

# THREE CLOSE READS - INTRODUCTION

## Preparation

- Download “Unit 1 Overview: History Stories”

## Purpose

This activity introduces you to the WHP Three Close Reads process. You will use this process when approaching all readings in the course because it will help you practice historical inquiry. The Three Close Reads process will teach you how to analyze historical accounts and interpretations by using a variety of reading strategies. Instead of simply learning about historical concepts, you’ll learn to evaluate different perspectives on historical issues so you can take an active role in constructing and deconstructing history, rather than taking everything you read at face value.

## Process

At the beginning of each unit of this course, you will be provided with an introductory reading that will help you get a sense of what’s to come. By looking at a zoomed-out view of a unit, you’ll be able to think about the patterns and themes that exist within it, something that’s often more difficult to figure out when you study history in smaller time periods or segments.

Before digging into the article, take out the Three Close Reads Worksheet, and with your class, quickly review the process as well as how to fill out the organizer section. Reading everything in the course three times might seem insane, but it’s actually a really helpful tool for getting all the information you need from the articles. Don’t worry—the process gets faster and faster with each reading. Somewhere in the middle of the course, you’ll probably notice that the three reads take the same amount of time one used to take.

## Framing Question or Idea

Before you start to read, make sure you have a question or idea to think about as you read to write in the box at the top of the Three Close Reads worksheet. Your teacher will probably provide you with the question or idea at first. As you get farther along in the course, your teacher might ask you to help choose these topics or questions. Keep this framing question or idea in mind as you read the article.

### *Reading 1—Skimming for Gist*

The first close read is really meant to be a skim of the article. It should be very quick and give you the gist (general idea) of what the article is about. You should be looking at the title, author, headings, pictures, and opening sentences of paragraphs for the gist. On the Three Close Reads worksheet, look at the “Questions” section for the first close read and see which questions you can answer quickly.

### *Reading 2—Understanding Content*

Now that you’ve completed the first close read, look at the second section of the worksheet. This read is probably closest to the kind of reading you usually do. Basically, you’re trying to get a better understanding of the concepts and arguments that are presented in the article. Review the “Pay Attention to…” and “Questions” sections of the worksheet so you know what to think about when reading and to be sure you understand the information from the article. Also, this is where you will write down any vocab you see in the article that is unfamiliar to you. Your teacher will suggest ways to keep track of these words.



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By the end of the second close read, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. Why did the fourteenth-century Black Death become a “usable” history to more people in 2020?
2. Some historians have argued that students should learn facts or information. Others have argued that they should learn a set of skills. Which approach (facts or skills?) is used in this course?
3. The author of this overview gives an example of a historian of the future working with social media about a fight you had with a friend. Why might a historian care about this fight?
4. Why is it important that historians have several history stories to work with?
5. What is claim testing?
6. What are the three frames in this course?

## ***Reading 3—Evaluating and Corroborating***

Now it's time for the third and final read. For this read, focus on why this article matters, how it connects to other content you've studied. Since this is the first reading assignment of the course, you may not connect it to much, other than the knowledge you already have.

At the end of the third read, discuss the following questions with your class:

- Write a brief history story that makes a claim. It can be about anything! Then write down a kind of evidence you might look for to test that claim. Now tell us why this history story might be usable for understanding or acting in the present.

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Name:

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**Directions:** Before you read, look at the “Pay Attention to” and “Questions” columns. Write your answers in the third column.

Article Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Article Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson #: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall question or idea to think about as you read:

## Reading 1: Skimming for Gist

This will be your quickest read. It should help you get the general idea of what the article or essay will be about.

Pay attention to ...	Questions	Your answers
Title and headings	What is this article going to be about?	
Images, image captions, graphs, tables	How do these add to your idea of what the article is going to be about?	

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## Reading 2: Understanding Content

In this read, you will pay attention to the information that most helps you understand the article or essay.

Pay attention to ...	Questions	Your answers
Vocab	Are there words you don't understand or recognize? Write those words here, and then annotate the text with a definition or synonym of each word. Or, as an alternative, add them to your vocab tracker.	
Major claim and key details	What is the main idea of this article (that is, what is the major claim or thesis statement)?  In addition to the major claim, what do you think are the three most important details from this article? Explain these key points on the right. Alternatively, your teacher may give you a more specific set of questions to answer about the main details.	
Analysis and evidence	What evidence does the author use to support and extend the main idea or major claim? Provide two to three examples.	

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## Reading 3: Evaluating and Corroborating

The third reading is really about understanding how the article relates to the idea or question you thought about as you read.

Pay attention to ...	Questions	Your answers
Overall argument	In what ways were the author's arguments logical and credible?	
Support	What facts or ideas from this article confirmed what you already knew about world history or the era/unit in question?	

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Extend	In what ways did this article deepen your thinking about a topic or topics in world history?	<i>This article added to my understanding of ... by...</i>
Challenge	How did this article change or challenge your thinking about a topic or topics in world history?	<i>At first, I thought... Now, I think... Or: My thinking on... changed when...</i>