**Close Reading Steps**

*(Expect to read the text multiple times, in multiple ways, looking for specific elements.)*

1. Read through the text. After the first reading, subdivide the text into sections.

*(Consider the type of text: prose is usually subdivided into paragraphs. Each paragraph of prose is divided into sentences. In prose, each sentence has a particular purpose, which it achieves or fails to achieve. For poetry, look for sentences or for other subdivisions such as stanzas or units of rhyming lines. Often in formal poetry, these subdivisions have significant differences in function. The formal characteristics of poetry can signal many things, including genre. Sometimes, for both prose and poetry, but especially for poetry, different subdivisions can communicate different meanings; sometimes these meanings are markedly different, creating tension or irony.)*

1. Once you have subdivided the text, reread the text, focusing on what you believe the author is saying. For each subdivision, summarize (in prose) the point you believe the author is trying to make.
2. In a further rereading, consider sentence-level grammar (including rhetorical schemes and tropes—see the "List of Literary Terms") and the connotations of words and images (metaphors, similes, symbols, and motifs). Highlight images you feel are the most important.
3. From your understanding of the meaning and connotations of the text, consider the tone. Does the author seem rational, emotional, sarcastic, sad, happy, angry, or ecstatic? Are the emotions expressed intense or subdued? Are the emotions expressed appropriate to the fictional situation in your opinion? What in the text makes you feel as you do about the tone?
4. Of the elements that you have observed, what are most important to creating the tone and meaning of the text? (This is your interpretation of the text.)
5. Create an argument that uses elements of the text to support your interpretation of the text’s overall meaning.