

4 Strategies for Close Reading

1. **Number the paragraphs.** You should be able to cite and refer to the text. You will be required to state which paragraph you are using for textual evidence when we are having a class discussion, so numbering the text will make these much easier.
2. **Chunk the text.** When faced with a full page of text, reading it can quickly become overwhelming. Breaking up the text into smaller sections (or chunks) makes the page much more manageable for students.
 - a. Look at the paragraphs to see where natural chunks occur. Paragraphs 1-3 may be the hook and thesis statement, while 6-8 may be the paragraphs where the author addresses the opposition. Draw a horizontal line between paragraphs to divide the page into these smaller sections. It is important to understand that there is no right or wrong way to chunk the text, as long as you can justify why you grouped certain paragraphs together.
3. **Annotate with a purpose.** Circling specific items is also an effective close reading strategy. You should circle “key terms” in the text. Key terms are usually defined and repeated throughout the text. If you only circled five key terms in the entire text, you would have a pretty good idea about what the entire text is about.
4. **Summarize in the left margin.** In the left margin, summarize each chunk. Try to write your summaries in 10-words or less. The chunking allows you to look at the text in smaller segments and summarize what the author is saying in just that small, specific chunk.