

THINKING  
LIKE A  
LITERARY CRITIC

Supporting Questions  
For the Frame

## STAGE A

1. Who is the author? How is the author connected to this topic or issue?

### STAGE B

Following the model on page 79, insert the specific, aligned CCSS for the lesson.

Then, select complex texts aligned with the rigor of learning expected in the identified CCSS.

Formulate text-specific questions of high cognitive demand aligned with the complexity of the texts.


- ▶ **Message**—(*The Big Idea of the text*)
- ▶ **Form**—(*Speech, Essay, Article, Letter, Other*)
- ▶ **Audience**—(*Group or person this text was written for*)
- ▶ **Imagery**—(*Vivid language author uses or mental pictures author creates*)
- ▶ **Tone**—(*The attitude of the author that shows in the writing*)
- ▶ **Conflict**—(*The clashing of opposing forces*)

4. What do I predict will be the author's message?

2. How will this topic or issue connect to me and/or society?

3. What do I know or believe about the topic or issue?

## Exhibit 7.7—Reading Like a Literary Critic Subtext Guide



**Stage C—Connection** (an association or relationship)

*In what ways am I different from the author or key person in the text?  
In what ways am I similar?*




**Stage C—Empathy** (identification with and understanding of author's situation)

What does the author or key person in the text believe?  
How has conflict shaped these beliefs?



**Stage D—Empathy** (understanding of another's feelings and motives)

*What does the author want me to feel?*  
Why did the author want to share those feelings?



**Stage D—Emotional Truth** (feelings aroused during reading, reflected upon, and applied to reach new realizations)

*What feelings did the text cause me to have? What do these feelings show me about myself and others? What do I realize now because of these feelings that I didn't realize before?*

## Stage A

Using the “**context frame for literature**” (Exhibit 7.6), read the questions in **Stage A** that are located on each side of the frame.

Beginning with number 1, respond to the questions. Write your response directly on the context frame in the space under number 1. Consider the supporting questions below in your responses:

### 1. Who is the author? How is the author connected to this topic or issue? (top of the frame)

- What makes the author qualified to write on this topic or issue?
- Why do I believe the author is qualified to write on this topic or issue?
- What connection does the author have to this topic or issue?
- How does the author assure the reader of his or her commitment to the topic or issue?
- How does the reader know the author is honest and ethical?

### 2. How will this topic or issue connect to me and/or society?

- How does the topic or issue impact my daily life?
- What can I learn about this topic or issue that will improve society?
- In what ways will I use this knowledge to improve my life?

### 3. What do I know or believe about this topic or issue?

- What else do I want to know about this topic or issue?
- How will my learning about this topic or issue help me in my life?
- How can my knowledge about this topic or issue open opportunities?

### 4. What do I predict will be the author’s message?

- What new insights will I gain?
- How can I apply these insights to my current life situation?
- What does the author provide that is filling something missing in my life?

## Stage B

Beginning with the **Message**, simply identify the key points for the **Message, Form, Audience, Imagery, Tone,** and **Conflict**. Responses are written directly inside the center of the frame, in the space under each component of **Stage B**. Formulate text-specific questions aligned with the complexity of the texts. These questions must demand students to cite text evidence in their responses. Consider the additional supporting questions below:

**Message** (the big idea of the text): What explicit message is the author through the speaker attempting to present?

- What implicit message is the author attempting to present?
- Why is either of these messages important to the reader in the present?

Beginning with the **Message**, identify the key points for the **message, form, audience, imagery, tone, and conflict**.

Formulate text-specific questions aligned with the complexity of the texts. These questions must demand students to cite text evidence in their responses. Consider the additional questions below.

**Message** (the big idea of the text): What explicit message is the author/speaker attempting to present?

- Why is this message important to the reader?
- How will the explicit message compare with the implicit message when it is addressed later in Stages C and D?

**Form** (speech, essay, letter, other): Did the author's selection of the form convey the message to the reader?

- Did the form of the message enhance the reader's understanding of the message?
- Why would the author choose the same form to convey the message today?

**Audience** (group or person this text was written for):

Why was the author's text appropriate for the reader?

- How did the author consider the reader when composing the text of the message?
- Why does the text of the message still resonate with today's reader?

**Imagery** (vivid language author uses or mental pictures he or she creates): How does the author of the text use language to create imagery to capture the reader's attention?

- How does the author of the text use literacy actions to create imagery for the reader?
- Why does the language chosen by the author create a powerful influence on the reader?

**Tone** (attitude of the author that shows in the writing): Which literacy actions did the author choose to present the text to the reader?

- How did the text convey the author's attitude?
- What was the attitude the author wanted the reader to adopt as a result of reading the text?

**Conflict** (clashing of opposing forces): Why was conflict in the text important for constructing meaning to the reader?

- How did the author use literacy actions to construct conflict in the text?
- What conflict would the author use to engage and influence today's reader?

Now that we have completed the first two stages in the Four-Stage Model for Text Investigation by thinking critically about the context and text in Stages A and B, the adolescent reader must now *engage* with the text by *inferring* connections and *identifying* empathy. The next two stages—**Stage C**, the impersonal subtext, and **Stage D**, the personal subtext—produce the reader's personal meaning, including emotional truth.

## Stage C

Using the “**subtext guide for reading like a literary critic**” (**Exhibit 7.7**), read the questions in **Stage C** that are located inside the boxes.

Beginning with **Stage C—Connection**, respond to the questions. Write your response directly on the subtext guide in the space under Stage C—Connection. Then, proceed to **Empathy**. Consider the supporting questions below in your response:

**Connection** (an association or relationship): In what ways am I different from the author or key person in the text?

- In what ways am I similar to the author or key person in the text?
- How is the text related and unrelated to my present relationships?
- How does the author connect the reader to the text?
- How does the author relate the text to the human condition?
- What literacy actions did the author use to create a relationship between text and reader?

**Empathy** (identification with and understanding of another’s situation):

- What does the author or key person in the text believe?
- Why do I agree or disagree with the author’s belief?
- In what ways am I similar to or different from the author or key person?
- How do I relate to the situation the author or key person finds himself or herself in?
- How is the author or key person’s situation different from mine?
- How does the author or key person use the situation in the text to best advantage?

## Stage D

Concluding the Disciplinary Literacy Four-Stage Text Investigation with **Stage D—Empathy** and **Emotional Truth**, respond to the questions. Write your responses directly on the subtext guide (**Exhibit 7.7**) in the spaces under Stage D. Consider the supporting questions below in your response:

**Empathy** (understanding of another’s feelings and motives): What does the author want me to feel?

- Why did the author want to share those feelings?
- What motivated the author or key person to act?
- When did the author or key person help me to understand why he or she had those feelings?
- How were the author or key person’s actions committed for personal gain or recognition?
- What literacy actions did the author or key person use to explain why he or she acted as he or she did in certain situations?

**Emotional Truth** (feeling that arises during reading, is reflected upon, and is applied to reach new realization): What feeling did the text cause me to have?

- How did I associate this feeling with a prior feeling?
- What do these feelings show me about others and myself?
- What do I realize now because of these feelings that I didn’t realize before?
- What personal agenda drove the act that resulted in those feelings?
- When have I acted because of another’s feelings?
- What feelings did the author or key person exhibit when actions were taken without regard for emotional truth?
- When did the author or key person cover up his or her feelings?
- Why did the author or key person cover up his or her feelings?
- What literacy actions did the author employ to power emotional truth?