

An Introduction to Close-Reading

Logos of the Lesson

Close reading is like developing a close relationship with a friend.

Part 1 of the Lesson: Invitation (preparing the students)

Talk about friendship through three sets of questions.

1. Think about a friendship you have, especially one that turned into a close friendship.
2. Think about the first time you all met. What kinds of questions you asked each other. What were they? What was your time like together during that first hang out?
3. You noticed you wanted to hang with this person more. Think about what the next several times were with this person? How did your questions change? What were they now? How did your time together change? Describe it.
4. Now they are close or best friends. How did your conversations change? How did you time together change?
5. Think about the whole process from first meeting to best friend. What did it require of each of you and the relationship to get there?

Part 2 of the Lesson: Comparing Types

1. Compare the first meeting or playdate with the potential friend to meeting a book for the first time. How could they be alike?
2. Compare the developing friendship to really getting to know a book. How could they be alike?
3. Compare the close friendship with a book that has become very meaningful to you. How are they alike? 4. Compare the whole process of what it required of you to become close friends with a person to what could be the process of what may be required of you to read a book closely.

Part 3: Ask the students to synthesize (narrate, explain, etc)

Ask several students to explain in your their words how developing a friendship can be like reading closely.

Pat 4: Application

Tell the student this is exactly what they can expect as they read this year in class. Apply the lesson right away. Begin the playdate read of the first work to read in class. You may need to do this together the first time. Make sure steps for this are laid out clearly for students.

For more help on how to teach close reading in the humanities, literature, history check out How to Teach the Humanities Course for Teachers at paideiafellowship.com/teach