

Approaching the Design of Text-Dependent Analysis Questions

Step 1: Read and annotate the text. Search for vocabulary, text structure, syntax, essential understandings that students will need to “linger over” or may be the focus of the text-dependent discussions. Consider:

- Writing style (e.g., repetition of sentence structure, phrases, particular words)
- Passages that are ripe for making inferences, difficult to read because of syntax, make a significant point or need interpretation, complicated because of figurative language
- Consider tone, flashbacks, foreshadowing, dialect, bias, irony, imagery, allusion, metaphor, simile

Step 2: Identify the essential understandings and key supporting details from the text (what is noteworthy and what supports this). **Essential Understandings:**

- are constructed in complete sentences
- focus on at least two concepts
- form a relationship between the concepts using strong verbs
- have transfer value and prime students to make connections so no proper nouns or past tense verbs are used
- represent what you really want students to understand about the text; answers the question “why is this important?” or “how”?

Examples:

- 1) People search for a place to call home and a sense of family to foster security.
- 2) Sometimes the truth needs to remain a secret to protect people from harm.
- 3) Effective leaders can help unite the disparate groups to achieve a unified goal by using compromise and strategy.
- 4) The structures and behaviors of living organisms help them adapt to their environments so they can survive.
- 5) Artifacts from diverse world cultures reveal information and insight about the daily life, beliefs, and customs of a civilization.

Concepts represent mental images, constructs, or word pictures that help people to arrange and classify fragmented and isolated facts and information (*“Social Studies Overview” from The NY State Educational Department, Albany, NY*)

Step 3: Locate and identify academic vocabulary and key text structures that are connected to the essential understandings and key ideas.

- **Tier One** – everyday speech
- **Tier Two** – general academic words: often represent subtle or precise ways to say relatively simple things
- **Tier Three** – domain-specific words

Step 4: Propose a culminating text-dependent analysis question

- Revisit essential understandings, key details, and review grade level standards.
- Determine how students can best demonstrate understanding of the text passage.

Step 5: Identify the expected proficient-level response

Step 6: Identify the standards associated with the text-dependent analysis question