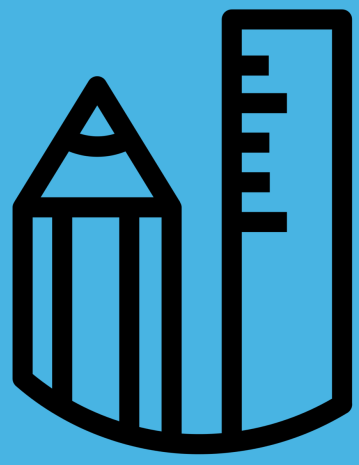
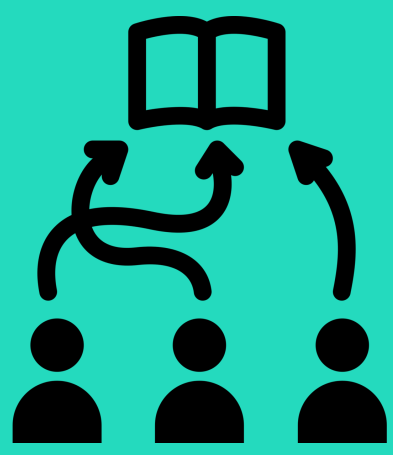


COMMENCEMENT



This lesson was designed to model practical annotation and critical thinking skills. Access additional presentation materials by scanning the QR code or visiting ELAOkTeachers.com/commencement-lesson.



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As You Read

Use effective and practical annotation strategies to retain what you read.

C.U.S. and Discuss

As you read, use a pen or pencil and mark up the text. Here's your guide to know exactly what to look for as you read! Obviously, modify it based on the needs of your students and the type of article being analyzed.

Always conclude by allowing students to discuss what they chose to mark-up with a peer.

Reading an article?
CUSS it out!

Circle new *words*

Underline *important details*

Star your favorite **paragraph*

Spot the *thesis* ←

Judgment -	What's the topic? What's the author's stance?
Authority -	Who wrote it? Is there bias? When was it written?
Basis -	Record the details for the author's judgment or supporting details about the topic.
Summary -	In your own words, summarize the article (in a single sentence).

J.A.B.S.

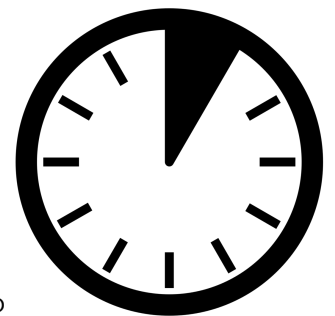
Students can compose a single JABS or two JABS over two articles and then perform a comparison. It's also good when reviewing and ranking multiple texts or materials for extended research projects.

5 Minute Experts!

Students are provided [5 minutes](#) to read and annotate an article.

1. Provide them with an annotation strategy like [CUSS and Discuss](#).
2. Students will read as much of the information, annotating while they read, within 5 minutes. They will be an "expert" over all the content they were able to cover in that 5 minutes (whether or not they finished the entire article, they are expected to have an understanding over what they did read).
3. At the end of five minutes, students summarize their thoughts (if necessary, you can assign a formal strategy like [GIST](#)), and share their understanding and notes with another student.

This is also excellent to incorporate with JIGSAW and Paired-reading activities.



Steve Jobs' Commencement Address (excerpt)
at Stanford University *Delivered 12 June 2005, Palo Alto, CA*

I'm honored to be with you today for your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. Truth be told, I never graduated from college, and this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today, I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.

The first story is about connecting the dots. I dropped out of Reed College after the first six months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife -- except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl.

So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking, "We've got an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?" They said, "Of course." My biological mother found out later that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would go to college. This was the start in my life.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition. After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life.

So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out okay. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made. The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked far more interesting.

It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms. I returned coke bottles for the five cent deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the seven miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans-serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between

different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the "Mac" would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on that calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backwards 10 years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something -- your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever -- because believing that the dots will connect down the road will give you the confidence to follow your heart, even when it leads you off the well-worn path, and that will make all the difference.

My second story is about love and loss.

I was lucky -- I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a two billion dollar company with over 4000 employees. We'd just released our finest creation -- the Macintosh -- a year earlier, and I had just turned 30.

And then I got fired. How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. And so at 30, I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down -- that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me. I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me: I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

David McCullough Jr.'s Commencement Address (excerpt)

...commencement is life's great ceremonial beginning, with its own attendant and highly appropriate symbolism. Fitting, for example, for this auspicious rite of passage, is where we find ourselves this afternoon, the venue. Normally, I avoid cliches like the plague, wouldn't touch them with a ten-foot pole, but here we are on a literal level playing field. That matters. That says something. And your ceremonial costume... shapeless, uniform, one-size-fits-all. Whether male or female, tall or short, scholar or slacker, spray-tanned prom queen or intergalactic X-Box assassin, each of you is dressed, you'll notice, exactly the same. And your diploma... but for your name, exactly the same.

All of this is as it should be, because none of you is special. You are not special. You are not exceptional.

Yes, you've been pampered, cosseted, doted upon, helmeted, bubble-wrapped. Yes, capable adults with other things to do have held you, kissed you, fed you, wiped your mouth, wiped your bottom, trained you, taught you, tutored you, coached you, listened to you, counseled you, encouraged you, consoled you and encouraged you again. You've been nudged, cajoled, wheedled and implored. You've been feted and fawned over and called sweetie pie. Yes, you have. And, certainly, we've been to your games, your plays, your recitals, your science fairs. Absolutely, smiles ignite when you walk into a room, and hundreds gasp with delight at your every tweet. Why, maybe you've even had your picture in the Townsman! And now you've conquered high school... and, indisputably, here we all have gathered for you, the pride and joy of this fine community, the first to emerge from that magnificent new building...

But do not get the idea you're anything special. Because you're not.

"But, Dave," you cry, "Walt Whitman tells me I'm my own version of perfection! Epictetus tells me I have the spark of Zeus!" And I don't disagree. So that makes 6.8 billion examples of perfection, 6.8 billion sparks of Zeus. You see, if everyone is special, then no one is. If everyone gets a trophy, trophies become meaningless. In our unspoken but not so subtle Darwinian competition with one another—which springs, I think, from our fear of our own insignificance, a subset of our dread of mortality – we have of late, we Americans, to our detriment, come to love accolades more than genuine achievement. We have come to see them as the point – and we're happy to compromise standards, or ignore reality, if we suspect that's the quickest way, or only way, to have something to put on the mantelpiece, something to pose with, crow about, something with which to leverage ourselves into a better spot on the social totem pole. No longer is it how you play the game, no longer is it even whether you win or lose, or learn or grow, or enjoy yourself doing it... Now it's "So what does this get me?" As a consequence, we cheapen worthy endeavors, and building a Guatemalan medical clinic becomes more about the application to Bowdoin than the well-being of Guatemalans. It's an epidemic – and in its way, not even dear old Wellesley High is immune... one of the best of the 37,000 nationwide, Wellesley High School... where good is no longer good enough, where a B is the new C, and the midlevel curriculum is called Advanced College Placement. And I hope you caught me when I said "one of the best." I said "one of the best" so we can feel better about ourselves, so we can bask in a little easy distinction, however vague and unverifiable, and count ourselves among the elite, whoever they might be, and enjoy a perceived leg up on the perceived competition. But the phrase defies logic. By definition there can be only one best. You're it or you're not.

If you've learned anything in your years here I hope it's that education should be for, rather than material advantage, the exhilaration of learning. You've learned, too, I hope, as Sophocles assured us, that wisdom is the chief element of happiness. (Second is ice cream... just an fyi) I also hope you've learned enough to recognize how little you know... how little you know now... at the moment... for today is just the beginning. It's where you go from here that matters.

As you commence, then, and before you scatter to the winds, I urge you to do whatever you do for no reason other than you love it and believe in its importance. Don't bother with work you don't believe in any more than you would a spouse you're not crazy about, lest you too find yourself on the wrong side of a Baltimore Orioles comparison. Resist the easy comforts of complacency, the specious glitter of materialism, the narcotic paralysis of self-satisfaction. Be worthy of your advantages. And read... read all the time... read as a matter of principle, as a matter of self-respect. Read as a nourishing staple of life. Develop and protect a moral sensibility and demonstrate the character to apply it. Dream big. Work hard. Think for yourself. Love everything you love, everyone you love, with all your might. And do so, please, with a sense of urgency, for every tick of the clock subtracts from fewer and fewer; and as surely as there are commencements there are cessations, and you'll be in no condition to enjoy the ceremony attendant to that eventuality no matter how delightful the afternoon.

The fulfilling life, the distinctive life, the relevant life, is an achievement, not something that will fall into your lap because you're a nice person or mommy ordered it from the caterer. You'll note the founding fathers took pains to secure your inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—quite an active verb, “pursuit”—which leaves, I should think, little time for lying around watching parrots rollerskate on Youtube. The first President Roosevelt, the old rough rider, advocated the strenuous life. Mr. Thoreau wanted to drive life into a corner, to live deep and suck out all the marrow. The poet Mary Oliver tells us to row, row into the swirl and roil. Locally, someone... I forget who... from time to time encourages young scholars to carpe the heck out of the diem. The point is the same: get busy, have at it. Don't wait for inspiration or passion to find you. Get up, get out, explore, find it yourself, and grab hold with both hands. (Now, before you dash off and get your YOLO tattoo, let me point out the illogic of that trendy little expression—because you can and should live not merely once, but every day of your life. Rather than You Only Live Once, it should be You Live Only Once... but because YOLO doesn't have the same ring, we shrug and decide it doesn't matter.)

None of this day-seizing, though, this YOLOing, should be interpreted as license for self-indulgence. Like accolades ought to be, the fulfilled life is a consequence, a gratifying byproduct. It's what happens when you're thinking about more important things. Climb the mountain not to plant your flag, but to embrace the challenge, enjoy the air and behold the view. Climb it so you can see the world, not so the world can see you. Go to Paris to be in Paris, not to cross it off your list and congratulate yourself for being worldly. Exercise free will and creative, independent thought not for the satisfactions they will bring you, but for the good they will do others, the rest of the 6.8 billion—and those who will follow them. And then you too will discover the great and curious truth of the human experience is that selflessness is the best thing you can do for yourself. The sweetest joys of life, then, come only with the recognition that you're not special.

Because everyone is. Congratulations. Good luck. Make for yourselves, please, for your sake and for ours, extraordinary lives.

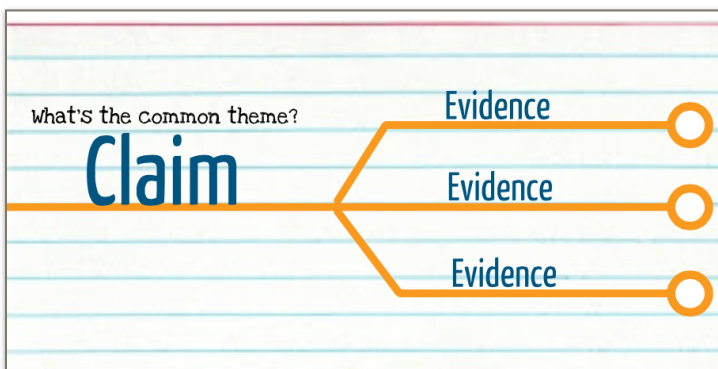
After You Read

Provide students with the opportunity to clarify their understanding of the text with an effective summarization strategy. Use the follow-up strategies described in the *As You Read* section or try the strategies below:

GIST

Generating Interactions between Schemata and Texts

Using the GIST strategy challenges students to creating concise summaries by setting a restriction for the number of words they are allowed to use in a single sentence. Adjust the number of words as necessary for your students.



Pitchfork

Use a pitchfork to organize the information. Especially if you're rummaging through multiple texts, a pitchfork will help to separate the essential information from the less applicable.

For example, ***what is the shared theme between the two commencement speeches?***

- I. State the proposed shared theme by making a claim and record it on the handle of the pitchfork.
- II. Review your notes and find evidence (i.e. inferred details and/or exact quotes) from the texts that best represent the proposed shared theme.

Adjust the number of forks required for students. Once completed, the student has created a brief outline for an extended essay.