

Hilton HS - Reading Question Reference List for Checking Out the Framework

Fiction Texts: *The Basic Reference List*

1. The title and/or subtitle – any predictions, questions, clues, or connections?
2. The author – Are you familiar with him or her? Is the writer still living? Is there a short biography somewhere in the book? Any interesting facts about the person?
3. The art work or graphics on the cover/inside of the book – what's the message, artist's intent? Any possible symbolism?
4. Read the "blurbs" on the back of the book, anything of interest? Are any pieces of the plot revealed? Are there any clues as to who the best audience of the book might be? Are there any descriptive words that catch your attention? Can you make any predictions?
5. Read the clips of reviews inside the book on the opening pages, or on the back or the book jacket: who are the reviewers and what do they have to say?
6. Who published the book and when? How many reprints have there been? Does this information reveal any clues as to: bias, popularity, intent, historical context, etc.?
7. Check out the Table of Contents: How is the book set up? Sections? Chapters? How many of each? Do they have titles that catch your attention? Do their titles give you clues to the text? How many pages does the book have?
8. Are there any quotes that the writer chose to put in the front of the book, before or after the Table of Contents that may give you a clue to the writer's intent?
9. Is the book dedicated to anyone, and if so, what might be the significance?
10. Is there a preface, introduction or prologue? What do they reveal about the book?
11. Read the first paragraph or page to get a "taste" of the book; then skip ahead 5, 10 or 20 pages and read a few different sections to get a flavor of the writer's style. From this brief taste of the book, are you able to identify the point of view the writer has chosen?
12. Based on all of the above, make some predictions as to your preliminary reaction or evaluation?

Poetry

In addition to *The Basic Reference List*, consider the following:

1. What is the format or structure of the poem? One or more stanzas?
2. What type of poem is it? epic? sonnet? lyric? elegy? ode? epitaph? etc.
3. Skim all of the last words in each of lines; do any of them rhyme?
4. After the first reading, has one or more speakers emerged?
5. Are there any footnotes that help explain pieces of the text? allusions? challenging vocabulary? etc.

Drama

In addition to *The Basic Reference List*, consider the following:

1. How is this play structured; how many acts are there? Are the acts divided into scenes? What is the length of the play?
2. Check out the cast list at the beginning of the script: How many characters are there? Did the playwright provide any kind of personality description? What are their ages, gender, ethnicity, etc.?
3. Are there plot summaries and/or stage directions in the beginning of each of the scenes to help the reader understand the text?
4. Did the playwright, editor, or publisher provide footnotes to help the reader with the text? If so, how are they

- organized and what is the best way to approach using them? (Shakespearean texts often contain them and students need to know how and when to use them)
5. How are the stage directions and emotional reactions (examples: *lovingly*, *angrily*, *with defeat*, etc.) of the characters set up and indicated in the play?
6. Does this play have a prologue and/or an epilogue?

Nonfiction Texts

In addition to *The Basic Reference List*, consider the following:

Look at the Table of Contents to get a sense of:

- what topics the book covers and to what extent / depth
- how it is organized and divided
- Are there reference tools in the back of the book that will help the reader with the text? (glossary, appendix, index, answer key, etc.)
- Flip through the book to see how the visuals are set up and explained
- Are there keys that are used commonly throughout the book that may help to decipher or decode the text and/or visual

Essays

In addition to *The Basic Reference List*, consider the following:

1. What is the historical context of this essay? When was it published and by whom? Do these answers indicate a possible bias?
2. Is it part of a larger collection or series of essays?
3. If it is contained in an anthology, check out the framework of the anthology. How is it organized? common theme? writer? chronological? other?

Periodicals and Newspapers

In addition to *The Basic Reference List*, consider the following:

1. Who owns this publication and does that suggest any particular bias?
2. What is the circulation of this text? How popular is it? Who is the primary audience?
3. How is this text organized and in what ways is the organization conventional or unconventional?
4. What seems to be the average length of the typical article? Can the length be characterized as: in-depth analysis? short and to the point? The "fast food" version of the facts?
5. How heavily does the publication rely on visuals? What might this mean?
6. Since many of these publications rely on advertisements for a great deal of their profit, who are the major advertisers in this publication?

Websites

1. Is the site easy to navigate?
2. Is there information about the author which shows you that the author has the authority or knowledge to write about the topic at this site?
3. Is the information clear and easy to understand?
4. If the information is about a controversial topic, is more than one side of the topic presented or does the site offer links to sites that would offer the opposing view?
5. Can you tell when the information on this site is fact versus opinion?
6. Is all the quoted information clearly identified and properly cited?