

Home Study Guide

ENGLISH IV READING FINAL

Author - C

The author's feelings and viewpoint affect a story. In order to fully understand a text, a student must recognize the author's viewpoint, tone, purpose, and details included in the story.

An author's viewpoint is how the author feels about or toward the story.

Tone is the feeling or mood of the story.

Purpose relates to why the author wrote this particular story. The purpose of a story can be to persuade, to inform, or to entertain the reader.

The details an author includes are important to understanding tone, purpose and viewpoint.

It is helpful if the student begins to recognize the effect of the author in all types of reading. Have the student choose a short story, an editorial from the newspaper, and passage from a textbook. For each text have the student fill out the chart below:

Five important details:

How the article makes the reader feel:

Purpose (inform, persuade, entertain):

Working with the answers from the chart, you and the student can discuss the importance of the author.

Possible questions for the discussion:

Does he or she think the author likes the subject of the article/story/text?

Why did the author include certain details?

Would it make a difference if someone else had written the article/story/text?

Cause and Effect - Reading Passage

Developing critical thinking skills is a necessary step toward becoming a proficient reader. Learning to determine abstract relationships, such as cause and effect, will help the student's reading comprehension.

A cause is anything that produces an effect. In a scenario such as, "Olivia's mother is coming over, so Olivia cleaned the house," the effect is Olivia cleaned the house. The event which caused this is Olivia's mother coming over.

It may be beneficial to develop a series of interesting cause and effect relationships. Help the student determine the cause and effect of each relationship. Further, discuss how one cause may produce multiple effects. For

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example, Jan practiced soccer every day. Because she practiced so often, she made the school soccer team and she developed muscular legs. Jan's practicing was the cause of two effects: making the team and developing muscles.

Help the student begin to recognize cause and effect relationships using simple examples such as:

The student can't go to the party because he or she didn't take out the trash.

Cause: The student didn't take out the trash.

Effect: The student can't go to the party.

Contextual Understanding - C

Contextual Understanding questions measure how well the student understands the surface meaning of what he or she reads. The questions measure the process of reading rather than products of reading.

In order to help a student practice Contextual Understanding questions, choose a passage from a book. The book should be on the student's reading level. Copy the passage, leaving out one word in each of the paragraphs. Choose a word that is most likely to be understood by the student. The goal is not to trick the student with vocabulary, but to check his or her reading comprehension. The word should be able to be guessed only if the student read the passage. Have the student read the passage. Then have the student choose the correct word from a choice of four words. One word will be the correct word. The other three words should be words that may make sense to the student if he or she did not read the passage carefully.

Practicing Contextual Understanding questions will help the student become a more thoughtful reader.

Dialogue: Long Passage - E

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

Reading dialogue requires the student to apply knowledge regarding the use of quotations to determine which character says what, and to focus on how character dialogue relates to the story line.

Quotation marks can sometimes be confusing to the reader. Begin by choosing a selection that contains character dialogue. Ask the student to read the passage. Then restate something from the story and ask the student which student said it in the story. Repeat this exercise until you are convinced that the student is comfortable with the use of quotation marks.

Choose another selection that contains character dialogue. After the student reads the passage, ask him to complete a story element chart similar to the one below. This will enable you to evaluate if the student can successfully differentiate between the characters' dialogue.

Setting(s) time and place:

Protagonists (good, main characters):

Antagonists (bad, main characters):

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Plot outline (action contained in the story):

Climax (most exciting part of the story):

Conflict(s) within the story:

Theme (lesson learned):

You can also ask the student specific questions about quotes made by specific characters in the story to verify the student's understanding

Dialogue: Long Passage - F

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Ask the student to write a paragraph about any topic in which two characters exchange dialogue. Then ask the student to write his own questions about the exchange. Review the questions and answers together.

After the student has successfully written one paragraph containing dialogue between two characters, ask him to do the same with a specific scenario.

For example, ask him to write dialogue between a mother who is angry with her son who does not perform his chores. Remind the student to include quotation marks.

Drawing Conclusions - B

This is a reading comprehension skill that is mastered through practice. It is a skill that often challenges students because they have to use text from a reading passage to discover unstated meanings. Because of this, it involves higher-level thinking skills.

Choose reading material that is interesting or relevant to the student. A school literature book is an excellent resource. It will contain a variety of types of literature of varying length.

To help the student begin making inferences towards drawing conclusions, begin by choosing a multi-paragraph passage from a book. It is extremely important that the book is on the student's reading level, or even below to begin with.

Ask the student to read the passage aloud. After he or she reads it, ask questions about the selection. Call the student's attention to dialogue, setting, and events in the passage. This will enable the student to draw logical conclusions through support from the text.

For instance, "Why do you think Snow White ate the apple?" or "What do you think will happen next?"

When the student answers, remind him or her that it's important to find evidence from the text to support his answers. The student can look at the text for clues as to what will happen next in the story.

At this point, it would be helpful to share your thoughts about the questions you asked the student. This will help the student evaluate ideas that he or she might not have had.

After the student has read several passages and you have discussed the characters' words and actions, and clues to help draw conclusions about the story, choose another text selection. Ask the student to read the selection independently.

Then encourage the student to write down a conclusion they arrive at from the information in the text. It might be what will occur next in the story, or it could be an explanation of why a character behaved a certain way. Remind the student to support his or her conclusion with factual information from the text.

By repeating this activity, the student will become more aware of character dialogue and interaction, setting, and events in the reading material. This skill will become easier for the student with practice.

Assumptions - B

An assumption takes information for granted. It draws a conclusion without all of the necessary evidence. Identifying assumptions requires critical and analytical reading skills.

The student must be able to determine which statements can be proved and which statements cannot be proved.

For example, "Michael is tall, so he must like to play basketball." The person speaking is assuming that because Michael is tall he must enjoy basketball (which is often played by tall athletes). The statement is not supported by fact, so it is an assumption.

Another example of an assumption is "My sister sneezed, so she must have a cold." The statement is not based on fact. It is an assumption. There is no proof that she has a cold; there are many other reasons why she may have sneezed.

Help the student recognize assumptions by making a list of statements. Make some of the statements true, and some of the statements assumptions. Here are some examples:

1. Jane looks sad. She must be mad at her sister.
2. The baseball player hit his tenth home run of the season.
3. Filipe must have just heard a joke. He's smiling.

Only the second example is a fact that can be proven. In the first example, there could be many other reasons why Jane looks sad. In the third example, there could be other reasons why Filipe is smiling.

Fact and Opinion - D

A fact is an objective statement that can be supported with evidence. An opinion is a subjective statement

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believed to be true by the person making the statement. "The world is round," is a fact. "She is the prettiest girl in the world," is an opinion.

It may be useful to develop a list of facts and opinions. Help the student distinguish between the facts and opinions.

Fact: The capital of the United States is Washington, D.C.

Opinion: I think Washington, D.C. is a nice place.

Science Fiction

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning from the text.

Science fiction is fiction that is imaginative and usually involves a combination of both fantasy and science.

It may be helpful to discuss the student's reading assignments with him or her. Ask questions regarding the content and characters. He or she may be having difficulty retaining information read in a story. Any reading concerns can be discussed with the student's teacher or an independent tutoring center.

You can also encourage the student to create story "reminder sheets" while reading. At the top of a blank piece of paper, have the student write the book or story title. Next, create a column on the far left side which lists the following story elements: setting, characters, problem, events, solution.

While reading, the student can use the "reminder sheet" to make notes about each story element. After completing the book or story, read over the notes together and discuss what may be missing, what can be elaborated on, and how story elements relate to each other.

Short Story - T

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

Often, students have difficulty with comprehension because they are not able to retain many of the story's details. By encouraging the student to complete a story element chart as he reads, you can help him to begin the habit of looking for the story's important events and characters.

The next time the student has a short story to read, ask him to read the story through once, and then ask him to read it again while completing the following.

Setting: time and place

Protagonists: main characters

Antagonists: challengers to the main characters

Plot outline: action contained in the story

Climax: most exciting part of the story

Conflict(s): problems within the story

Theme: lesson learned

You can also ask the student to think about inferential questions including:

What would be a good title for this story?

What do you think is the main idea of this story?

What do you think will happen next?

Encourage the student to support his answers with information from the story.

Eventually, the student should be able to read a short story and identify the story elements orally without having to use a chart.

Application/Form

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a passage, understand details in the passage, make connections among passage details, and construct meaning.

A functional passage relates useful information and facts. Directions and recipes are examples of functional reading materials.

Functional material, also called informational material, is writing that is intended to convey information or demonstrate how to do something. Some examples are the writing on a cereal box, road directions, and instructions on how to put a bookcase together.

Looking at the structure of functional writing can help the student understand the passage better. Look for the following features in a functional piece:

Title

A legend (color coded key to an illustration)

Numbered items

Listed items

Help the student look at the structure of the passage. Ask questions about the passage. What is the title? What kind of predictions can you make about the passage based on the title?

Is there a numbered list? How long is the list?

Is there a legend? Could this be a map?

Is there a list of supplies? Are there ingredients for a recipe?

Once the student has looked over the structure of the functional passage, he or she will be better able to understand the passage.

Instructions - E

Following directions is a critical life skill and a foundation for academic success.

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In life, we follow directions when putting something together, finding our way to a new place, or when cooking. In school, we must be able to follow directions that the teacher gives orally, as well as written directions on exams, homework, and in-class work.

Finding your way around requires following directions. With the student, pick a local place which you would like to visit. For example, a mall, the zoo, or a video arcade. Together, write down the directions to your location. Once finished, have the student develop directions for the best way to get around that area.

The following are some tips:

Include your favorite spots.

Think about other stores or exhibits that surround a particular spot.

Try explaining landmarks as opposed to specific words. For example, instead of writing: "Walk past The Casual Store to find McMerra's Fashions on the right," try, "Walk past the store with three mannequins in the window. One has a bright orange hat on. The store on the right will have a jewelry display in the window."

Now, test out your directions by including another student or friend. You can check yourself by how well they find their way to your location!

Media: Newspaper Article - B

A newspaper article is in a section of the newspaper dealing with a specific topic. An article may be about a local event, world news, sports, entertainment, or politics. The purpose of a newspaper article may be to inform, persuade, or entertain.

It is good practice for the student to read different types of newspaper articles. Often Friday's or Sunday's newspaper will have a wider variety of articles to choose from. Have the student pick out articles from different sections of the newspaper; editorials, entertainment, and local news might be a good place to start.

After the student reads the article, discuss the following questions:

What is the title of the article?

What are three important details?

What is the purpose of the article?

In what order did the events occur?

How does he or she think the article will affect readers? The community?

Recipe - C

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

A recipe requires the student to follow detailed directions.

The student may be having difficulty determining the sequence of instructions. It may be helpful to have the student follow a set of directions, such as a recipe. Try this one for sugar cookies together:

SUGAR COOKIES

Ingredients:

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1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature

1/2 cup vegetable oil

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup powdered sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 1/4 cups all purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar

1/2 teaspoon salt

Additional sugar to taste

Directions:

1. Using an electric mixer, beat butter, oil, 1/2 cup sugar, and 1/2 cup powdered sugar in large bowl until well blended.

2. Mix in egg and vanilla.

3. Sift flour, baking soda, cream of tartar, and salt over ingredients in bowl and then mix them in.

4. Cover mixture and chill until firm, about 30 minutes or up to 1 day.

5. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

6. Butter 2 large baking sheets.

7. Roll 1 tablespoon of dough into a ball. Place on buttered baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough, spacing balls evenly on sheets.

8. Dip a flat-bottomed drinking glass into water to moisten, then dip the glass-bottom into sugar and press dough to 1/4-inch-thick round. Repeat with remaining dough balls, dipping the bottom of the glass into sugar before pressing each.

9. Bake cookies until light brown, about 15 minutes. Allow cookies to cool completely before eating.

Makes about 36 cookies

Technical

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

A technical passage includes specific details on complex subjects.

Using index cards to keep track of technical information may be helpful to the student. Have the student read a technical passage. On each index card, have the student write unfamiliar words from the passage. Then have the student use the context of the passage to define the word, or use a dictionary if necessary.

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Another approach is to have the student write the main idea of each paragraph on an index card. Make sure the student summarizes each paragraph in his or her own words. Have the student number the cards, with Card 1 being the first paragraph of the passage. As the student reads through the summaries, he or she will gain a better understanding of the technical passage.

Biography

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

Biographies include details from a person's real life. Biographical information at this level is historical.

It may be helpful to discuss the student's reading assignments with him or her. Ask questions regarding the content and characters. He or she may be having difficulty retaining information read in a biography.

One way to create discussion is through "webbing." The purpose of the "web" activity is to prompt students to recall facts and personal impressions from specific biographies.

To construct a web, write the name of the person from a biography in the center of a piece of blank paper (or other surface). Circle the person's name and ask the student to list every physical trait he or she remembers about the person. As the traits are detailed, draw a line from the circle, write a specific physical feature, and circle that feature. Continue this process with the person's personality traits, actions, life events, etc. When finished, biography "webs" contain everything the student knows about a person.

If the story or book is lengthy, try creating "webs" for different sections or chapters. The student will be able to see how a specific person's traits are revealed throughout a story.

"Webs" are an effective reading strategy because they help students focus on meaning, visualize the relationships between character traits and events, remember details, and can help a student apply the information to a book report, journal, or other reading response format.

Journal Entries

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a story, understand story details, make connections among story details, and construct meaning.

Journal entries contain personal information, and are written in the first person. A journal entry passage requires the student to follow and interpret narrative-like text.

Journal entries are different from other types of writing because they contain personal information. If the student has ever written in a diary, he or she has created a journal entry. It may be useful to encourage the student to write his or her own journal entries.

Both you and the student can keep a daily log for one week. Include information such as what you ate during the day, activities you completed, or how you were feeling emotionally. Both you and the student can create questions about your journals.

At the end of the week, trade journals and answer the questions. This will help the student become familiar with the journal format and answering questions about its content.

Letter: Character

An informal or social letter is less formal in style than a business letter. Examples of informal letters include thank you notes, invitations, personal letters, and sympathy notes. Informal letters reveal information about both the sender and the receiver.

A fun way for students to become familiar with informal letters is in writing a note to a friend. Have the student write a note to a friend, real or imaginary. The letter should include information of the student's state of mind or feelings, important events in the students life and questions about the receiver.

Once the student has written the letter, have him or her share it with friends, but omit the name of the receiver. See if other students or friends can guess who the receiver is from the information in the letter.

Nonfiction - K

Nonfiction material contains factual information. Although it may be a true story, nonfiction is often factual information that is used to educate, persuade, or inform its audience. Fictional material, in contrast, is created in the author's mind, and its purpose is generally to entertain.

An example of nonfiction material that is told as a story is a biography of a person's life, such as Henry Ford. An example of nonfiction material that is used to educate is a school textbook.

A fun way to involve students in nonfiction in reading is to read about a famous person. Ask the student about whom he or she would like to read. You can find books about most well-known people in the school or local library. Allow the student to read on his or her own. Afterward ask the student about specific details in the book. Outlining the story or information will help the student remember information, as well as relate it to academic activities.

An outline can be arranged as follows:

Main purpose(s) of this passage:

Key Points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Important words or terms and their definitions:

Nonfiction - L

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Ask the student to choose a chapter from a textbook he is currently studying in school. Ask him or her to read the chapter through one time, and to orally recall the main purpose of the passage, important details, key points, and important terminology. The student will probably find this a difficult task because of the amount of information he or she had to digest.

Ask the student to read the chapter again, but this time, encourage him or her to complete an outline as he or she reads.

Often the act of writing helps students collect their thoughts and construct meaning from text with less difficulty than if they try to remember what they read.

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Key Points:

- 1.
- 2.
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Important words or terms and their definitions:

Grievance Letter

Reading comprehension is the ability to read, understand details, make connections among details, and construct meaning.

A grievance letter is written to communicate an unpleasant experience or to complain about something. For example, it would be appropriate to write a grievance letter if you received bad service at a store. By writing a grievance letter you are making a person or company aware that there is a problem, and that you hope they will fix the problem in some way.

Understanding a grievance letter requires interpreting tone. Tone refers to an author's attitude as reflected by written style and expression. An author's tone will convey how an author feels about a particular topic.

Developing an awareness of tone requires attention to the author's implications. An author may make subtle suggestions which have tremendous influence on the way a reader should interpret a passage. To get the student to think about such implications, engage the student's attention through questions such as the following:

1. Who is the author of this letter?
2. Why are they writing the letter?
3. To whom is the author addressing the letter?
4. How would you describe the tone of this letter? Angry? Sad? Upset?
5. How has the author set this tone?

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Through such a series of questions, the student will begin to understand what a grievance letter is and the purpose it serves.

Persuasive - D

Reading comprehension is the ability to read a passage, understand passage details, make connections among passage details, and construct meaning.

Persuasive text is intended to persuade readers to adopt a specific point of view. An author will give his or her opinion on a topic in order to influence the reader. Developing an awareness of persuasive writing requires attention to an author's persuasive techniques.

Common persuasive techniques include:

 Incite to action- in which the writer tries to motivate the reader to do something regarding the topic

 Expert opinion- in which the writer refers to the opinion of someone who is an expert in the field, or refers to research or a study performed by that person

 Appeal to emotion- in which the writer tries to persuade the reader by appealing to his feelings or emotions rather than logic or facts

 Statement of facts- in which the writer simply refers to factual information to try and win the reader over

Familiarize the student with the following persuasive techniques:

1. Bandwagon - persuading people to do or buy something by telling them others are doing it or buying the product
2. Testimonial - using the words of a famous person to persuade
3. Transfer - using the names or pictures of famous people, but not direct quotations
4. Repetition - the product name is repeated at least four times
5. Emotional words - words that will make you feel strongly about someone or something

Once the student understands the types of persuasive techniques used, he or she can more easily distinguish between the author's substantiated and unsubstantiated statements.

Choose a piece of persuasive writing. Letters to the editor in the local newspaper are usually good sources.

Ask the student to read the letter. Then ask him or her to identify:

 The topic

 The writer's position on the topic

 The persuasive techniques that the writer used

 The factual information contained in the letter

Ask the student what his or her position on the issue was before reading the letter and then after. What techniques did the writer use that the student thought were successful?

This activity can be repeated with another letter to the editor or articles contained in the newspaper or a magazine.

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Poem - C

Comprehending a poem involves reading the poem, paying attention to poem details, making connections among details, and constructing meaning from the poem as a whole.

Poetry is written in many different forms. Understanding poetry often involves interpreting the feelings of the speaker in the poem, as well as recognizing and understanding different forms of language.

It may be helpful to review poetry commonly read by students at this grade level. Your local library can suggest some books of poetry. Help the student interpret the format and meaning of each poem. Discuss the following terms and definitions with the student as you read poetry together:

Speaker, Tone, and Listener

Terms to know:

1. Listener - The listener is the assumed audience a poem addresses.
2. Speaker or Persona - The speaker or persona is the "character" assumed to be narrating or "speaking" in the poem. The author and the speaker are not always the same person. For example, a forty year old man might write a poem in the voice of a little boy. In this case, the author and the speaker are two different people.
3. Tone - Tone is the emotional voice of a poem. Before reading a poem, ask the student to listen or read for any indication of tone. Are there emotions being communicated in the poem? Is it sad, happy, serious, funny?

Language

Terms to know:

1. Connotation - the ideas or notions associated with words
2. Denotation - the direct or literal meaning of words
3. Diction - the author's choice and use of words
4. Word Order - the sequence of words in a line of poetry

Discuss the style of the poem. Does the poem use casual and fun language, or is the language complex and serious? How does the poem's style affect the meaning?

As you read a poem, ask the student whether specific words are being used literally or figuratively. Literal language is language that means exactly what is says. Figurative language is any kind of language that has a different meaning than the ordinary meaning of a word. Below are some examples of figurative language.

Figurative Language

Poets often use dramatic comparisons to convey images.

Terms to know:

Imagery- the pictures and representations of sensations communicated in a poem

For example: The cool breeze tickled the hair on her arm.

Metaphor - a comparison used for dramatic effect which explains that two things being compared are the same

For example: Her skin was silk. OR His smile was a warm beam of light.

Simile - a comparison used for dramatic effect which uses the words "like" or "as"

For example: Her skin was like silk. Or, His smile was as warm as a beam of light.

Personification - a description which gives human characteristics to nonhuman objects or to an abstract concept

For example: The wind whispered in my ear.

Whispering is a human characteristic used to describe the way the wind blows in the person's ear.

Symbol - an object or event which is a reference to one or more associations beyond itself

For example: The darkness covered me.

Darkness could refer to the literal darkness of the night. However, it might be a symbol for a bad or evil feeling.

Read the following excerpt from "No Second Troy," by W.B. Yeats.

"That nobleness made simple as fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow. . . "

By comparing "nobleness" to the simplicity of "fire" or comparing "beauty" to "a tightened bow" he communicates associations for "nobleness" and "beauty" that are vivid and dramatic.

As you read together with the student, look for these strong comparisons and discuss what the associations and images may mean. Poems are often like puzzles. It is exciting to put the pieces together and discover the meaning of a poem.

Text Purpose - B

A text is written for a variety of reasons. Many texts inform the reader about jobs, upcoming events, or important information. The reader must pay attention to specific details in the passage in order to understand why it was written.

Ask the student to find an informative article from a magazine. Read the article along with the student.

Afterward, each of you can make up a quiz for the other person to take. After taking the quiz, discuss the correct answers and why the student chose those particular questions.

Examples of questions:

Name three important details from the article.

What was the title of the article?

Why did the author write the article?

What is the main idea?

Questions can be more specific including exact details from the text.