

Levels of Comprehension

Overview of Levels of Comprehension

Read through this entire explanation BEFORE beginning the assignment so you have a clear overview of the entire project. Some parts of these steps will be used on the discussion board.

Project Purpose:

The levels of comprehension is a device that aids in literature analysis. One way to conduct this literature analysis is using a system called the Levels of Comprehension.

There are six levels: literal, inferential, appreciative, critique, evaluative, and essential. For each level you come up with questions and then **MORE IMPORTANTLY** with well developed and thoroughly explained responses. And it is with these responses that you can easily step into the paragraphs of an essay. The more in-depth your questions and the more detailed your responses – the easier an essay is to write.

Why come up with questions? Because when you read you naturally come up with questions as you read, who is this character? why did that guy do that? maybe the butler did it? Or you are commenting in your thoughts as you read, or maybe it was Miss Scarlet in the library with the candlestick. Or you are judging characters, this girl shouldn't be doing that, she is going to get into trouble. That guy is a total jerk and that girl is a loser for staying with such a jerk. Active reading is more important than ever - you need to pay attention to those thoughts and jot them down as you write, on the book in the margins - or on post-it-notes. But LISTEN to your mind as you are reading.

Prereading/Preview:

As you have been told and taught throughout the semester not only do you need to ACTIVELY READ but you need to consider what you already know about a subject or a novel or film. That is called activating Prior Knowledge. Why do you do this? Because the simple act of THINKING prior to PLUNGING into a text - whether it is a textbook (skimming the chapters) or reading a novel or another piece of literature - your brain works much better if you THINK prior to plunging into a homework assignment. And I am not talking about HOURS of deep THOUGHTS.... just a few minutes.

The same can be said for asking questions of your reading (and viewing) instead of just starting to write from a blank slate. THINK and question. Just as you learned to annotate from the active reading packet - you think aloud or on the post-it-note - start asking questions.

Objective:

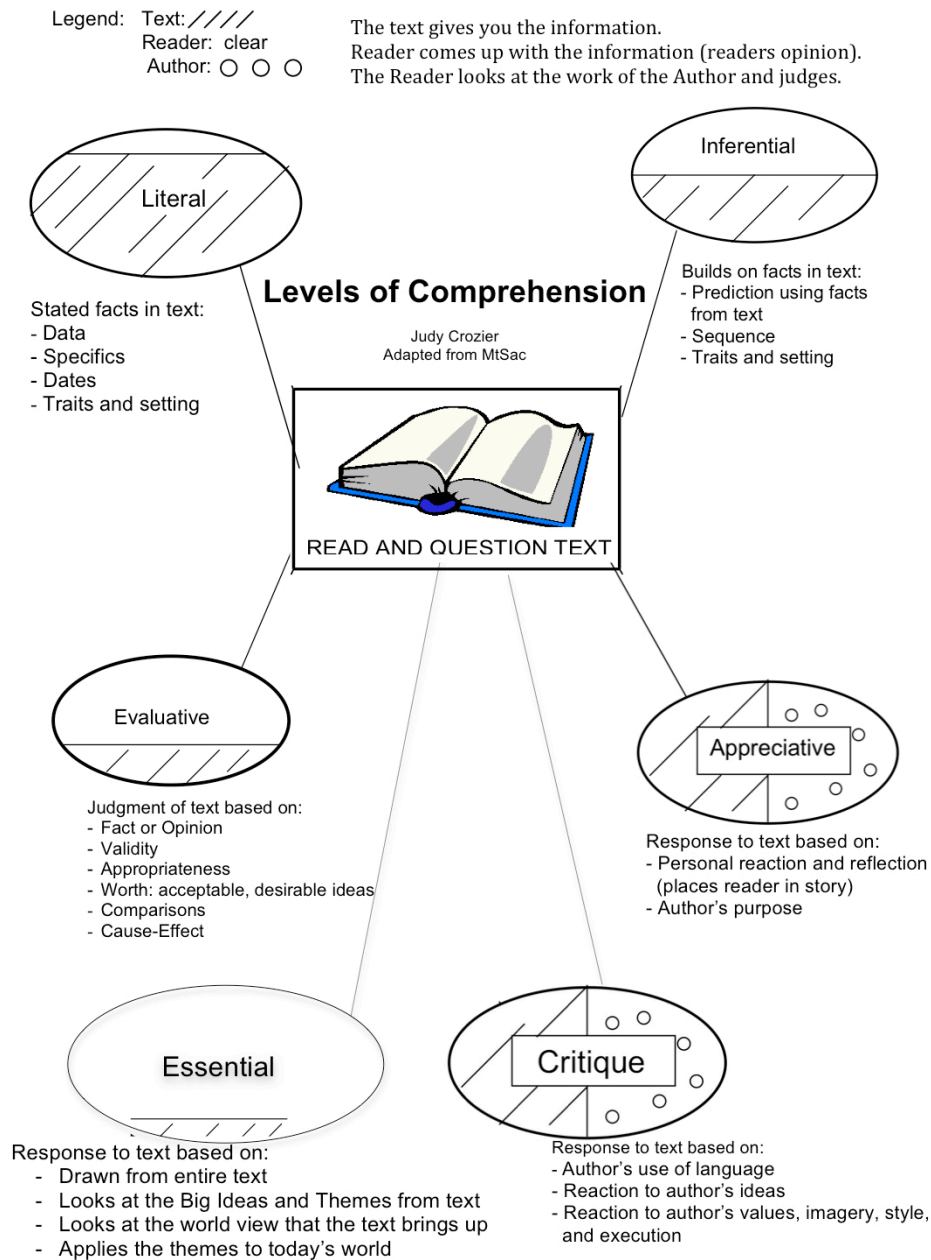
- To activate prior knowledge and start the questioning process.
- Ask questions before reading.

Directions:

Based on the given author and **title** of the article, short story, play, movie, or novel, what questions would you like to ask and find answers for? Write (2) questions. - WRITE THEM NOW - annotate - on post-it-note or write in the margin of the source (novel, article). This is part of your pre-writing.

Part One: Levels of Comprehension What are they????

Below is the list and breakdown of each level - at the bottom of the page you will be directed to WHERE you can download the PDF of the levels - please download that. Notice the legend - for some of the levels you obtain information from the text of your source and other items you provide as the reader and still some comes from the author of the source.



Download the PDF of the above image Six Levels of Comprehension under the assignments and downloads.

The Levels of Comprehension were modified and based on Mt Sac Levels of Comprehension

Active Reading

Objective:

- To help readers gain better understand the given written work - novel - article or short story
- Always remember: active reading is critical reading – think while you read and annotate your thoughts.
- **Inferential Questions:** come from your predictions about what is going to happen – these are questions you would want to annotate as you read.

IMPORTANT:

YOU MUST annotate these predictions they are VERY hard to come up with when you have finished reading. Pay attention to your thoughts as you are reading and write them on a post-it-note or in the book - you will be surprised at how quickly you forget them when you turn the page. ALWAYS read with a pen or pencil in hand!

It is easier to jot down the notes about what you THINK might happen next AS you read - than it is to GO BACK and try to remember.

ANNOTATE!!!!

- these predictions will be a part of a discussion board – so predict plot points
- these predictions should be substantial (not simplistic)
- these predictions should be with major characters not minor characters
- these predictions should be with an unknown outcome until the end, close to the end of the story – (predictions can also be made after the story ends – what happens after the story ends)
- each prediction should have a section of the story that you can quote – a specific action or conversation that lead you to believing whatever you predicted

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD - Example

Read and watch how these techniques can help you create a paper.



With the help of *Little Red Riding Hood* - you will see how asking yourself a few questions about a reading passage will ease you into writing a paper about any topic - this works both for literary works and film analysis.

Below is the story about *Little Red Riding Hood* - and then after the story there are questions - you should ask yourself and answer that pertain to not only the story but society. Read the story to refresh it for yourself. First start with some prior knowledge. What do you already know about Little Red? Author, genre of story (fairy tale), year published – a long time ago (exacts are not necessary when considering prior knowledge).

Here is the link where I got this story and the images from <http://www.dltk-teach.com/rhymes/littlered/1.htm> The story is both a book but also it can be a chapter in a book. As a book the title would be referenced in italics, as a chapter in a book of many fairy tales it would be referenced using quotes. Your short stories are all short stories and as such will all be referenced using quotes.
Now let's read the story.

Little Red Ridinghood

	<p>Once upon a time, there was a little girl who lived in a village near the forest. Whenever she went out, the little girl wore a red riding cloak, so everyone in the village called her Little Red Riding Hood.</p> <p>One morning, Little Red Riding Hood asked her mother if she could go to visit her grandmother as it had been awhile since they'd seen each other.</p> <p>"That's a good idea," her mother said. So they packed a nice basket for Little Red Riding Hood to take to her grandmother.</p>
	<p>When the basket was ready, the little girl put on her red cloak and kissed her mother goodbye.</p> <p>"Remember, go straight to Grandma's house," her mother cautioned. "Don't dawdle along the way and please don't talk to strangers! The woods are dangerous."</p> <p>"Don't worry, mommy," said Little Red Riding Hood, "I'll be careful."</p> <p>But when Little Red Riding Hood noticed some lovely flowers in the woods, she forgot her promise to her mother. She picked a few, watched the butterflies flit about for awhile, listened to the frogs croaking and then picked a few more.</p>
	<p>Little Red Riding Hood was enjoying the warm summer day so much, that she didn't notice a dark shadow approaching out of the forest behind her...</p> <p>Suddenly, the wolf appeared beside her.</p> <p>"What are you doing out here, little girl?" the wolf asked in a voice as friendly as he could muster.</p> <p>"I'm on my way to see my Grandma who lives through the forest, near the brook," Little Red Riding Hood replied.</p>
	<p>Then she realized how late she was and quickly excused herself, rushing down the path to her Grandma's house.</p> <p>The wolf, in the meantime, took a shortcut...</p> <p>The wolf, a little out of breath from running, arrived at Grandma's and knocked lightly at the door.</p> <p>"Oh thank goodness dear! Come in, come in! I was worried sick that something had happened to you in the forest," said Grandma thinking that the knock was her granddaughter.</p>
	<p>The wolf let himself in. Poor Granny did not have time to say another word, before the wolf gobbled her up!</p> <p>The wolf let out a satisfied burp, and then poked through Granny's wardrobe to find a nightgown that he liked. He added a frilly sleeping cap, and for good measure, dabbed some of Granny's perfume behind his pointy ears.</p> <p>A few minutes later, Red Riding Hood knocked on the door. The wolf jumped into bed and pulled the covers over his nose. "Who is it?" he called in a cackly voice.</p>
	<p>"It's me, Little Red Riding Hood."</p> <p>"Oh how lovely! Do come in, my dear," croaked the wolf.</p> <p>When Little Red Riding Hood entered the little cottage, she could scarcely recognize her Grandmother.</p> <p>"Grandmother! Your voice sounds so odd. Is something the matter?" she asked.</p>
	<p>"Oh, I just have touch of a cold," squeaked the wolf adding a cough at the end to prove the point.</p> <p>"But Grandmother! What big ears you have," said Little Red Riding Hood as she edged closer to the bed.</p> <p>"The better to hear you with, my dear," replied the wolf.</p> <p>"But Grandmother! What big eyes you have," said Little Red Riding Hood.</p> <p>"The better to see you with, my dear," replied the wolf.</p>

	<p>"But Grandmother! What big teeth you have," said Little Red Riding Hood her voice quivering slightly.</p> <p>"The better to eat you with, my dear," roared the wolf and he leapt out of the bed and began to chase the little girl.</p> <p>Almost too late, Little Red Riding Hood realized that the person in the bed was not her Grandmother, but a hungry wolf.</p> <p>She ran across the room and through the door, shouting, "Help! Wolf!" as loudly as she could.</p> <p>A woodsman who was chopping logs nearby heard her cry and ran towards the cottage as fast as he could.</p>
	<p>He grabbed the wolf and made him spit out the poor Grandmother who was a bit frazzled by the whole experience, but still in one piece.</p> <p>"Oh Grandma, I was so scared!" sobbed Little Red Riding Hood, "I'll never speak to strangers or dawdle in the forest again."</p> <p>"There, there, child. You've learned an important lesson. Thank goodness you shouted loud enough for this kind woodsman to hear you!"</p> <p>The woodsman knocked out the wolf and carried him deep into the forest where he wouldn't bother people any longer.</p> <p>Little Red Riding Hood and her Grandmother had a nice lunch and a long chat.</p>

Levels of Questioning:

Objective:

- To use the answers to these questions to help create your essay paper.

Once you have actively read your story you should be able to come up with at least THREE substantial questions for each level (ideally you come up with these questions WHILE reading)– and each question should lead to a substantial answer – that means the response that requires more than a mere yes or no short answer response. Always go into detail and explain WHY.

READ below and notice that each one has a question - and for each one you would find a quote that substantiates your RESPONSE to the question (not the question).

Literal:

Write questions that have correct answers, which may be found in the text. Write down all the facts, characters, locations and sequential events. This can include the plot and the themes, setting, turning points, anything that can be drawn directly from the text of the story and is factual.

Example: Whom did Little Red Riding Hood's mother send her to meet?

For Essay: Find quote/s that proves your response.

Inferential:

Write questions and answers, which require the reader to make an "educated guess" or prediction/s about what is going to happen in the story or why something is so. Write down all the possibilities that can be inferred (predicted or guessed) while reading the story - ABOUT the plot, about the characters, about anything that you have to GUESS what might happen next, or in the conclusion. If you are reading a novel - (for your final project) then at the end of each chapter write on a large post-it-note all the things you can GUESS might happen in the story, or to the characters.

Example: Do you think Little Red Riding Hood will make it to her grandmother's house safely? Why, or why not?

For Essay: Find quote/s that supports why you guessed/predicted what you did and why you concluded what you did.

Appreciative:

Write questions and answers that require the reader to make a personal response to a character or situation in the story or to the author's purpose. Write all possible items to be appreciated from YOUR point of view - if you lived this story or the lives of these characters. How would you (I) feel if... is the basic question. This is the ONE paragraph that you can use the "I" statement.

Example: How would you feel if you were sent off into the woods alone? EXPLAIN your answer.

For Essay: Find quote/s that supports or led you to why you thought what you did.

Critique:

Write questions and answers that require the reader to make a judgment about the author's use of language, style of writing, execution of the text, or the author's ideas in the text. Recognize the value of the authors use of language and descriptions, images, style and values of story concepts, look at the authors work of writing the story - did they tell a good story - why or why not? Did the author use descriptive words? or plain flat language? Did they make you SEE the scenes they wrote in your mind because they were so descriptive? This is where you JUDGE the author and how well they wrote the story.

Example: Did the author write the story so that it is relatable for kids/adults? What style or form did the author write in, was the language authentic, and was the description rich? EXPLAIN your answer.

For Essay: Find quote/s that demonstrates and supports what you describe (good or bad) about the authors writing, style, use of language, or authenticity.

Evaluative:

Write questions and answers that require the reader to make a judgment about an aspect of the story such as a character's actions. Write all possible judgments about characters and issues within story - we judge people around us everyday. JUDGE the characters as if you knew them as if they were real. Is someone cranky? or Mean? Justified? Or self-righteous? or stuck-up? or a bully? Judge the characters.

Example: Do you think it was right for Little Red Riding Hood's mother to send her off into the woods alone? Why or why not?

For Essay: Find quote/s that demonstrates or supports the judgment, what a character/s said or did that made you judge them however you did.

Essential:

Write questions and answers that requires the reader to consider an issue that is addressed in the story "outside" of the story. Bring the concepts of the story to the world today, can this happen today, does it? Write down all the possible world issues that the story discusses or implies.

Every story has a theme, apply the themes to the world today.

Example: How old should a child be before he or she is allowed to go out alone? What parameters would you set for the child? Explain your answer.

For Essay: Find quote/s from text or possibly outside sources that demonstrates and support your statements – link the concepts of the story to the world today and situations happening today (or that could happen).

Vocabulary Building:

Find definitions and synonyms for ALL uncertain, unclear, or unknown words. Use the word in a sentence that allows the sentence to explain the word's meaning. Example: Today I felt such a *catharsis* after watching that movie, my tension was released and I had a good cry as I went from watching the couple on screen to remembering my own situation it was liberating. Definition: means "cleansing" or "purging". Synonyms: purification, elimination, renewal. (Also rewrite in original context and create graphic).

Judy Crozier, El Camino College Compton Center – University of Montana, Helena College adapted from Mt. Sac.

How to build a paper from the levels:

Each level, with the exception of literal, becomes a paragraph. Literal is not a paragraph because it contains just the facts and is used throughout the entire paper. You open your paper with an intro paragraph that introduces the title, author and summary of the story as well as introduces your readers to an overview of the levels that you will be discussing. This opening paragraph should contain a thesis that can be tied to the theme of the story and possibly a theme you thread throughout the levels. For *Little Red Riding Hood* a theme could be lessons learned or kids listening and each of your levels could thread that theme through.

You can place the levels in any order but to your reader (me) it needs to be very clear which level you are writing in. You want to do this without using conversation – *I am writing in the level of...* Please see the three sample papers also in assignment and download section. Here is the standard order outline.

1. Intro paragraph
2. Inferential paragraph
3. Appreciative paragraph
4. Critique paragraph
5. Evaluative paragraph
6. Essential paragraph
7. Conclusion paragraph

While you may write up to three questions for each level – you do not have to use all three in your paper. You need only make ONE substantial point per paragraph (with quote to support). And the questions – while they can be present in the outline and rough draft should be completely removed from the final paper.