

Steps for Reading Informational Text

Toolkit # _____

Write responses in the margins of the text as you complete each of the following steps:

1. **CONTEXT** - Who is the speaker? What is the occasion? (ie. Where, when and why is the speech being given?) Who is the intended audience?
2. **NUMBER the Paragraphs**
3. **DEFINITIONS** - Look up any words you do not know and record their meanings in the margins of the article.
4. **ANNOTATE**
 - Place boxes around names of people and organizations and label who they are
 - Circle key terms
 - Underline the author's claims
5. **CHUNK the Text** - Divide the text up into chunks based on which parts of the text seem to go together and identify the content and function

Content (what it says)

- For each chunk, write 1 sentence that summarizes the meaning of the WHOLE chunk.

Function (the part of a text + how it does its job)

- For each chunk, identify the part of the text and how that part does its job

Parts of a Text

Attention Getter
Main Idea (always opinion)
Transitions
Background Information
Major sub-points or reasons
Addresses the Opposition

How the Part Does Its Job

Evidence: Facts, Expert Opinion & Narrative
Opinion & commentary
Interprets evidence
Compare / contrast
Problem /solution
Cause /Effect
Develops the Definition of a Concept
Call to Action

6. **TOPICS** - What topics does the speech address? (ie. freedom, responsibility. etc.)
7. **MAIN IDEA**
 - What is the main idea of the speech? (ie. What is the overall **message** the author is trying to convey about these topics to his audience?)

8. STYLISTIC DEVICES

Identify the stylistic devices below in the article that are used. Circle words and phrases connected to the stylistic device and label which stylistic device is being used. In the margins, make notes about how the stylistic device contributes to the main idea. Consider choosing specific words connected to the stylistic device and brainstorming connotations.

- Opposites / Contrasting language (example: images / words related to day and night)
- Diction (ie. word choice)
 - Connotations & Denotations
 - Formal vs. informal language (ie. everyday language)
- Figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.)
- Symbols
- Repetition (words, sounds, ideas)
- Absolutes (use of words like never, always, only, every, just, none, must, all, etc.)
- Imagery & Sensory language
 - specific words related to our sense of smell, sound, sight, touch or taste
- Sentence length
- Sentence structure
 - i. Rhythm (This is often created by using parallel structure, which is a repeated grammatical structure. Example: I like walking *pink* dogs, snuggling *blue* cats, and eating *orange* pigs.)
- Punctuation - colons, dashes, ellipsis (3 dots), exclamation points, question marks, parenthesis and brackets, quotation marks, etc.
- Allusion
- Alliteration
- Rhetorical questions (questions that are not intended to be answered but which hint the answer)

9. ETHOS, PATHOS & LOGOS

- Highlight or underline portions of the text that are examples of ethos, pathos and logos and label.
 - Choose one type of appeal (ethos, pathos or logos) and for each example in the text, answer the corresponding questions below.
- a. Ethos – What does the author say to get his audience to trust and relate to him? Tip: think about who the audience is.
 - i. Consider an appeal called plain folks appeal (“I’m just like everyone else”). Why might the author want or not want to use this appeal? How does the author wish to be viewed by his / her audience?
 - b. Pathos – What does the author say to stir emotion in his audience? What emotions does he want his audience to feel?
 - c. Logos – What logical arguments does the author present?

