

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Close Reading of a Primary Source Video Transcript

Ann Pember:

We talked about the balance between the role of government, which is to protect us, but we also have this idea of personal liberties, personal freedom, and sometimes those ideas clash.

Student:

Like, airport security got stricter.

Pember:

Yes, definitely. Another way?

Student:

The government started monitoring our phone calls.

Pember:

We're going to read and mark this article up. I'm going to get you started.

For literacy routines, we start with organization.

We're going to add a few different types of strategies for marking up today, some new ideas that we're going to be working on for the rest of this year.

At the beginning of the year, students definitely come in with a mixed range of skills. With the different skill sets, I do a lot of kind of building the background knowledge, a lot of vocabulary strategies, a lot of organization, and trying to help them interact and not just highlight everything that they read, but actually a purpose to those strategies. What are you reading, what is the main information, and then what do you do with that information?

What we're going to do for the purpose of marking them up is kind of break them into groups and mark them up as groups. First new paragraphs are kind of considered one chunk. They go together.

The first unit of the year, pretty much all skill and strategy base, kind of setting up, "Here's what we're going to be doing," and then every chapter after that is we practice and reinforce.

You should have 18, 19 paragraphs. The reason we number them, it helps when we're referring back to information in the text. It helps if we can say it was in paragraph one or paragraph five. So this will help us as we look at primary source documents.

The lesson today was on the Patriot Act, and they had been talking a lot over the last few days about the balance between personal liberties and security and the purpose of government and protection.

So what's an example of something that's patriotic? How can you fight for your country in a patriotic way?

Student:

The military?

Pember:

Yes, good. This unit so far on the Constitution, we've been talking about the idea of your personal freedoms, your rights, and we also talked about how patriotism can be a good thing and sometimes how it can be a negative or dangerous idea. How can patriotism be used in a bad way or a dangerous way? Yes, Junior?

Junior:

Having too much confidence in your country. You could go to another country and maybe offend them by how you're proud of your country.

Pember:

Okay, so you might offend other people if you're too proud of your country. You might miss some important details from other cultures. Yeah, that's a great example. Yes, Zion.

Zion:

Burning an American flag to protest a government action.

Pember:

Okay, so burning an American flag could be seen as something that can be a dangerous form of patriotism, or maybe burning another country's flag. So any of that kind of brings a violent edge to it. Good, so we talked about those different things, and we also talked about the balance between the role of government, which is to protect us, but we also have this idea of personal

liberties, personal freedoms, and the government does have to protect us, and sometimes, those ideas clash. So what are you willing to give up in order to be safe? So what kind of rights would you be willing to give up temporarily or long term if it meant you would be protected? Can a free person do whatever they want? Are there limits? What limits are there on freedom, and who decides what those limits are? So that's sort of where we're going. For today, you're gonna complete some reading that will help you answer this.

We do a lot of reading of secondary sources as well as primary sources. We do a lot of interacting with the text.

Number 15 is called "The Patriot Act Article." This article, if you look at the date at the very top of this article, the date is October 2001. So this is a primary source article published in the *New York Times*, and this was one month after the September 11 attacks. The language is difficult, so we're gonna try to work together through most of this, and then I will let you work on your own for part of it as well.

I did a think aloud, demonstrated a think aloud where I modeled my thoughts and my marking-up process.

All right, so to get you started, I'm going to model how I would mark up this type of a text. I'm going to start with the first chunk, so paragraphs one, two, and three. I'm gonna model how I would mark them up. I want you to watch and listen and copy down the marking up that I do, and then we'll discuss it a little bit after. The left-hand side of your margins, this is where we're gonna put, on the left-hand side, "What is the author saying?" And for each chunk, each group of paragraphs, we're gonna have one quick summary, "What were those three or four or one paragraph about?" So this will be "What is the author saying?" on the left-hand side. Right-hand side is for your CCQs: comments, connections, and questions. So the right-hand side is where you will add your thoughts, comments, questions, connections.

Zion:

I think it's helpful because some people would just look at the passage and say that they read it, but then if you annotate it, like, you have to take your time, then you'll start to actually think about it.

Pember:

All right, so Washington, October 12, so I know this is Washington, D.C. This is where the government is. "The House of Representatives approved legislation today..." I'm going to circle that word, it looks important, not quite sure what it means, but I'll come back to it in context. "...today to give the government broad

new powers for wiretapping, surveillance, and investigation of terrorist suspects."

I usually have them define the vocab word in their own words and then create a picture so they have a visual.

Your eyes will be prettier than mine.

It is very, very important to have that vocabulary, or else they struggle with so much of the rest of the reading, they can't access the main idea, the details.

Anything that you underlined or highlighted, you're explaining why.

I structure it so they're not just highlighting everything; it has to have purpose. They'll highlight things they think are a main idea, and then they have to explain in the margin, why did they highlight something? So sort of defending their thinking process.

Zion:

She made us mark up the text and annotate it.

Pember:

Can I have a brave volunteer with the help of the class to try and mark this one up? Zion, you want to come on up? Read this out loud, and we are going to stop and help, and any vocabulary words, any thoughts, comments, we're going to help him with. So I'm going to let you begin.

Zion:

"Civil liberties advocates implore Congress to slow down and consider the legislation impact, which they said could be a dangerous infringement on Americans' privacy and constitutional rights."

Pember:

Okay, so let's pause there. A lot of vocabulary in that sentence, right? Infringement, what does it mean to infringe on someone? Infringe on someone's rights? Yes.

Student:

Take away?

Pember:

Take away, yes. You're trying to take away somebody's rights. Last sentence?

Zion:

"With lopsided votes in both houses, enactment of the measure, perhaps in a matter of days, is now seen as a fait accompli."

Pember:

Fait accompli, yes. All right, so lopsided, what does it mean to be lopsided? Yes.

Student:

One side's totally heavier than the other.

Pember:

Yes.

Student:

It's outdone.

Pember:

Right, so there are two groups, remember, that are trying to pass this law, and if it's lopsided, does that mean that they're really discussing and working together? Not so much. And the last phrase there, "fait accompli." How many of you take or know French? Any guess on what "fait accompli" might mean?

Student:

"Fait" means, like, doing, it's something that's being done, and I don't know, "accompli" sounds like "accomplished."

Pember:

Yes, that's exactly it. "Fait" means "to do," or something's been done, and "accompli" sounds like "accomplished." Perfect, that means it was already done, there wasn't much discussion over it. Excellent, good reasoning, good working it out. Thank you, Zion, for volunteering.

And then they had instructions for how to read the rest on their own and summarize, "What was the author trying to say in these paragraphs?" And then include their own thoughts, comments, questions, and connections.

I want you to turn to the person next to you, take about one minute, review what did you read in these paragraphs. What was the author saying, what was some of the tough vocab or the important words, what were your questions, comments, connections?

Zion:

A word that I didn't get was the "voiced dismay" thing.

Student:

I think "dismay" is like "disappointed." Writing... I'd seen "avert," and I thought that was, like, so they could avoid that.

Pember:

After they had interacted with the text and they've read the reading, check for understanding.

This is item number 16, the concept map.

I have them work on what's called the concept event map, and it's a graphic organizer that asks the basic W questions: the who, what, when, where, why and...

How? That's some detail. How are things going to be safer under the Patriot Act?

The better they can access the material and the reading, the better, then, they can respond and they can share their opinions.

You're writing this from the point of view as a news reporter reporting live on the scene, explaining to the people back home about the Patriot Act. All of the words that we put up here, put this now into sentence form...

In the social studies classroom, we want to get to that higher order thinking. We want to know, "What do you think? Do you think this is constitutional? Is this patriotic, unpatriotic, why or why not? And use evidence to support it."

All right, live on the scene.

Zion:

We all know what happened one month ago. It was a sad moment for America. But I am here today because the House of Representatives and the Senate are debating whether they should pass the law of the Patriot Act, which means to sacrifice personal freedom for safety.

You give up your right to privacy. For some people, that's a lot, but for me, it's really not that much, so if I can give up my right to privacy just to feel safe, I would do it.