

Quarter Turns: Supports to Access Complex Text Across Disciplines

What are quarter turn instructional moves?

Quarter turns are small pivots teachers and students can make to help all students learn from rich grade-level text. These instructional moves are designed to provide access to complex text for all middle and high school students through the intentional use of teacher-designed supports and student-centered learning activities.

How can I use quarter turns?

Quarter turns can be used by middle and high school teachers across the content areas when a complex, grade-level text must be read and understood by all students. Some of the quarter turns are small changes to the text layout (like line numbers) while others are more involved discussion structures (like “Save the Last Word”). In all cases, these quarter turns have been designed to engage more students more frequently with more text. The table below details ten quarter turns; each quarter turn is named and described, and links are provided to resources to help with implementation. Student-facing examples and handouts have been provided most often as Word documents so that you may adapt them for your own quarter turns activity. The quarter turn activities have been grouped by when they might be used: [before reading](#), [during reading](#), or [after reading](#).

As you use these quarter turns, you may notice a couple of them go well together in one lesson or a series of lessons. For example, if a teacher wants to use “The Coming Global Water Crisis” as part of a unit on the global use of natural resources, the teacher might add line numbers to the text, have students read and annotate the text for claims-reasoning-evidence, and then have students discuss the article using the “Save the Last Word” activity.

Who drafted these quarter turns?

The instructional moves gathered here were developed or adapted by K-12 teachers in the Washoe County School District. You can learn more about these resources and explore others at [Project Tahoe](#) or contact [Sarah Brown](#).

Before-Reading Supports - Text Preparation

Title of Support	Short Description: Purpose and Application	Strategy Resources and Example
Line Numbering/ Paragraph Numbering	<p>Purpose: Line or Paragraph Numbering helps students find specific portions of the text during writing and discussion tasks.</p> <p>Application: Add line or paragraph numbers to text using Microsoft Word, a Chrome extension, or other technology tool.</p>	<p>Insert line numbers in Word or Google Docs</p> <p>Insert paragraph numbers in Word</p> <p>Example of Line Numbering: The Coming Global Water Crisis</p>
Providing Synonyms	<p>Purpose: Providing Synonyms offers vocabulary support for a text with challenging vocabulary and/or phrases that are essential to understanding the text but do not have any context clues.</p> <p>Application: Read the text and identify challenging vocabulary and/or phrases. Either bold or underline words and phrases that do not have context clues. Provide a synonym in the margin or as a footnote.</p>	<p>For help selecting and identifying essential vocabulary, see "Which Words Do I Teach and How?"</p> <p>Example of Providing Synonyms: In One Slum (Dharavi)</p>

During-Reading Learning Activities

Title of Activity	Short Description: Purpose and Application	Strategy Resources and Example
Annotations to Support	<p>Purpose: Text Annotations support students to learn from reading complex text when the text's main idea and details are challenging to understand, the structure affects the text's tone/purpose/meaning, or the argument is challenging to understand.</p>	<p>Qualitative Text Complexity tools</p>

<p>Understanding of Text</p>	<p>Application:</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text to determine essential understanding and how the author’s structure develops the argument or main idea. 2. Select the annotation from the annotation guide that is most relevant for the text under consideration. <p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the selected text. 2. Annotate the text with the selected annotations. 3. When done reading, work in small groups to discuss and share annotations. 	<p>Text Annotations Implementation Guide</p> <p>Annotations to Support Understanding of Text Guide</p>
<p>Argument Mapping</p>	<p>Purpose: Argument Mapping supports students to evaluate an author’s complex argument by identifying an author’s claims, evidence, and reasoning.</p> <p>Application</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text. Identify the author’s claim(s), evidence, and reasoning. <p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and annotate the text for claims, evidence, and reasoning by color coding or labeling each claim, evidence, and reasoning. (See the Annotations to Support Understanding of Text Guide for a more detailed strategy.) 2. Work in pairs to create a visual representation (map) of the author’s argument. 	<p>Psychology Today article about Argument Mapping</p> <p>Argument Mapping student instructions</p>
<p>Interview with the Author</p>	<p>Purpose: Interview with the Author supports students through reading a dense, complex text by using pause points during reading so students can clarify their understanding of the text.</p> <p>Application</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the text and insert pause points after particularly complex, rich, or important passages. 	<p>Adapted from AdLit.org’s Question the Author</p> <p>Example of Interview with the Author: A Nation of Weavers</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Prepare a question matrix or question stems for students to use. 3. Add reflection questions to the end of the text selection: If you could ask the author just one of your questions, which question would you ask him? What makes this question so important? <p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text. 2. At the provided pause points, create questions for the author that relate to the text passage. Use the question matrix or question stems to help draft questions. 3. After reading and drafting questions, select the most valuable question. 4. Work in small groups to select 2-4 of the most valuable questions to ask the author. 	
Split Screen Notes	<p>Purpose: Split Screen Notes support students to visualize challenging concepts in order to build understanding of a complex text.</p> <p>Application:</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text. Select pause points in the text after particularly rich, complex, or important passages. <p><i>During Instruction:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Teacher</i> reads the text, stopping at selected pause points. 2. <i>Students</i> draw what they hear, share images with a partner, and discuss. 3. <i>Students</i> then reread passages to select words and phrases to support their drawing. Students may add on to or modify their drawing. 4. Repeat steps 1-3 until selected text is read and student notes are complete. 	<p>Split Screen Notes student handout</p> <p>Adapted from Reading for Academic Success</p>

After-Reading Learning Activities

Title of Activity	Short Description: Purpose and Application	Strategy Resources and Example
<p>Collaborative Summarizing</p>	<p>Purpose: Collaborative Summarizing supports student discussion of a text’s key details, main ideas, and claims. Through small-group discussion, students explore and summarize the main idea or argument to build their understanding of the text.</p> <p>Application:</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text. If it is an argumentative text, determine the author’s claim(s) and relevant evidence. If it is an informational text, determine the author’s main idea(s) and relevant details. <p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individually read the text and determine the author’s claim or main idea and five most important supporting details. 2. Work with a partner or small group to share lists and come to a consensus on the claim/main idea and five most important supporting details. 3. Use the agreed-upon list to write a summary of the text. 	<p>Collaborative Summarizing student handout for argumentative text</p> <p>Collaborative Summarizing student handout for informational text</p> <p>Adapted from Reading for Academic Success</p>
<p>Evidence Ranking</p>	<p>Purpose: Evidence Ranking supports students in building understanding of a complex text’s central argument and use of evidence.</p> <p>Application:</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text, identify one of the main claims in the text, and select 5–10 pieces of evidence from the text. This evidence should provide varying degrees of support for the identified claim. 2. Teacher creates a set of evidence-ranking materials: the text, a reading activity (the Annotations to Support Understanding of Text Guide may be helpful here), a stated claim, and a series of supporting evidence. 	<p>Examples of Evidence-Ranking Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Power of Yet" • "Space Mining" • "The Writing Revolution"

	<p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text and annotate as needed. 2. Review the teacher-provided claim. 3. Work in small groups to review and rank the listed evidence from most to least effective and draft reasoning statements. 	
Reading Response Cards (Prompts)	<p>Purpose: Reading Response Cards support students to examine complex or rich concepts from a text through discussion.</p> <p>Application</p> <p><i>Teacher Preparation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text. Identify the complex or rich concepts students might explore during discussion. 2. Provide students or student groups with the reading response prompt cards <p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students read text. As they read, students underline passages that they are curious or unsure about. 2. Students work in small groups and rotate through the cards, using reading response prompts to discuss the text. 	<p>Reading Response prompt cards</p> <p>Adapted from Reading for Academic Success</p>
Save the Last Word for Me	<p>Purpose: Save the Last Word for Me engages students in a discussion of a text’s critical concepts, topics, or arguments.</p> <p>Application</p> <p><i>Students:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the text independently and note three quotes that are relevant to them or identify a main idea or claim. 2. In groups of three, share selected quotes: student A will read their quote, and then student B and student C will respond to the quote (what is interesting about it, why it might be important, etc.). Student A will get the “last word” to explain why the quote was selected. 3. Students will rotate through rounds of sharing as outlined in #2. 	<p>Description of Save the Last Word for Me</p> <p>Save the Last Word for Me student handout</p>