

Contents

Introduction	5
Teaching Routine for Close Reading and Text Marking	9
National Curriculum Correlation	10
Comprehension Skill Summary Cards	11

Texts and Questions

Character

.....

1 The Earmuffs (560L)	Realistic Fiction	14
2 The Fastest Kid in Kalamazoo (860L)	Media Story	16

Point of View

.....

3 Community Vegetable Garden (790L)	Urban Story	18
4 A Sofa Speaks Out (820L)	Humorous Story	20

Setting/Mood

.....

5 Supermoon (700L)	Descriptive Story	22
6 At Housesteads (870L)	Cultural Story	24

Key Events & Details

.....

7 Two Hands on the Paddle (680L)	Adventure Story	26
8 Sea Battle (740L)	Fantasy	28

Sequence of Events

9	More Disgusting Broccoli Pie, Please (N/A)	Poem	30
10	The Dove and the Ant (840L)	Fable	32

Conflict & Resolution

11	Customer Service (780L)	Technology Story	34
12	Edenton Protest (930L)	Historical Fiction	36

Context Clues

13	Garage Band (740L)	Music Story	38
14	The Mysterious Jackalope (910L)	Cowboy Legend	40

Compare & Contrast

15	Kitchen Kids (820L)	Food Story	42
16	July at the Farm (620L)	Holiday Story	44

Make Inferences

17	Artist in the Corner (780L)	Art Story	46
18	One of a Kind (900L)	Character Sketch	48

Summarise

19	In the Beginning ... (630L)	Creation Myth	50
20	Cruise Walking (870L)	Family Story	52

Answers	54
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Introduction

Texts For Close Reading and Deep Comprehension

Close reading involves careful study of a short text passage to build a deep, critical understanding of the text. By developing children's comprehension and higher-order thinking skills, you can help them make sense of the world.

"A significant body of research links the close reading of complex text – whether the student is a struggling reader or advanced – to significant gains in reading proficiency, and finds close reading to be a key component of college and career readiness."
(Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2012, p7)

Reading and Re-Reading For Different Purposes

The texts in *Close Reading* are carefully selected and deliberately short. This focuses children on purposeful reading, re-reading and responding. They learn about the topic through rich vocabulary development and deep comprehension.



Children re-read and analyse the text through questioning to explore:

- text structure and features
- key ideas and details
- connections/conclusions
- predictions/inferences
- words and phrases in context.

Children actively respond to the text using:

- higher-order thinking skills
- paired discussion
- written responses.

Text Marking: A Powerful Active-Reading Strategy

To improve their comprehension of literary texts, children must actively engage with the material. Careful and consistent text marking by hand is one valuable way to accomplish this. The true goal of teaching text marking is to help children internalise an effective close-reading strategy, not to have them show how many marks they can make on a page. Text-marking skills are encouraged in each passage.

The Earmuffs

Read the realistic fiction.

Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

The shopping centre car park was so congested that Carolyn had to park far from the entrance. She didn't object; it was a beautiful day and she enjoyed walking. But when she got out of her car, some old earmuffs changed her entire day.

The earmuffs were lying on the ground, near a discarded towel, not half a metre away. They seemed to wriggle, though it was a calm day. As Carolyn approached for a closer look, the earmuffs moved. Then they rolled over and squeaked the tiniest squeak.

Of course, these weren't earmuffs – they were two tiny kittens! As Carolyn bent to inspect them, the towel moved and two more tiny kittens wiggled out. Each was about the size of an orange. "Oh, you sweet babies!" she cooed. "Good thing I'm a curious person!"

As an animal lover, Carolyn sprang into action. She carefully placed the kittens on the back seat of her car, on top of her cloth shopping bag, and drove straight home. There, she put the kittens in a clean basket.

"Look at these tiny orphans, Jake," she told her son. "Please, go online to learn about caring for newborn kittens while I call the vet."

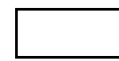


Text Marking

Identify who the story is about.



Circle the main character.



Box the minor character.



Underline three details about the main character.



Underline one detail about the minor character.

The Earmuffs

▶ Answer each question. Give details from the realistic story.

1 Why might a car park become **congested** (paragraph 1)?

- ▶ A It's a very cold day.
- ▶ B Many people have come to shop.
- ▶ C It is too far from the shops.
- ▶ D People park where they aren't supposed to.

What helped you answer? _____

2 Which best summarises the theme of this story?

- ▶ A Anger
- ▶ B Courage
- ▶ C Kindness
- ▶ D Wisdom

What helped you answer? _____

3 Summarise how a pair of earmuffs changed Carolyn's day.

4 Write a brief character sketch of Carolyn, using details from the story.

1 Character

Name _____ Date _____

The Earmuffs

Read the realistic fiction. Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

The shopping centre car park was so congested that Carolyn had to park far from the entrance. She didn't object; it was a beautiful day and she enjoyed walking. But when she got out of her car, some old earmuffs changed her entire day.

The earmuffs were lying on the ground, near a discarded towel, not half a metre away. They seemed to wriggle, though it was a calm day. As Carolyn approached for a closer look, the earmuffs moved. Then they rolled over and squeaked the tiniest squeak.

Of course, these weren't earmuffs – they were two tiny kittens! As Carolyn bent to inspect them, the towel moved and two more tiny kittens wiggled out. Each was about the size of an orange. "Oh, you sweet babies!" she cooed. "Good thing I'm a curious person!"





As an animal lover, Carolyn sprang into action. She carefully placed the kittens on the back seat of her car, on top of her cloth shopping bag, and drove straight home. There, she put the kittens in a clean basket.

"Look at these tiny orphans, [Jake]," she told her son. "Please, go online to learn about caring for newborn kittens while I call the vet."



Text Marking

Identify who the story is about.

-  Circle the main character.
-  Box the minor character.
-  Underline three details about the main character.
-  Underline one detail about the minor character.

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 1: The Earmuffs

1 B; *Sample answer:* I picked B because I worked out that congested means very crowded.

2 C; *Sample answer:* I picked C because it tells about a person who went out of her way to do a kind thing for abandoned kittens.

3 *Sample answer:* When Carolyn spotted what looked like earmuffs that moved, she investigated and found that it was actually a pair of tiny kittens. She took pity on them and rescued them.

4 *Sample answer:* Carolyn is a curious, generous, kindly person, a mother, also an animal lover or pet owner. She could have ignored the kittens, but she took charge, brought them home and helped them.

2 Character

Name _____ Date _____

Fastest Kid in Kalamazoo

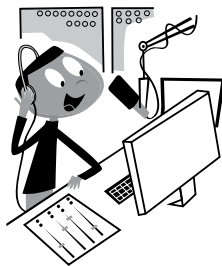
Read the media story. Then follow the instructions in the Text-Marking box.

Loyal listeners, last week on my radio show, I told you about my pal Daniel. To recap, I informed you that Daniel is not only the fastest kid in Kalamazoo, he's the fastest in the history of Kalamazoo. I stated that he's faster than a Formula One racing car. And I told you that I, his best friend, have witnessed examples of his velocity that, if I hadn't seen them with my own two eyes, I wouldn't have believed. I then described for you the most recent case of Daniel's amazing speed against the force of darkness.

Recall that I was in his bedroom, by his desk, and Daniel was in the doorway. As I watched, in astonishment, he turned off the bedroom light and was in his bed, snuggled under his blanket, before the room was dark! As a matter of fact, he was already nearly asleep!



Extraordinary, right? Okay, as promised last week, I'll now tell you how Daniel accomplished his bedroom feat. It was during the day, and the room never got dark! Hah!

So that's it for this week's edition of Fred's Fabulous Feats. I'm Fred and after the break, I'll tell you about Flora, and how she taught herself to fly. Stick around and be amazed!



Text Marking

Identify who the story is about.

-  Circle the two main characters.
-  Underline details about each character.

◀ Sample Text Markings

Passage 2: Fastest Kid in Kalamazoo

1 D; *Sample answer:* I picked D because I noticed that it was told in first-person ('I', 'my'), and Fred identifies himself in the last paragraph.

2 B; *Sample answer:* I picked B, speed, because of the context clues 'fastest' and 'faster'.

3 *Sample answer:* Fred has a weekly radio talk show. He has a sense of humour and fun, and seems to enjoy his work. He talks about unusual events and accomplishments.

4 *Sample answer:* Listeners will probably hear a wild story about Flora teaching herself to do something but probably not flying like a bird or even learning to pilot an aircraft.