

A Closer Look.

MARK THE TEXT

This strategy can help:

- increase engagement with the text
- develop analysis & questioning skills
- identify new vocabulary

When literature is quickly read but not understood, it helps to slow down the reader by suggesting she make a short comment about the information in each paragraph or on each page. These "notes" remind the reader of new knowledge, interesting vocabulary, unexpected/confusing information, or a clarification. It is important that the reader return to these highlights to process the original text. It is the act of reviewing, discussing, and working with this extracted information that empowers the reader and improves comprehension.

Either in the margin of a handout or book [if you are not squeamish about writing in books], encourage your reader to jot down a main point, an unusual word, a question or an "ah-ha" provided in that paragraph. If the reader is involved in a longer text, the strategy can be used at the beginning, middle, and end of a page instead of at every paragraph. Your reader can also use sticky notes or a separate notebook to record the points of interest he finds along his reading journey. This strategy can be helpful for any reader who becomes frustrated trying to understand written information, particularly with nonfiction text.

Guidance:

G: Guide

R: Reader

G: When you finish reading your paragraph, write a quick thought on your sticky note.

R: I've written that I think Ponyboy reminds me of my cousin, Sam.

G: When you review today's notes, you might want to write a paragraph explaining the similarities between Ponyboy and Sam.

G: What is something interesting you read?

R: When I looked back at my comments from Monday, I remembered I was curious about something called "Circle Justice".

G: What could you do to learn more about "Circle Justice"?

G: Write down any new words that you either don't understand or you would like to use in one of your own stories. We can look up their definitions later so you will know their meanings.

G: Is there anything confusing happening in the story?

R: I thought submarines were invented in the early 1900s. When I was going over my notes from last week, I was reminded that the book I was reading about the Civil War mentioned a submarine. That doesn't seem right.

G: How can you clear up your confusion?

Sample Notes - Nonfiction:

- Pompeii was built near the volcano, Vesuvius.
- Pumice? Pyroclastic? Archeology?
- Why didn't everyone escape on boats?
- Reading about the positions of the bodies helps me realize the eruption happened so fast that escape was impossible for many residents.

Sample Notes - Fiction:

- Jesse gives Leslie the puppy when they meet in Terabithia.
- Dumbfounded? Grove? Realm?
- Why is it a bad idea for Leslie to sit at the back of the school bus?
- I get it now. Jesse has no idea how to be a "ruler" and the books will give him some ideas.