Our Schools
Bay Shore Schools...The Future Begins Here
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COMMON CORE IN THE ELA CLASSROOM

With recent academic changes in New York State, parents are hearing a lot about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and wondering, “What are they and how do they affect my children?” As a school district and a community, it is important that we know what the new standards look like in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. Parents can support student success by asking their children to talk about what they are learning, by reading to and with them and by providing opportunities to learn new things at home or in the community. In the classroom, one method of engaging our students with texts they are reading is through the “close read.”

My Child Did a Close Read Today...
What Does That Mean?

by Debbie Olsen, South Country School

What is a Close Read?

A close reading is a careful and purposeful reading. Well actually, it’s rereading. It’s a careful and purposeful rereading of a text. It’s an encounter with the text where students really focus on what the author had to say, what the author’s purpose was, what the words mean, and what the structure of the text tells us.

-Dr. Douglas Fisher

How is it done?

1. Number your paragraphs.
2. Read the text for the first time. (see “The Ant and the Grasshopper”)
3. Reread the text and circle any words you think are important. In the margin, write why you circled the word.
4. Reread and underline any information you think is important. In the margin, write why you underlined it.
5. Reread again and highlight the central message or “gist” of the story.
6. Write anything you notice about the author’s writing style or the structure of the text in the margins.

Once your child has completed his/her reading, ask questions which require evidence from the text in the answer (these are called text-dependent questions). For example:

- What lesson does the grasshopper learn about hard work?
- Why doesn’t the ant play and sing along with the grasshopper?

Close reading questions should require students to go back and inspect the text carefully for the answer. More advanced questions should ask students to review multiple paragraphs to synthesize the answer.

You may find additional information regarding the Common Core State Standards on our website at www.bayshoreschools.org or www.EngageNY.org.

The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer’s day, a grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart’s content. An ant walked by, grunting as it struggled to carry a plump kernel of corn.

"Where are you going with that heavy thing?" asked the grasshopper.

Without stopping, the ant replied, "To my ant hill. This is the third kernel I’ve delivered today."

"Why not come and sing with me," teased the grasshopper, "instead of working so hard?"

"I am storing food for the winter," said the ant, "and think you should do the same.

"Winter is far away and it is a glorious day to play," sang the grasshopper. But the ant went on his way and continued his hard work.

The weather soon turned cold. All the food lying in the field was covered with a thick white blanket of snow that even the grasshopper could not dig through. Soon the grasshopper found itself dying of hunger.

He staggered to the ant’s hill and saw him eating corn from the stores he had collected in the summer. He begged the ant for something to eat.

“What!” cried the ant in surprise, “haven’t you stored anything away for the winter? What in the world were you doing all last summer?”

“I didn’t have time to store any food," complained the grasshopper; "I was so busy playing music that before I knew it the summer was gone."

The ant shook his head in disgust, turned his back on the grasshopper and went on with his meal.