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# Introduction

## Texts For Close Reading and Deep Comprehension

Close reading involves careful study of a short text passage to build a deep, critical understanding of the text. By developing children's comprehension and higher-order thinking skills, you can help them make sense of the world.

"A significant body of research links the close reading of complex text – whether the student is a struggling reader or advanced – to significant gains in reading proficiency, and finds close reading to be a key component of college and career readiness."  
(Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2012, p7)

## Reading and Re-Reading For Different Purposes

The texts in *Close Reading* are carefully selected and deliberately short. This focuses children on purposeful reading, re-reading and responding. They learn about the topic through rich vocabulary development and deep comprehension.



Children re-read and analyse the text through questioning to explore:

- text structure and features
- key ideas and details
- connections/conclusions
- predictions/inferences
- words and phrases in context.

Children actively respond to the text using:

- higher-order thinking skills
- paired discussion
- written responses.

## Text Marking: A Powerful Active-Reading Strategy

To improve their comprehension of literary texts, children must actively engage with the material. Careful and consistent text marking by hand is one valuable way to accomplish this. The true goal of teaching text marking is to help children internalise an effective close-reading strategy, not to have them show how many marks they can make on a page. Text-marking skills are encouraged in each passage.

# Wake-Up Bell

Read the poem.

Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

I do not like you, wake-up bell!

The reasons why I cannot tell

And yet I know, and know full well –

I do not like you, wake-up bell.

Your cruel clang shatters slumber's spell!

The sting of this I cannot quell.

Yet deep I know, know all too well –

I do not like you, wake-up bell.

Sleep, embrace me in your spell,

Your tender hush! My heart can tell

We'll soon be parted with a yell

From slumber's rival – wake-up bell.

I'll never like you, wake-up bell,

Demolishing sleep's restful spell.

Yet by my bedside you must dwell.

I do not like you, wake-up bell.



## Text Marking

Identify who the poem is about.



Circle the main character.



Box the minor character.



Underline details about the main character.



Tick details about the minor character.

# Wake-Up Bell

▶ Answer each question. Give details from the poem.

1 What is the wake-up bell the speaker dislikes so much?

- ▶ A a telephone    ▶ B an alarm clock    ▶ C a police siren    ▶ D an oven timer

What helped you answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Which is a synonym for **rival** (stanza 3)?

- ▶ A ally    ▶ B companion    ▶ C challenger    ▶ D neighbour

What helped you answer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 Identify the poem's point of view and explain how the poet gets across the speaker's attitude.

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

4 How would you best summarise the central idea of this poem?

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

1 Character Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Wake-Up Bell


Read the poem.  
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

I do not like you, wake-up bell  
The reasons why I cannot tell  
And yet I know, and know full well –  
I do not like you, wake-up bell.

Your cruel clang shatters slumber's spell! ✓  
The sting of this I cannot quell.  
Yet deep I know, know all too well –  
I do not like you, wake-up bell.

Sleep, embrace me in your spell,  
Your tender hush! My heart can tell  
We'll soon be parted with a yell  
From slumber's rival – wake-up bell.

I'll never like you, wake-up bell,  
Demolishing sleep's restful spell.  
Yet by my bedside you must dwell. ✓  
I do not like you, wake-up bell.



**Text Marking**

Identify who the poem is about.

- Circle the main character.
- Box the minor character.
- Underline details about the main character.
- Tick details about the minor character.

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◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 1: Wake-Up Bell

1 B; *Sample answer:* I picked B because I could tell that the bell is by the bedside, so it must be an alarm clock.

2 C; *Sample answer:* I picked C because the poem blames the wake-up bell for ruining the speaker's sleep, so a rival must be a challenger to the peace of sleeping.

3 *Sample answer:* The poem is written in the first person (clues: 'I', 'me', 'my'). The speaker doesn't like the wake-up bell, will never like it and describes it as a heartless brute.

4 *Sample answer:* The central idea is that the speaker hates waking up from a restful sleep to the unwelcome clang of an alarm clock, though it seems she must do this on a regular basis.

2 Character Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Fox and Goat

Read the fable, adapted from Aesop.  
Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

While seeking water one day Fox accidentally tumbled down a well from which she, despite all her cleverness, saw no escape. Then, Fox spied a thirsty goat peering into the well.

✓ Goat called sociably, "Fox, what are you doing down there?"

"Greetings, Goat," Fox cheerfully replied, disguising the sad facts of her predicament. "I sought a satisfying drink of water because I've heard it's the tastiest around – fresh, cool and pure. Come join me here, since there's plenty for us both."

Unable to think beyond his thirst, parched Goat replied, "I gratefully accept your invitation, Fox, and I'm on my way!"

With that, he leaped into the well, eager for refreshment.


As Goat drank his fill, Fox interrupted urgently. "There's just one small thing," she carefully said. "We have plenty of water, but the distance to the top makes getting out challenging. Don't worry, though, because I've developed a simple plan to benefit us both."

Goat sheepishly said, "I never even considered getting out, so it's lucky you did." Thank you, Fox, and tell me what to do.

Fox directed, "Goat, press your hooves firmly against the wall of the well while I scamper up your back and horns to the surface. Then I'll return the favour to get you out." Goat did as asked, enabling Fox to exit the well effortlessly. The moment she reached the surface, Fox called back triumphantly, "What a brilliant plan – and farewell!"

Panicked, Goat shouted, "But you promised we'd both escape, so what about me?"

Fox sighed at the frightened goat. "Had you planned ahead," she scolded, "you'd never be stuck in the first place, foolish one. I'll agree to help you this once. While you consider the valuable lesson I hope you've learned, I'll engineer a rescue worthy of my cleverness."



**Text Marking**

Identify the two characters the fable is about.

- Circle the main character.
- Tick the minor character.
- Underline at least three traits about the main character.
- Box at least three traits about the minor character.

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◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 2: Fox and Goat

1 D; *Sample answer:* I picked D because I think it means that Goat is so thirsty that, instead of taking a moment to think of possible results of jumping into a well, he just jumps.

2 B; *Sample answer:* I picked B because it seems to best summarise the error Goat made by failing to think ahead.

3 *Sample answer:* Fox is clever, resourceful, lies easily and enjoys gloating. She tricked Goat into coming down into the well to provide her with a means of escape, but had no intention of returning the favour. Still, she kept her promise this time.

4 *Sample answer:* It reminds me of someone giving in to a dare to avoid seeming weak, but ending up in even more trouble because of failing to think ahead about what would most likely happen.