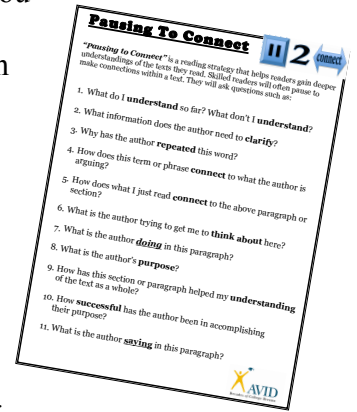


Pausing to Connect

Have you ever been asked to read something in class or for homework, but when you get to the end of the text you realize you don't have a clue what it said? You read the words but it made no sense to you because you just tried to breeze right through it instead of wrestling to understand it's meaning. **"Pausing to Connect"** is an active reading strategy that asks students to pause at different times throughout the reading and think critically about the relationship between language and meaning. It asks you to connect ideas within the text, seeking to understand what the author says and how s/he says it. Highly proficient readers read top to bottom, from left to right, but also bottom to top and right to left; they stop mid-sentence to reread important ideas, consult reading aids like dictionaries and thesauruses while working through a difficult passage, find connections among words, and consider various other textual details with reading. Whew! Sounds like a lot of work, right. Well, it is, but you have to keep in mind that the texts you will be asked to read as you progress through secondary school and into college are going to get progressively harder and you have to develop the skills to meet those challenges.



How Should Students Pause to Connect?

Pausing to Connect involves stopping periodically while completing a reading, taking a moment to connect ideas within the text. You might stop to

- **reflect** on what you just read (“What was the author saying in that piece of text? What was that section about? What do/don’t I understand so far?”),
- **synthesize** ideas from one or more paragraphs (“How does what I just read connect to the preceding paragraphs? Why is the author repeating this word?”),
- **connect** to reading aids presented in the text (“How do the visuals help me to understand what the author is saying or doing?”), or
- **relate** ideas that have been circled or underlined to the surrounding information.

Use the **“Pausing to Connect Bookmark”** you have received as a guide for the types of questions you may want to ask yourself as you move through a text. Once you have made connections you should write them in the margins of your text or in your notes.

When Should Students Pause to Connect?

Your teacher might limit the number of choices you have when starting to learn the strategy, but ultimately we want you to have a list of ways you can pause to connect with texts floating around in your mind. We also want you to get so good at using **“Pausing to Connect”** that you know which questions to pick for a particular reading or type of thinking called for by any given text. Once you learn this skill inside and out, you will begin to use it instinctively—you won’t even need your teacher to tell you to do it! You’ll be asking questions while you read, going back to different parts of

the text to reread it, make connecting lines between paragraphs, chunking paragraphs that have things in common, and all sorts of other things.

You should get used to using this strategy whenever you are having a hard time following the meaning or ideas of a text because it will slow you down a little and force you to interact and think about what the author is saying and doing. In other words, if you are reading something for school and you find yourself thinking or saying, “What????? or HUUUUHHHH????”, it might be time to pull out your “**Pausing to Connect Bookmark**” so you can attack that text with re-enforcements.

Why Should Students Pause to Connect?

A good reader will often pause to make connections to what he or she is reading. Mature readers will pause to clarify ideas (“What is the author saying here?”), question the meaning of an idea, or investigate the relationship between words, paragraphs, or ideas. Doing this helps you dig deep into a text, thinking about what an author is saying and even what they are doing—the choices they made and how those choices impacted the meaning. When you **Pause to Connect**, you become invested in actually understanding the text. You’re not just reading to try and finish what the teacher told you to do...you are actually seeking to understand. The texts you will be asked to read and understand in school will continue to get more sophisticated and challenging. **Pausing to Connect** helps you remain up to the challenge.

Key Questions to Consider:

Ultimately, Critical Reading strategies are meant to help you become a better reader, helping you to increase your level of college readiness so you can do well now and also prepare for life in the University after high school. This is not just busy work...**Pausing to Connect** is a type of strategy good readers turn in to a habit so they can easily use it to construct meaning from the texts they read. Someday you won’t be reading “like” a college student...you will be reading “as” a college student.

Ask the following questions to reflect on the use of **Pausing to Connect**:

- How did this strategy improve your understanding of the text?
- What did using Pausing to Connect do to your level of interest, engagement, and/or understanding while you read?
- Why would readers want to use this strategy?
- When would you want to use a strategy like Pausing to Connect?
- What types of texts would it be useful on? What types would you want to steer-clear of using it on?