

Prioritising and modelling active reading for GCSE preparation

Securing understanding of texts

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Final version

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- Some students may well find GCSE text extracts challenging to read and comprehend, and many students who are competent readers can misread or make incorrect assumptions when rushing and under pressure.
- Building a conscious metacognitive routine around close, active reading through regular modelling and plenty of opportunities to practise can support students who struggle with the reading element of the paper and is often useful as a calming strategy for students who are anxious in examinations.
- Ensure that the sequence of teaching does include independent practice as well as modelled and shared reading – it is all too easy to over-scaffold as a means of settling the class.

Before Reading : *Activate my prior knowledge*

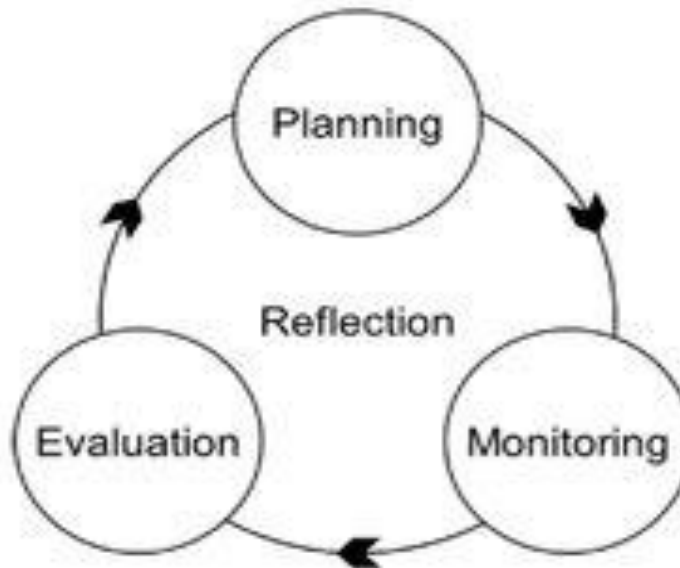
- What do I already know about this topic?
- What do I predict this text will be about?
- What strategies will I use to understand this text?

After Reading :

Evaluate my understanding

- What is this text about?
- Where is it set?
- When does the action take place?
- Why do events occur?
- How does the character feel?
- What does the writer feel/think?
- What is the key theme?
- Where can you see the theme surface across the whole text?
- Is the theme presented differently at key points throughout the text?

Metacognition phases



During Reading

Apply reading strategies

- Visualise
- Summarise
- Refine/adjust
- Make links
- Ask questions
- Infer
- Respond to characters
- Respond to the writer's message

Building and deepening understanding

Use the ‘thinking aloud’ process of deliberate, conscious, active reading in lessons to ensure comprehension

- Ensure that opportunities to use active reading are part of the daily diet – students know how to use comprehension strategies and once reminded, can use them strategically
- Texts pupils need to access for GCSEs are challenging even for pupils with high prior attainment
- Spend time in lessons modelling how to explore a text in more depth – this will benefit *all* pupils
- Annotations are not just for analysis

Predict

Question

Clarify

Summarise

Infer

Comment



Consider the processes we go through as a skilled reader to understand this text

There was a sickening smell of warm humanity – it seemed to be oozing out of everybody in the bus – and everybody had the same expression, sitting so still, staring in front of them. Rosabel stirred suddenly and unfastened the two top buttons of her coat... she felt almost stifled. Through her half-closed eyes, the whole row of people on the opposite seat seemed to resolve into one meaningless, staring face.

She began to think of all that had happened during the day. Would she ever forget that awful woman in the grey mackintosh, or the girl who had tried on every hat in the shop and then said she would ‘call in tomorrow and decide definitely’? Rosabel could not help smiling; the excuse was worn so thin.

But there had been one other – a girl with beautiful red hair and a white skin and eyes the colour of that green ribbon shot with gold they had got from Paris last week...

(AQA English Language 2017 Paper 1 –
Katherine Mansfield, *The Tiredness of Rosabel*)



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She's really using the senses here – I can imagine the smell of body odour and can sympathise with her reaction – does this link back to the fact that she hasn't had enough to eat?

About the people on the bus – but why 'humanity' rather than 'humans'? What's the feeling? Does she feel like one of them or not?

'Everybody' is repeated – links to 'humanity' – maybe the sense that they are all going through the same experience. Sympathy or not?

Oozing sounds disgusting – like slime

There was a **sickening** smell of warm **humanity** – it seemed to be **oozing** out of **everybody** in the bus – and **everybody** had the same expression, sitting so still, staring in front of them. Rosabel stirred suddenly and unfastened the two top buttons of her coat... she felt almost **stifled**. Through her **half-closed eyes**, the whole row of people on the opposite seat seemed to resolve into one meaningless, staring face

Maybe she is judging them – feels superior?

It's hot, she's tired – she's going to fall asleep in a minute. Maybe she's trying to escape into her own thoughts.

Not sure what 'stifled' means – she's undoing her coat so maybe she's hot and uncomfortable. Maybe she feels as if she has got to get out. Maybe she can't bear it any more.

They wouldn't be on the bus if they could afford private travel – maybe they are all poor. Is the writer making a social comment about workers?

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