:

- The teacher performs a think aloud where she models how she reads a poem using specific reading comprehension strategies the class has been practicing (Ex: Making Connections; Questioning; Inferring etc.). She uses adhesive post-it notes to write down the questions or connections she is making to enable her to comprehend the poem.
- The teacher explains the gallery walk activity for her students, including the norms that will be in effect. She provides each student with 5-10 post it notes.
- For the next 10-20 minutes the students visit the gallery and walk randomly from exhibit to exhibit. This is a silent activity. The playing of mellow music can sometimes contribute to the reflective atmosphere. As students read different poems they write reflections on post-it notes and attach the notes to the poetry exhibits. These reflections make use of the targeted reading comprehension strategy.
- After the teacher calls the students back to their seats, she pairs up the students and gives each pair a poem from off the wall. Each pair rereads the poem with one reader reading softly out loud. The pair is then asked to read the post-it notes of questions or connections that now accompany the poem. Each pair is asked to discuss the following questions:
  - What kinds of questions and connections did readers make as they read the poems?
  - How did the post-it notes' questions and connections inform your reading of the poem?
  - What did the process of reading the notes in company with the reading of the poem teach you about reading and writing?
- After 5 minutes of paired discussion, each pair is asked to write a one-page reflection on the poem.
- These reflection essays are then mounted next to the remounted poems and are available for public viewing for about a week.

# Questioning

Effective readers, when they read, do a lot more than recognize and understand words. To borrow from those people who work with wood, effective readers know how to read a text both with the grain and against the grain. We can think of readers who are able to conform to the expectations of the text when we speak of readers reading with the grain. We can think of readers who interrogate the text—generating questions that challenge a text’s assumptions and that wonder about alternative points of view—when we speak of readers reading against the grain.

True reading comprehension involves reading with and against the grain. Too often teachers teaches students to be a *passive reader* and then wonder why they have difficulty retaining what they read. An *active reader* both listens to a piece of writing and speaks back to it through imaginative interaction with its author.

One useful way to help students understand the difference between reading against the grain as opposed to reading with the grain is to introduce students to the difference between *fat* questions and *thin* questions.

## **FAT** questions...

- ...can be answered in many different ways.
- ...allow for honest disagreement between good readers.
- ...have no obvious answer.
- ...encourage more questions.
- ...generate answers that can not be definitively proven “correct.”
- ...are used to develop interpretive understandings of the text.
- ...are used to discover the complexities in the text.

## **Thin** questions...

- ...can be answered with “yes” or “no.”
- ...can be answered by recalling or discovering information from the text
- ...have an obvious answer.
- ...have a “correct” answer.
- ...are used to clear up information confusion about the text.
- ...are used to develop literal understandings of the text.

# Roles for the Competent Reader

<p><b>Critical Roles for the Reader</b> (Freebody &amp; Luke, 1990)</p>	<p><b>What Good Readers Do?</b> (Ash, 2001)</p>
<p><i>Code Breaker</i></p> <p><b>Coding Competence:</b> Cracking the code of the text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify difficult words and concepts</li> </ul>
<p><i>Meaning Maker</i></p> <p><b>Semantic Competence:</b> Figuring out what the text means to the reader in current contexts (reading with the grain; uncritical consumption of texts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make and revise predictions</li> <li>• Use existing knowledge to make connections</li> <li>• Ask real life questions while reading</li> <li>• Summarize and synthesize information when they read</li> <li>• Monitor and repair their comprehension throughout the reading</li> </ul>
<p><i>Text User</i></p> <p><b>Pragmatic Competence:</b> Deciding the purpose for the text and the reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set purposes for their reading</li> <li>• Identify the purposes of the author</li> <li>• Identify/evaluate the role the text wants the reader to assume</li> </ul>
<p><i>Text Critic</i></p> <p><b>Critical Competence:</b> Analyzing what assumptions the text makes about them as readers and what assumptions they make about the text, its meaning, and its place in society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the perspective(s) of the author</li> <li>• Identify the perspective(s) not presented by the author</li> <li>• Identify the role of the text in positioning the reader toward a particular perspective</li> </ul>

# Schema

...the expectations we bring to our reading and writing of texts...a sense of what is likely to happen next...a familiarity with the formal and social context

## Reading

- Strong Schema Texts:  
*Popular Culture; Graphic Novels; Ghost Story; Scripts; Epistolary Texts; Sermons*
- Weak Schema Texts:  
*Expository Essays; Textbooks; Academic Prose; Satire*

## Writing

- Strong Schema Writing Tasks:  
*Soap Opera; Romance; Memoir; Dialogue Rich Texts; Letters; Narrative Texts; Tall Tales*
- Weak Schema Writing Tasks  
*Traditional Research Papers; Expository Essays*

Students struggle when they have weak schematic knowledge to bring to their reading and writing tasks. Conversely, a seventh grader who lives and dies NBA basketball will be more than capable of reading a transcript of a “play by play” commentary of a basketball game which another student, who has never watched a basketball game, will have a lot of difficulty reading and comprehending. This situation will occur even if the latter student is the class’ “best reader” and the former student is the class’ “weakest reader.”

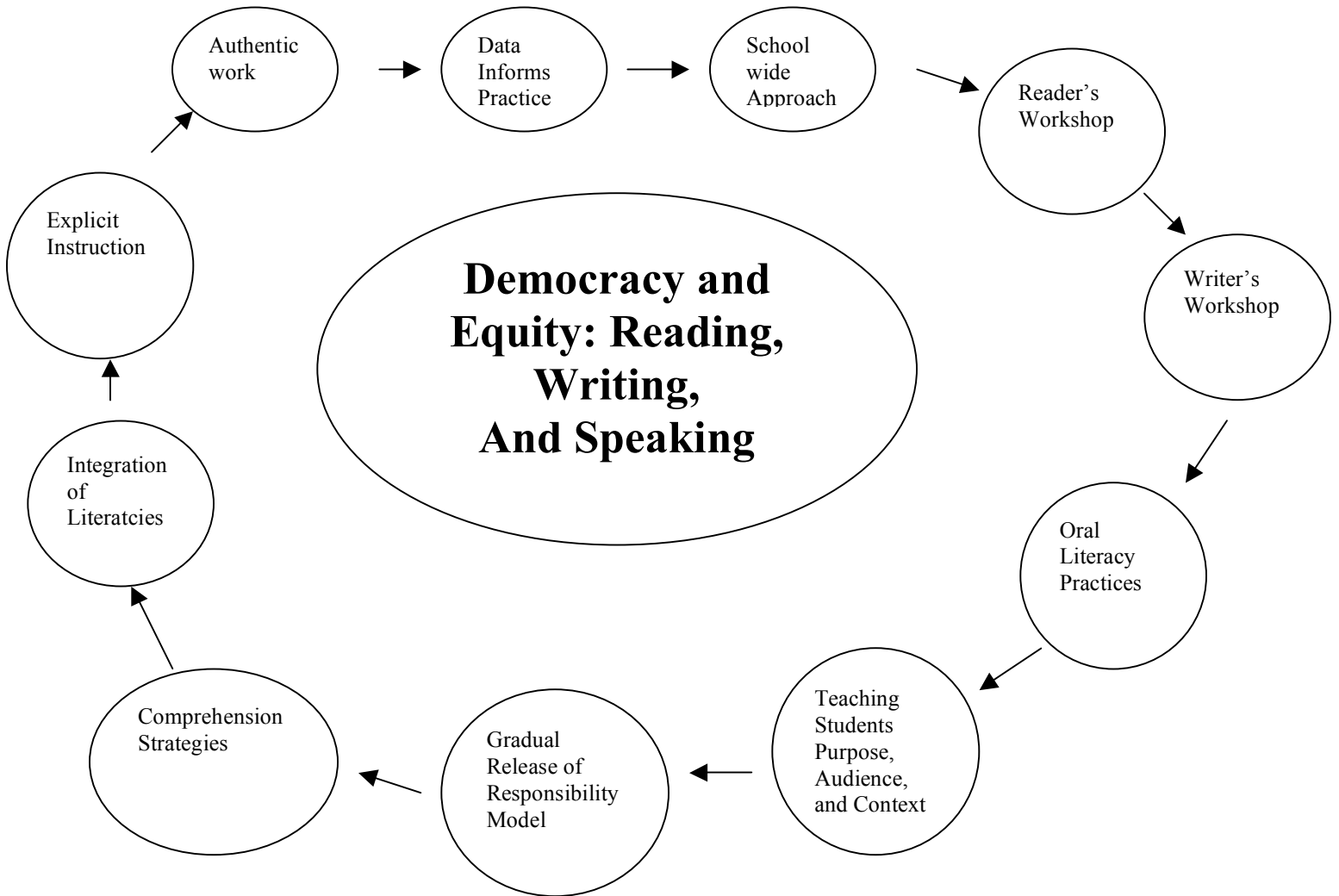
Teachers need to be adept at rating the reading texts and writing tasks their students are working with as either “Strong Schema” or “Weak Schema.” Depending on the amount of schematic knowledge students bring to the literacy event, teachers need to support students with literacy scaffolding. For example: a teacher wants her students to write a thorough examination of the issues surrounding capital punishment. In one class she asks her students to write about the issue in the context of script documenting a debate on a talk show. In another class she asks the students to write about the issue in the context of an expository essay. Chances are the teacher will find a significant difference in the depth and quality of the writing. The script writing class will most often produce better writing. If the teacher’s ultimate goal is to have students be able to write a traditional expository essay, she will be well served to begin by having her students write the script and then use their scripts to scaffold their writing of the essay.

# TSR

Many times teachers ask students to write persuasive essays while neglecting to teach them important matters such as the psychology of persuasion or the concept of good evidence. Nor do teachers help students, while they are writing, to refer back to different types of formal argument with which they might be familiar. From television, movies, or personal experience, most students have some schematic knowledge of courtroom proceedings. Showing students how courtroom summations, from Clarence Darrow to Johnnie Cochran, employ a simple TSR structure can help students organize a persuasive essay in a more interesting way than the common five paragraph theme template.

<b>T</b> ell...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the reader about the problem you are addressing in your essay.</li><li>• the reader what you will prove in the course of your essay</li><li>• the reader of the points you are going to make and of the general outline of your argument</li></ul>
<b>S</b> how...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the reader by producing evidence to support your argument</li><li>• the reader by supporting your argument with examples, testimony from credible witnesses (experts), relevant data, and effective appeals to the reader's emotions</li><li>• the reader the weakness of opposing points of view by anticipating opposing arguments and explaining these arguments' lack of merit</li></ul>
<b>R</b> emind...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the reader of the problem you are addressing in your essay</li><li>• the reader of your argument</li><li>• the reader of what you said you were going to prove</li><li>• the reader that you proved what you set out to prove</li></ul>

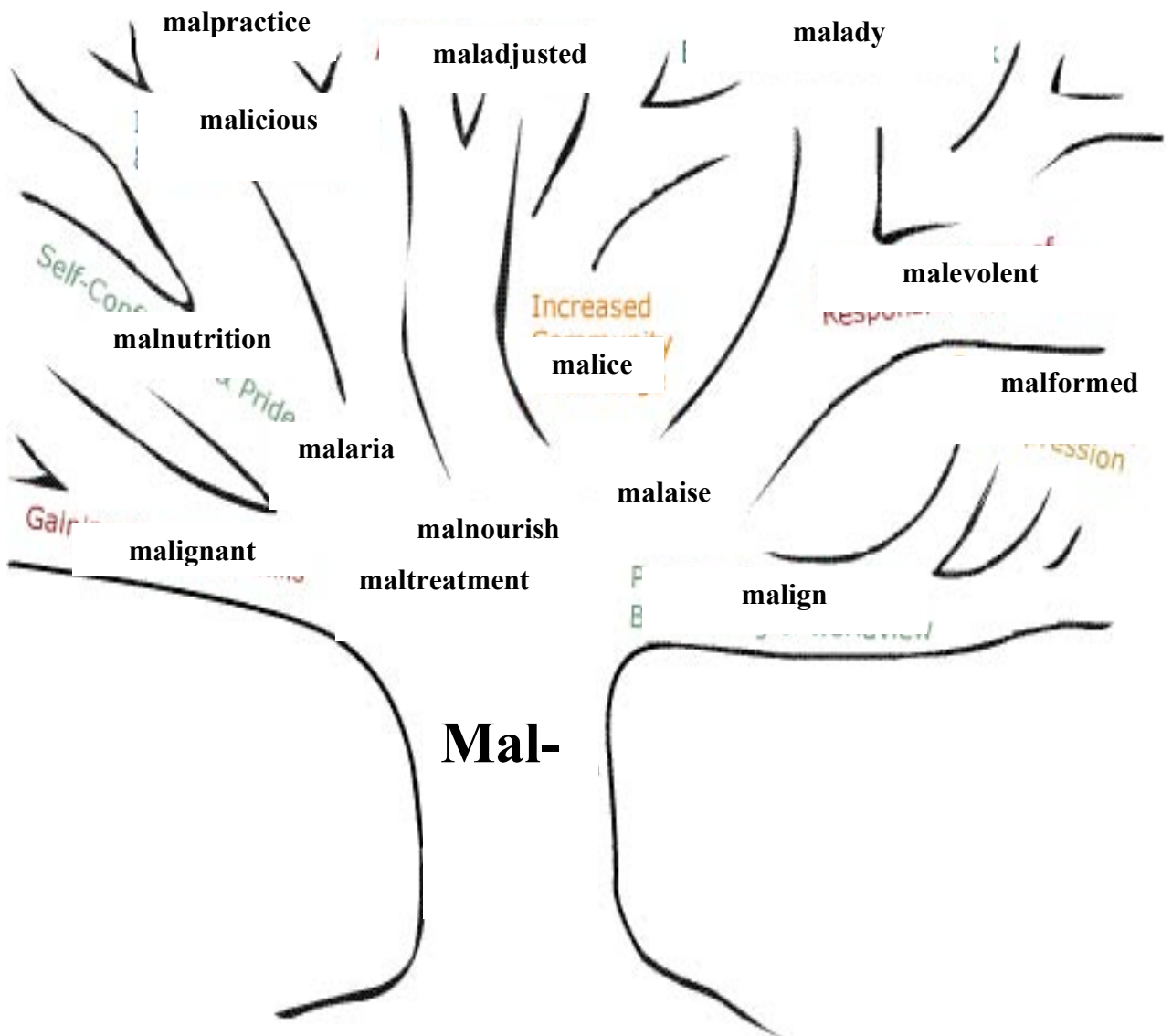
# Universe of Meaning



**The center of gravity to literacy teaching and its spheres of influence**

# Vocabulary Trees

Often teachers report that a significant handicap students bring to the task of reading content-based material is the fact that students have limited semantic awareness. In the classic numeracy tale, A Grain of Rice, one grain of rice doubled quickly produces warehouses of rice. In an analogous way, understanding one vocabulary word can lead to the possession of a rich store of words. Teaching students semantic awareness requires teachers to teach vocabulary words in meaningful contexts. Vocabulary trees provide students with a useful schema and trains them to anticipate that when they meet a new word, there may be other related words that share the same tree.



**“bad...”; “badly...”**

# Word Splash

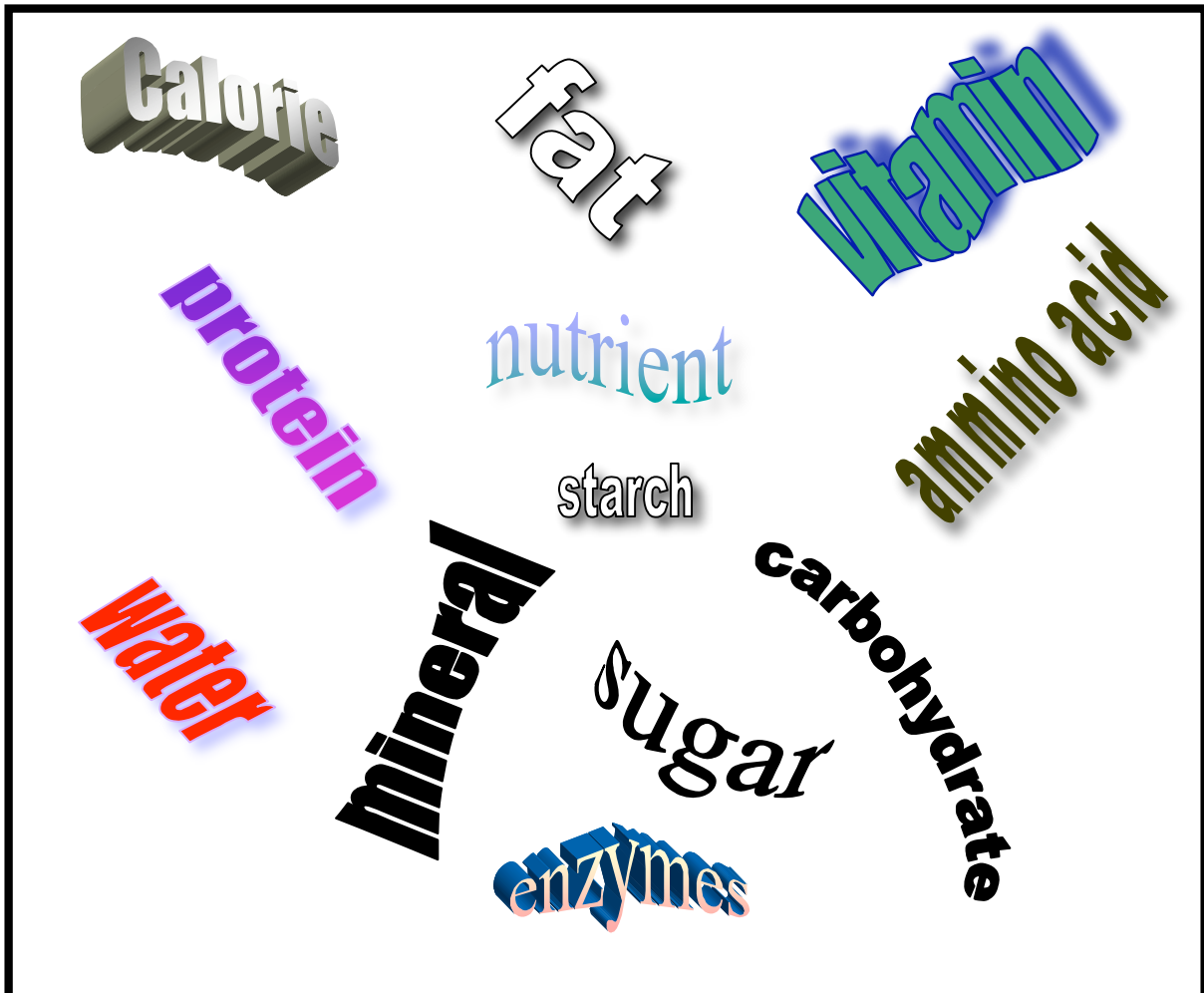
We read better when we read with purpose. Reading for leisure we supply our own purposes based on our interests and tastes. At other times purpose is provided to us by a particular task: we read the camera manual in order to learn how to operate it; we read workplace memos—either e mailed to us or placed in our boxes—to learn (we hope) important information.

The word splash activity supports students' reading by helping to provide purpose. It is especially important that struggling and reluctant readers are provided with a purpose before reading. A student generated word splash asks a group of students to quickly brainstorm on a large sheet of paper all the words they associate with the topic of the article they will soon be reading. The teacher can then review these words with the class by asking individual students to write a sentence using the word or by asking students to write a paragraph using some of the words. The teacher can also review words orally with students exploring the meaning of the word and the association the word has with the topic.

After reviewing the words, the class can begin reading the article. Using the word splash the student will read with recently activated background knowledge and with purpose as she discovers whether the understandings generated by the word splash can be confirmed or corrected.

A teacher generated word splash can be used when students are reading an article on a topic that may not be easily accessible to students.

## Teacher Generated Word Splash for “The Importance of Food” Science Chapter

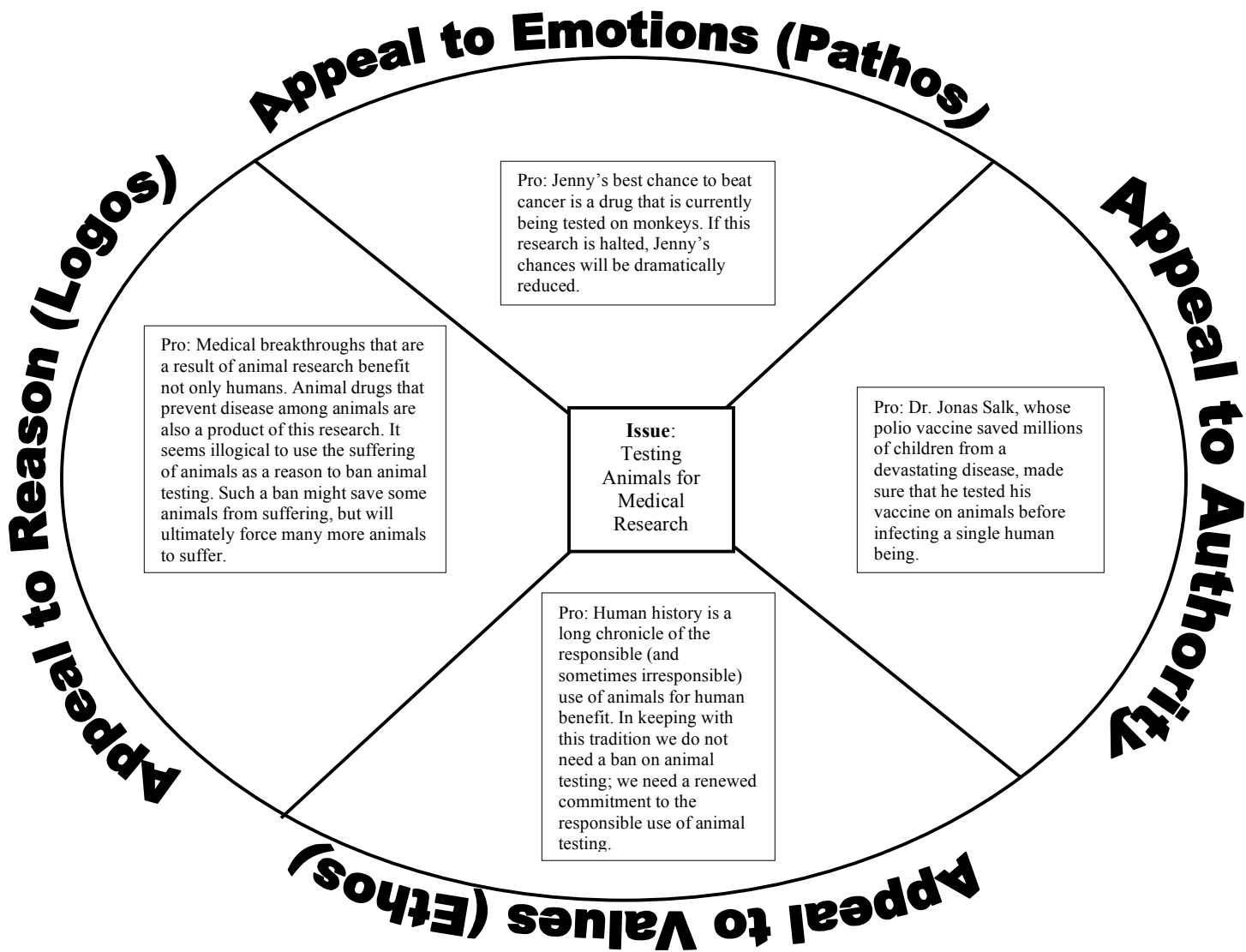


# X Chart

## for Persuasive Writing

Schools ask students to write essays in the persuasive mode, but often under prepare students for this sophisticated task. Generally the instructional emphasis is on the organization of the five-paragraph theme. Each essay needs an introductory paragraph that contains a clear thesis statement, followed by three supporting paragraphs each containing one supporting detail. A concluding paragraph summarizes the thesis statement. What is rarely discussed in the typical adolescent classroom is the very subject of argument itself. “What constitutes good evidence?” “What are effective argumentative strategies?” “What cinches an argument?”

The uses of an X-Chart as a prewriting activity helps students identify the different appeals they can use to successfully argue their case. For example, students learn the differences between appealing to the emotions and appealing to the reason of readers. Of course, separating heart, mind, values, and the testimony of authority figures are all artificial ways of talking about human experience. The X Chart reminds students to think of how these perspectives unite to make a whole. Forcing students to think of a diversity of appeals helps students to unpack their ideas about a subject. This unpacking can aid students to better understand the subject.



# Young Adult Learners

## What can we generalize about young adult learners?

- Puts a high degree of attention on social world (i.e. peer relationships; the self's relationship to larger cultural world)
- Very conscious of how he/she is perceived by others
- Feels push-pull between “wanting to fit in” and “wanting to stand out and be different”
- Anxious to create some separation between the adolescent and his/her immediate family
- Making the shift to “the next level” (re. reading and writing) where she/he will encounter more complex texts both in regards to structure and theme
- Can be very emotional—of the many “selves”, the affective self demands considerable attention
- Can be subject to a crisis of confidence
- Eager for more responsibility and self autonomy
- Places a high value on “face” (i.e. saving face)
- Willing to experiment
- Wants to “test” conventions

## What does this mean for school literacy practices/culture?

- Schools need to give special care to the building of communities of readers and writers
- Teachers must work to avoid creating situations where students could “lose face” in front of his/her peers
- “School literacy” must work to have an authentic, “real world” context
- Students need considerable support as they make the transition to “the next level”
- Students must be allowed to find a personal connection to the meaning making work of literacy
- Classes must genuinely work towards providing students with responsibility and autonomy over their reading and writing tasks
- Teachers must acknowledge student resistance and look for ways to engage students
- The curriculum must not become so departmentalized that connections can not be made by the student to other portions of the curriculum or to the personal and social self
- School must be willing to ask students to participate (as readers and writers) in conversations about high interest, at times, controversial issues grounded in the lived experiences of students
- Literacy is seen as having a larger purpose than the transmission of information—such as, resolving conflicts among students, allowing for group decision making, enriching the social culture by providing students with a means to uncover themselves on their own terms (making students famous)

# Contact Zones

Mary Louise Pratt's 1991 essay *Arts of the Contact Zone* has been a very influential essay for the college and adult literacy professional community. The fact that few K-12 educational professionals are familiar with this essay indicates again the significant disconnect between K-12 and adult literacy discourse communities.

Pratt's essay invites teachers to imagine classrooms not as stable spaces where rationality reigns, but as sites for complex interplay, where often cultures knock against each other and where all kinds of give and take occurs. Some of this give and take is sanctioned by the authority of teacher and school. Other examples of give and take are not sanctioned. Pratt's essays invites teachers to take a new look at the "contact zone" of the classroom and see not just the challenges, but the possibilities for new literacies and new understandings.

## Definition and Lists

**Contact Zones:** social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.

**Literate Arts of the Contact Zone:** autoethnography, transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression

**Perils of Writing in the Contact Zone:** Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of meaning

**Pedagogical Arts of the Contact Zone:** exercises in storytelling; identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, attitudes of others; experiments in transculturation and collaborative work and in the arts of critique, parody, and comparison (including unseemly comparisons between elite and vernacular cultural forms); the redemption of the oral; ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories), ways to move into and out of rhetorics of authenticity; ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the all important concept of cultural mediation.

From *Arts of the Contact Zone* by Mary Louise Pratt

Pratt, Mary Louise. 1991. "Arts of the contact zone." *Profession* 91. New York: MLA. Pp.33-40.