Sample
Elementary
Close Reading Experiences
Sample Close Reading Experience (Grade K)

Name of Text: *Fire! Fire!* By Gail Gibbons

Context and Purpose:
In the unit of study, students explore the essential question, *What makes a community?* Students read a variety of stories and informational texts about community workers. They eventually choose one and become that community member - writing, explaining and carrying out the jobs of that community member for the day. This text was chosen because of its connection to the unit, its illustrations and rich details.

Reading Standards:

*RI.K.1* With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

*RI.K.7* With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

**Day 1:**

**Read:** The teacher shares the pictures from *Fire! Fire!*

**Discussion:** After sharing the pictures, the students turn and talk with a partner about the following question: What do the illustrations tell you about the job of the firefighters? *RI.K.7*

Students share their explanations with the large group and the teacher charts their responses.

**Re-read:** The teacher reads the text to the student.

**Discussion:** Students work with a partner to answer the following questions:

- Where can a fire happen? *RI.K.1*
- How can a fire start? *RI.K.1*
- Who fights the fires? *RI.K.1*

**Write:** Students draw a firefighter and write/dictate a sentence about the job of the firefighter.

**Day 2:**

**Read:** The teacher shares the pages “Ways to Prevent a Fire” and “How to Fight a Fire”.

**Discuss:** The class discusses the following questions

- Why do you think the author included these two pages? *RI.K.7*
- What can we do to prevent fires? *RI.K.1*
- What should we do if there is a fire? *RI.K.1*

**Write:** Students draw a picture and write a sentence showing how they can help the firefighter prevent fires in their community.

Text can be found at:
Sample Close Reading Experience (Grade 2)

Name of Text: Where do polar bears live? Sarah L. Thomson

Context and Purpose:
In a unit of study about protecting the earth, the students read a variety of stories and informational texts including, where do polar bears live? This text focuses on global warming and the impact it is having on the Arctic ice. Students have spent time reading and discussing the text to learn about the polar bear, about the artic and about the shrinking polar ice.

The close read focuses on two pages of the text which discuss why the world is getting warmer and what they can do about it.

Reading Standards:
RI 2.1 Ask and answer questions (who, what, where, when and why) to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
RI 2.2 Identify the main topic of a multi paragraph text as well as specific paragraphs within the text.
RI 2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Day One: Each student is given a copy of page 36, titled “Find Out More About Why the World is Getting Warmer.”

Read Aloud: The teacher reads the text out loud and pauses to define academic words with the class: atmosphere, gases, oxygen and carbon dioxide.

Independent Read: Students reread the text underlining information in each paragraph about why the world is getting warmer. RI 2.2

Discussion - Turn and talk:
• What are the different ways the world is getting warmer? RI 2.1
• How do the text and the diagram work together to explain how the world is getting warmer? RI 2.7
• Why is this important? RI 2.1

Writing Task: Students explain one way the world is getting warmer.

Day 2: Each student is given a copy of page 37, titled “What can you do?”

Independent Read: Students are asked to read the whole page independently.

Second read: The teacher reads the page out loud, asking students to follow along and put a star next to the things they think they can do to keep the world from getting warmer.

Discussion - Turn and talk:
• What are some of the things you can do to help the world? RI 2.2

Writing Task: Write a letter to a family member to tell them what you have learned about the Arctic:
• Share facts about the Arctic

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• Tell about why the earth is getting warmer
• Describe what you want to do help keep the earth from getting warmer.
Sample Close Reading Experience (Grade 5)

Name of Text: “Casey at the Bat” by Ernest Lawrence Thayer

Context and Purpose:
This close reading experience uses a complex narrative poem. Students will continue to draw upon skills that they have used throughout the year including quoting from the text (RL.5.1), making inferences (RL.5.1), and summarizing the text (RL.5.2). This close read, however, will focus predominately on determining the meaning of unknown words including figurative language (RL.5.4) and explaining how stanzas fit within the structure of a poem (RL.5.6).

Day 1:

Reading Task: Students will read the entire text independently. The first reading is a reading for the “gist” or “to get a sense of the whole”. The teacher will remind students that the text is challenging and parts may not make sense, but there will be time to re-read and discuss those parts.

Second Read: The teacher will read the poem aloud inviting the students to listen to the words, the melody and the emerging story. Students are asked to underline words or phrases that give clues as to what the poem is about.

Discussion Task: Small groups will have an initial conversation around the question, What is this story about? How do you know? Find words and phrases that support your thinking. Groups will share out to the entire class.

Writing Task: Individuals will summarize the class discussion by writing a short response (2-3 sentences) to the question, What is the story about?

Day 2:

Reading Task: The teacher rereads the first twelve lines of the poems.

Discussion Task: Students will use their copies of the text to discuss the following questions about the first twelve lines in small groups:
1. What has happened in the story so far?
2. How does the phrase, “and the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake” capture the narrator’s point of view of the batter’s that came before Casey? (syntax question)
3. How does the phrase, “so upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat” capture the feeling of the crowd? (syntax question)
4. How does the narrator’s use of these phrases impact what you think will happen next?

Writing Task: Students will use the information from the discussion to write a brief explanation of how the language conveys the feeling of the crowd (lines 1 – 12).

Day 3:

Reading Task: Students will read lines 13 – 28 independently taking note of the language used by the narrator to describe the events of the poem. The teacher will then read the passage aloud.

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Discussion Task: Students will be asked to work in small groups to discuss the following questions:
1. What is happening in the poem?
2. How do the narrator and crowd feel about these events? What words and phrases help you understand their feelings?
3. Why has the author clustered the poem in lines of four? How does this impact how the poem is read? How does it impact the meaning of the poem?

Writing Task: Students will work with a partner to write an explanation of how the structure of the poem contributes to its meaning.

Day 4:

Reading Task: Students will read the remainder of the poem independently taking note of the language and structure of the poem.

Discussion Task: Students will work in small groups to answer the following questions:
1. What are the words and phrases used by the author to describe how the crowd feels about Casey?
2. How does the following stanza describe how Casey feels about himself?

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
   And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
   Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped–
   “That ain’t my style,” said Casey. “Strike one,” the umpire said.

3. How does the last stanza reveal what happens to Casey? What language provides clues?

Final Day of the Close Read:

Reading Task: Students will reread the entire text independently. They will have the opportunity to review annotations from any day of the close reading experience.

Writing Task: Students will rewrite the story of “Casey at Bat” in their own words and explain how describe how the language the author uses makes the events, the attitude of Casey and the feelings of the crowd come alive.

1. The outlook wasn’t brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;
2. The score stood four to two with but one inning more to play.
3. And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,
4. A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

5. A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
6. Clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
7. They thought if only Casey could but get a whack at that–
8. We’d put up even money now with Casey at the bat.

9. But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
10. And the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake;
11. So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
12. For there seemed but little chance of Casey’s getting to the bat.

13. But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,
14. And Blake, the much despise-ed, tore the cover off the ball;
15. And when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred,
16. There was Johnnie safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

17. Then from 5,000 throats and more there rose a lusty yell;
18. It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;
19. It knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,
20. For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

21. There was ease in Casey’s manner as he stepped into his place;
22. There was pride in Casey’s bearing and a smile on Casey’s face.
23. And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
24. No stranger in the crowd could doubt ‘twas Casey at the bat.

25. Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;
26. Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.
27. Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
28. Defiance flashed in Casey’s eye, a sneer curled Casey’s lip.

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29. And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
30. And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
31. Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped–
32. “That ain’t my style,” said Casey. “Strike one,” the umpire said.

33. From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
34. Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore.
35. “Kill him! Kill the umpire!” shouted someone on the stand;
36. And it’s likely they’d have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

37. With a smile of Christian charity great Casey’s visage shone;
38. He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
39. He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the sphereoid flew;
40. But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, “Strike two.”

41. “Fraud!” cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered fraud;
42. But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.
43. They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
44. And they knew that Casey wouldn’t let that ball go by again.

45. The sneer is gone from Casey’s lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;
46. He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.
47. And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,
48. And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey’s blow.

49. Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
50. The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
51. And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;
52. But there is no joy in Mudville–mighty Casey has struck out.