

The Main Events

PLOT AND CONFLICT

• FICTION • DRAMA • MEDIA • INFORMATIONAL TEXT • POETRY



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What Are Life's Big Questions?

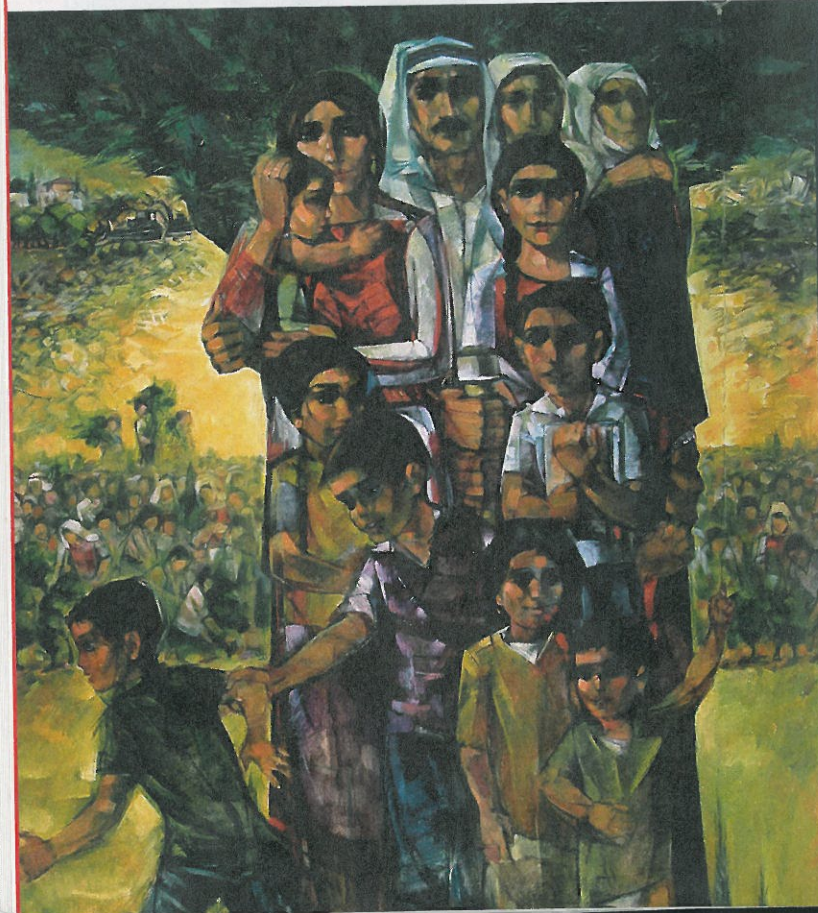
We never stop searching for answers to life's big questions. Asking questions such as the ones shown here is our way of making sense of who we are, where we're going, and how we fit into the world. While our own experiences can guide us toward answers, good literature can also help. Through reading, writing, and talking about literature, we can explore the big questions in life and gain meaningful insights into our own lives and the world.

What does it mean to BELONG?

Humans are naturally social beings. We create groups—families, friends, communities—that bind us together. But what happens when you're on the outside of a group and can't find a way in? Explore the meaning of belonging through the writing of Naomi Shihab Nye, Daniel Keyes, David Sedaris, and others. Then ask yourself: Is it always good to belong?

Why does the PAST matter?

There's an old saying: "History repeats itself"—in other words, everything that happens in the world is bound to happen again. If that's the case, then we can look to the past to help us understand conflicts and issues that challenge us in the present. In this book, you'll read about the Civil War, Paul Revere, and Harriet Tubman. Find out what we can still learn from them all these years later.



Are people basically GOOD?

In her diary, Anne Frank wrote: "... I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart." This sentiment is surprising, given that Anne was one of the millions of Jews who lost their lives in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. Today, we might find ourselves asking this same question. After all, war and crime are still facts of life. What do you think? Are people really good?



What's really IMPORTANT?

Some objects, such as flashy cars and diamonds, are worth a lot of money. But then there are other things—a photograph or a beautiful sunset, for instance—that are priceless. Authors such as Sandra Cisneros, Walter Dean Myers, and Joseph Bruchac all write about the things people treasure most. Reading about what others value can help you decide for yourself what's really important to you.



Exploring Text Types

Throughout history, people have turned to everything from ancient cave walls, fragile paper manuscripts, and up-to-the-minute blogs in search of answers to life's big questions. Exploring literature of all types can help you think about these questions—and answers—in new and exciting ways.

The Genres

What draws you to the books you read or the movies you see? Most likely, their ideas or topics appeal to you. Family relationships, competition between friends, impossible decisions—powerful ideas and topics such as these are at the heart of many literary and nonfiction texts. In fact, traditional literature and nonfiction—whether it comes from the first part of the 20th century or as far back as a centuries-old oral tradition—also address ideas and topics that are relevant to you in today's world.

In this book, you'll explore ideas in a variety of genres, or categories, of text. You'll also consider the ideas in popular media forms, such as ads and movies. First, though, familiarize yourself with the characteristics of each genre.

GENRES AT A GLANCE



STORIES

Stories are narratives about made-up events and characters.

- short stories
- novels
- novellas
- graphic novels



POETRY

Poetry is a type of literature in which words are chosen and arranged in a precise way to create certain sounds and meanings.

- odes
- sonnets
- narrative poems
- lyric poems



DRAMA

Drama is meant to be performed. Characters and conflicts are developed through dialogue and action.

- comedies
- radio plays
- historical dramas



NONFICTION

Nonfiction is writing that tells about real people, events, and places.

- autobiographies
- essays
- news articles
- biographies
- speeches
- feature articles

TYPES OF MEDIA



Media refers to forms of communication that reach large numbers of people.

- TV shows
- advertising
- Web sites



STORIES

Does fiction mean “fake”? Some authors dream up every element of a story, from the setting to the plot and the characters. Others may be inspired by real events and people, and build a story around them. Whether it's an original product of an author's imagination or an idea “ripped straight from the headlines,” all good fiction guarantees a stirring **plot**, a vivid **setting**, and compelling **characters**. Most stories also have **themes**, or larger messages about life. Fiction usually takes one of three forms.

- A **short story** often focuses on a single event or incident. Most stories are short enough to be read without taking a break.
- A **novel** is a longer work of fiction that weaves together many different events, storylines, and characters.
- A **novella** is generally longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. Novellas usually feature a limited number of characters.

Read the Model In the novel *Slam!*, Greg Harris has just transferred from a high school in Harlem to a more academically challenging school for the arts. At his old school, Greg was the star of his basketball team. Will he still shine on the court now that he's on unfamiliar ground? As you read this excerpt, notice how Greg describes his athletic abilities. In what ways does his attitude help you to understand the idea of self-confidence?

from

SLAM!



Novel by **Walter Dean Myers**

Basketball is my thing. I can hoop. Case closed. I'm six four and I got the moves, the eye, and the heart. You can take my game to the bank and wait around for the interest. With me it's not like playing a game, it's like the only time I'm being for real. Bringing the ball down the court makes me feel like a bird that just learned to fly. I see my guys moving down in front of me and everything feels and looks right. Patterns come up and a small buzz comes into my head that starts to build up and I know it won't end until the ball swishes through the net. If somebody starts messing with my game it's like they're getting into my head. But if I've got the ball it's okay, because I can take care of the situation. That's the word and I know it the same way I know my tag, Slam. Yeah, that's it. Slam. But without the ball, without the floorboards under my feet, without the mid-court line that takes me halfway home, you can get to me.

So when Mr. Tate, the principal at my new school, started talking about me laying low for the season until I got my grades together I was like seriously turned out. The night after he talked to my moms I couldn't sleep. It wasn't the hissing of the radiator or my little brother talking in his sleep in the other bed, it was the idea of not playing ball that was bouncing crazylike through my head.

LITERARY TERMS FOR STORIES

- plot
- conflict
- character
- setting
- theme
- narrator
- point of view

Close Read

1. Characters and conflicts are two key elements of good stories. Which characters are introduced in this excerpt? What is Greg's conflict?
2. **Exploring a Big Question** Greg's confidence springs from his “game.” Other than athletic ability, what else can be a source of self-confidence?

snow
softly
swirls

POETRY

"Poetry: the best words in the best order." This is how British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge summed up the goal and the struggle of writing poetry. Poets search for the perfect words and then arrange them in precise ways to achieve specific effects. The result can be both ear-catching and unforgettable.

As you know, poetry looks different on the page than fiction or nonfiction. Poems are made up of **lines**, which are often arranged into groups called **stanzas**. In some poems, the lines and stanzas reflect the rules of a particular form, such as a haiku or a sonnet. In others, there is no recognizable form; instead, the poet lets the ideas drive what the poem looks like on the page.

In poetry, sounds and language are just as important as form. Does the poem have a brisk **rhythm** or singsong **rhymes**? What sensory details help readers clearly picture what's being described? Every choice a poet makes can affect the overall meaning and sound of the poem.

Read the Model You already know what it's like to be a teenager—but how about the parent of one? As you read this poem, think about relationships, especially between parents and teenagers.

Teenagers

Poem by Pat Mora

One day they disappear
into their rooms.
Doors and lips shut
and we become strangers
5 in our own home.

I pace the hall, hear whispers,
a code I knew but can't remember,
mouthed by mouths I taught to speak.

10 Years later the door opens.
I see faces I once held,
open as sunflowers in my hands. I see
familiar skin now stretched on long bodies
that move past me
glowing almost like pearls.



LITERARY TERMS FOR POETRY

- form
- line
- stanza
- speaker
- rhyme
- rhythm
- sound devices
- imagery

Close Read

1. What specific characteristics tell you that "Teenagers" is a poem, rather than a work of fiction?
2. **Exploring a Big Question** According to this poem, how do parents view their relationships with their teenaged children? How might teenagers' views differ?



DRAMA

You may use the term *drama* in everyday speech to mean something or somebody acting in a dramatic way (as in, "What a drama queen!"). In literature, though, a **drama** is any work that is written to be performed on a stage. A drama has all the elements of good fiction—plot, characters, setting, and theme. Unlike a work of fiction, however, a drama is usually divided into **scenes**, with several scenes grouped into **acts**.

A drama is primarily written as **dialogue** between characters. The playwright, or author, describes the setting, characters' movements, and props as **stage directions**, written in *italics* throughout the play. These notes represent the playwright's vision of the performance. However, a great deal is left to the imagination of the director, the actors, and readers.

Read the Model This drama takes place in Brooklyn in 1937. Fourteen-year-old Eugene has just discovered that his oldest brother, Stanley, is leaving home. Stanley is ashamed because he gambled away his paycheck, which the family relies on to make ends meet. In this excerpt, Eugene offers Stanley "his life savings" for train fare. As you read, consider what admiration means.

from *Brighton Beach Memoirs*

Drama by Neil Simon

Eugene. You're leaving home?

Stanley. When I'm gone, you tell Aunt Blanche what happened to my salary. Then she'll know why Mom was so angry. Tell her please not to leave, because it was all my fault, not Mom's. Will you do that?

(*He takes the coins out of the cigar box*)

Eugene. I have eight cents' worth of stamps, if you want that too.

Stanley. Thanks. (*He picks up a small medal*) What's this?

Eugene. The medal you won for the hundred-yard dash two years ago.

Stanley. From the Police Athletic League. I didn't know you still had this.

10 **Eugene.** You gave it to me. You can have it back if you want it.

Stanley. It's not worth anything.

Eugene. It is to me.

LITERARY TERMS FOR DRAMA

- plot
- character
- act
- scene
- stage directions
- dialogue

Close Read

1. How does Eugene feel about Stanley? Cite details from the dialogue and the stage directions to support your answer.
2. **Exploring a Big Question** Think of a person you look up to or admire. If that person made a mistake, would your opinion of him or her change? Why or why not?



NONFICTION

Some works of nonfiction, such as biographies and true-life adventures, read like gripping novels. There's a key difference, though. In nonfiction, the events actually happened, and the characters are real people. Other types of nonfiction—such as news articles, manuals, and directions to a friend's house—are nothing like stories. They are sources you consult for information. Since you read all kinds of nonfiction texts daily, you should know what to expect from them.

TYPE OF NONFICTION	CHARACTERISTICS	
AUTOBIOGRAPHY/ BIOGRAPHY The true story of a person's life, told by that person (autobiography) or by another person (biography)	- Provides details about a person's life - Written from the first-person point of view (autobiography) or from the third-person point of view (biography) - Presents the writer's own version of his or her life (autobiography) or an outside writer's research (biography)	
ESSAY A short work of nonfiction that focuses on a single subject. Common types include reflective, persuasive, and descriptive essays.	- Is intended to share a personal experience, to express feelings, to inform, to entertain, or to persuade - May be written in a formal style, with an academic tone - May be written in an informal style, with a conversational tone	
SPEECH An oral presentation of the ideas, beliefs, or proposals of a speaker	- May be intended to share a personal experience, to express feelings, to inform, to entertain, or to persuade - Relies on powerful language, as well as the speaker's voice and gestures	
NEWS/FEATURE ARTICLES Informative writing in newspapers and magazines. News articles report on recent events. Feature articles offer in-depth coverage of human-interest topics.	- Are primarily intended to inform or entertain - Use headlines, subheadings, photographs, and graphic aids to present information - Strive to be objective and fair	
FUNCTIONAL TEXTS Writing that serves a practical purpose. Types include consumer documents, such as user manuals, and workplace documents, such as résumés.	- Are written to inform a specific audience (for example, employees or consumers) - Often include charts, diagrams, or other helpful graphic aids	

TERMS FOR NONFICTION

- purpose
- text features
- argument
- persuasion

MODEL 1: BIOGRAPHY

As the cofounder and CEO of a major technology corporation, Steve Jobs helped develop some of the first user-friendly personal computers. As you read this excerpt from a biography of Jobs, keep in mind the personal quality of initiative—the ability to take action.

from Steve Jobs: [Thinks Different]

Biography by Ann Brashares

At thirteen, Jobs's interest in electronics was blossoming. One day he was building an electronic counting machine, and he needed some parts. He knew he could get them from Hewlett-Packard, a giant electronics company not far from his house. Jobs looked up the phone number of Bill Hewlett, the cofounder of Hewlett-Packard. Some kids would have been afraid to dial up one of the richest and most important men in California. Not Steve Jobs.

He boldly chatted with Bill Hewlett for twenty minutes, and Hewlett was so impressed and surprised by the young man that he not only gave him the parts he needed but offered him a summer job, too. That phone call taught an early lesson: If you ask for what you want, you often get it.

Close Read

1. How can you tell that this excerpt is from a biography rather than an autobiography?
2. Exploring a Big Question Jobs was a "go-getter" even at the age of 13. What qualities do you think people must have in order to take initiative?

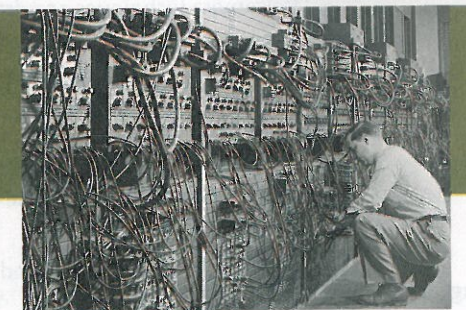
MODEL 2: FEATURE ARTICLE

Did you know that the first computer weighed 30 tons? As you read this excerpt from a feature article on computer history, look for other mind-boggling facts. Also, consider the idea of progress.

WIRELESS EVOLUTION: THANK YOU ENIAC

WAY BACK WHEN, ONE COMPUTER COULD FILL AN ENTIRE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA. TODAY, YOU CAN WEAR ONE ON YOUR BELT LOOP.

by David Santos



Far from a Handheld The first computerized "counting machine" was called ENIAC—Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer. Completed in 1946, covering three walls, standing eight feet high, and weighing 30 tons, ENIAC required 7,468 vacuum tubes and 6,000 manual switches just to get warmed up!

ENIAC could execute thousands of calculations in seconds. However, reprogramming it took a team of people, three days, and lots of patience.

ENIAC's advanced technology, even with its massive shortcomings, was critical in spurring on the decades of computer evolution that followed.

Close Read

1. What characteristics make this article different from the biography you just read?
2. Exploring a Big Question Think about the role technology plays in our society. What are the dangers of technological progress, or is it all positive?



TYPES OF MEDIA

The World Wide Web alerts you to breaking news. A blockbuster movie keeps you on the edge of your seat for two action-packed hours. A clever ad campaign convinces you to buy a product you probably don't need. Media messages are all around you, and they influence your beliefs and actions more than you might realize. That's why it's important to become **media literate**—to learn how to “read” all types of media messages, including the ones shown here.

TERMS FOR MEDIA

- medium
- message
- purpose
- target audience

TYPE OF MEDIA	CHARACTERISTICS	
FEATURE FILMS Motion pictures that use narrative elements to tell stories	• Created for entertainment and to make money • Rely on music, cinematography, sets, and actors to tell interesting stories • Are at least one hour in length	
NEWS MEDIA Accounts of current events in newspapers and magazines, as well as on television, the radio, and the Web	• Designed to inform and entertain viewers • Present information differently in each medium (TV, Web, print) • Can include bias and inaccuracies, so must be closely examined	
TV SHOWS Programs broadcast on television, including dramas, sitcoms, talk shows, documentaries, and reality shows	• Are usually created to entertain or inform • Are sponsored by advertisers who pay to market their products during commercial breaks • Use camera techniques and dramatic music to make stories more compelling • Typically last for a half hour or an hour	
ADVERTISING Paid promotion of products, services, candidates, or public service messages using print, electronic, and broadcast media	• Is designed to persuade a target audience to buy a product, use a service, or agree with an idea • Uses visuals, sound effects, and actors to persuade viewers • Is presented when and where the target audience is likely to see it	
WEB SITES Collections of “pages” on the World Wide Web. Users navigate to pages by clicking menus or hyperlinks.	• Present information through text, graphics, audio, video, animation, and interactive features • Require careful evaluation, as most Web sites are not checked for credibility	

Literature and Nonfiction Strategies



Record your reactions and observations in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1 Ask the Right Questions

It's one thing to “get through” a text but another to really enjoy and understand it. To get the most from what you read, make sure you ask the right questions.

Where to Look

Text Analysis Workshops
(at the beginning of every unit)

Side notes and discussion questions

Analysis Frames

Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML8-11



What You'll Find

Interactive practice models and Close Read questions

Questions (throughout and following each selection) that focus on the analysis of literary and nonfiction elements

Guided questions for analyzing different genres of text

2 Make Connections

The conflicts and themes in literature can help you make sense of your own life. Use these tips to make connections.

- **Big Questions** Take time to think about how the big questions in this book are relevant to your life. For example, where do you think confidence comes from? Has someone you admire ever disappointed you?
- **Discussion/Journaling** Jot down your thoughts and opinions as you read, or share them with others. You might want to record
 - conflicts or events that you can relate to
 - characters who remind you of people you know
 - ideas you strongly agree or disagree with

3 Record Your Reactions

Organize your questions, thoughts, and analysis by writing them down. Experiment with different formats to find out which works best for you.

JOURNAL

Pause as you read to record your impressions, predictions, or questions.

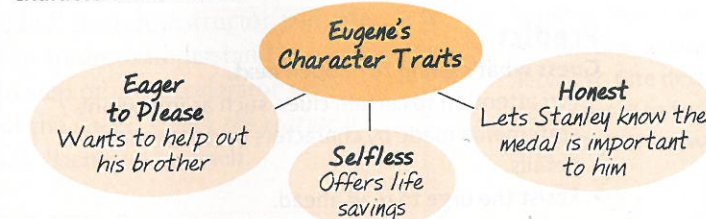
Brighton Beach Memoirs

I wonder how Stanley's family will react when he leaves home.

I predict that Eugene will have a hard time dealing with his brother's absence.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

After reading, create a graphic organizer to help you analyze characters and events.



Becoming an Active Reader

Are you sometimes tempted to race through your reading just to get it done? Have you ever skipped ahead a few scenes or chapters to find out what happens? While you might save time, you probably won't enjoy the experience as much. Reading actively means taking the time to ask questions, clarify, and connect to what you're reading, whether it's a message-board posting, a novel, or even a TV drama. Use these skills and strategies to stay engaged in the process.

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVE READING

Preview

Become familiar with the text before you start to read.

- Look at the title, the graphics, and subheadings.
- Skim the first paragraph to get a feel for what the text is about.

Set a Purpose

Know why you are reading.

- Ask: Am I reading for pure entertainment, information, or another reason?
- Think about how your purpose affects your approach. Should you take notes or sit back and enjoy?

Connect

Find something you can personally relate to.

- Consider whether any characters remind you of people in your life.
- Ask: If I were in this situation, would I react differently?

Use Prior Knowledge

Recall what you already know about a topic.

- Before reading, jot down what you already know.
- As you read, connect what you know to what you are learning.

Predict

Guess what's going to happen next.

- Pay attention to certain clues, such as important statements made by characters or repeated details.
- Resist the urge to read ahead.
- Ask: Was my prediction on target, or did I miss the mark?

Visualize

Get a clear mental picture of what is being described.

- Notice the author's description of characters, settings, and events.
- Use these descriptions to help you "see" what's happening like a movie in your mind.

Monitor

Check your own understanding.

- Ask **questions** like, What just happened? Why did the character do that?
- **Clarify** your understanding by rereading confusing parts.
- **Evaluate** yourself as a reader. Ask: How well am I understanding this?

Make Inferences

Make logical guesses by considering the text and your own experiences.

- Record specific details in the text about characters and events.
- Use common sense and your own experiences to help you "read between the lines."

Details in "The Winter Hibiscus"	What I Know	My Inference
Saeng is nervous about passing the driver's test.	It's easy to make mistakes when you're nervous.	Saeng's nerves probably interfered with her judgment during the test.

MODEL: SHORT STORY

This story is about a 16-year-old girl named Saeng, who has moved with her family from Laos to the United States. The time has come for Saeng to take her driver's test. The stakes are high because Saeng's family is counting on her to be their sole driver. In this excerpt, David, a fellow classmate, is letting Saeng borrow his car to take the exam. As you read, use the **Close Read** questions to practice the skills and strategies you just learned.

from *The Winter Hibiscus*

Short story by Minfong Ho

"Ready?" David asked, eyebrow arched quizzically as he handed her his car keys.

Saeng nodded. Her mouth suddenly felt dry, and she licked her lips.

"Don't forget: Step on the gas real gently. You don't want to jerk the car forward the way you did last time," David said with a grin.

"I won't," Saeng said, and managed a smile.

Another car drove up, and the test instructor stepped out of it and onto the curb in front of them. He was a pale, overweight man whose thick lips jutted out from behind a bushy moustache. On his paunch¹ was balanced a clipboard, which he was busy marking.

Finally he looked up and saw Saeng. "Miss Saeng Panouvong?" he asked, slurring the name so much that Saeng did not recognize it as her own until she felt David nudge her slightly.

"Y—yes, sir," Saeng answered.

"Your turn. Get in."

Then Saeng was behind the wheel, the paunchy man seated next to her, clipboard on his lap.

"Drive to the end of the street and take a right," the test instructor said. He spoke in a low, bored staccato² that Saeng had to strain to understand.

Obediently, she started up the car, careful to step on the accelerator very slowly, and eased the car out into the middle of the street. *Check the rearview mirror, make the hand gestures, take a deep breath*, Saeng told herself.

1. **paunch**: a protruding belly.

2. **staccato**: short, crisp sounds, or way of speaking.

Close Read

1. **Make Inferences** Given David's comments in lines 4–5, what can you infer about Saeng and David's relationship?

2. **Monitor** How can you tell that Saeng is nervous? Cite details from lines 1–22 to support your answer.