CLOSE READING vs. BIG PICTURE READING
High School English Worksheet

What Is Close Reading?

Close reading means carefully examining a text to understand its specific details, word choices, structure, evidence, and deeper meanings.

When close reading, readers ask:

- What specific words stand out?
- What evidence does the author provide?
- Why did the author choose this particular word or phrase?
- What literary techniques are being used?
- What can I infer from the details?
- How does the author's language affect the meaning or tone?

What Is Big Picture Reading?

Big picture reading means stepping back to understand the overall meaning, purpose, main idea, themes, and message of a text.

When reading for the big picture, readers ask:

- What is the text mostly about?
- What is the author's main purpose?
- What is the central idea?
- What is the overall theme or message?
- How do the major ideas connect?

Part I: Multiple Choice

1. Which statement best describes **close reading**?

A. Reading only the title and first paragraph
B. Carefully analyzing specific details and language
C. Skimming a text as quickly as possible
D. Ignoring unfamiliar words

2. Which question is most appropriate for **big picture reading**?

A. Why did the author use the word "storm" instead of "rain"?
B. What is the overall message of the passage?
C. What literary device is used in line 8?
D. What does the third sentence imply?

3. Which question is most appropriate for **close reading**?

A. What is the text generally about?
B. What is the author's overall purpose?
C. How does the author's use of repetition emphasize the character's emotions?
D. What is the main topic?

4. A student examines three specific words that create a threatening tone. What type of reading is the student practicing?

A. Big picture reading
B. Close reading
C. Predictive reading
D. Recreational reading

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5. A student finishes a chapter and explains how the events contribute to the novel's overall theme. This is an example of:

A. Close reading
B. Big picture reading
C. Word study
D. Editing

6. Why is close reading important?

A. It helps readers notice details that support deeper understanding.
B. It allows readers to skip difficult sections.
C. It focuses only on the title.
D. It eliminates the need to understand the main idea.

7. Why is big picture reading important?

A. It helps readers understand how individual details contribute to the overall meaning.
B. It requires readers to memorize every sentence.
C. It focuses only on vocabulary.
D. It prevents readers from making connections.

8. Which activity is an example of **close reading**?

A. Identifying the central theme of an entire novel
B. Examining the author's use of imagery in one paragraph
C. Summarizing the entire book in one sentence
D. Identifying the main topic of an article

9. Which activity is an example of **big picture reading**?

A. Analyzing one metaphor
B. Examining a character's specific word choice
C. Determining the author's overall message
D. Studying the punctuation in one sentence

10. Which statement about close reading and big picture reading is TRUE?

A. Readers should use only one method.
B. Close reading is more important than big picture reading.
C. Big picture reading should never involve details.
D. Both approaches can work together to improve understanding.

Part II: Close Reading or Big Picture?

Directions: Write **C** for **Close Reading** or **B** for **Big Picture Reading**.

11. _____ What is the author's main message?
12. _____ Why does the author repeat the same phrase several times?
13. _____ What is the central theme of the story?
14. _____ What does the metaphor in paragraph four suggest?
15. _____ How does the ending connect to the events throughout the story?
16. _____ What specific details reveal that the character is nervous?
17. _____ What is the author's overall purpose?
18. _____ Why did the author choose this particular word?
19. _____ How do the major ideas in the article connect?
20. _____ What effect does the author's use of short sentences have on the tone?

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Part III: Read and Analyze

Directions: Read the passage below and answer the questions.

Passage

The rain had stopped, but the streets remained dark and shining beneath the streetlights. Marcus stood outside the empty train station, watching drops of water slide slowly down the glass doors. He checked his phone again. No messages. No missed calls.

For weeks, he had imagined this moment. He had pictured himself walking through those doors, boarding the train, and leaving the town behind. Yet now that the moment had arrived, his feet seemed unwilling to move.

Marcus looked back at the quiet street. The old bookstore was still there. So was the café where he had spent countless afternoons with his friends. Everything looked ordinary, but nothing felt ordinary anymore.

He took a deep breath, picked up his suitcase, and walked toward the station.

21. What is the big picture of the passage?

A. Marcus is waiting for a friend at a train station.
B. Marcus is preparing to leave his familiar life behind, but he feels uncertain about the change.
C. Marcus is looking for a bookstore.
D. Marcus is upset because his phone is broken.

22. Which detail is most important to understanding Marcus's feelings?

A. The streets are wet.
B. The train station has glass doors.
C. His feet seem unwilling to move even though he planned to leave.
D. The bookstore is still open.

23. The phrase **"nothing felt ordinary anymore"** suggests that:

A. the town had physically changed
B. Marcus's feelings about the familiar places had changed
C. the weather was unusual
D. Marcus had never visited the town before

24. Which question requires **close reading**?

A. What is the passage mainly about?
B. What is the overall conflict?
C. What does the description of the rain and darkness suggest about Marcus's mood?
D. What happens at the end?

25. Which question requires **big picture reading**?

A. Why does the author mention Marcus checking his phone?
B. What does "unwilling to move" reveal about Marcus?
C. What is the overall conflict Marcus is experiencing?
D. Why does the author describe the streets as "dark and shining"?

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