

READING CLOSELY

Glossing Instructions

Do you know what “glossing” is?

Generally speaking, glossing is a method of examining your own writing and the writing of others to see *if* it works and *how* it works. Glossing can be an editing technique or an analytical reading technique. Glossing works of literature allows you to *interact* with the text, thereby gaining a better understanding of the text. As you read, you should be formulating questions, interpretations and connections to the text. Glossing is a way of writing those questions and ideas down in order to help you read more closely and think more critically about the text.

How do I gloss a text?

- Read through the text the first time to get a basic understanding of the piece. Then read through the text a second time with a pencil in hand.
- As you read, circle the words and phrases that you don't understand. Then, define them in the margins.
- Underline or highlight interesting phrases and ideas. Note good descriptive passages and good use of figurative language (similes, metaphors, analogies, etc.). Look for passages that you agree or disagree with what the author is stating.
- In the margins of the text, write personal comments on those phrases and ideas.
i.e., “What does he mean here?” “Interesting thought!” “This is similar to when I experienced...”
- Also, write analytical thoughts/ideas.
i.e., “Does this really support the point of the article?” “What is she saying between the lines?” “Why does he use this particular example?” “This does not ring true. Is the narrator lying?” “This reminds me of...”
- These thoughts do not have to be complete sentences. You can just jot down words and phrases.

When you gloss, keep in mind the following:

- 1) What is your reaction to the writing?
 - a. What did you like? Why?
 - b. What did you dislike? Why?
 - c. Does this piece of work remind you of anything else that you have read or experienced?
- 2) Comment on and find references to repetitions and patterns in the writing.
 - a. Repeated words and their significance
 - b. Repeated actions and their significance
 - c. Repeated ideas and their significance
 - d. Repeated events and their significance
 - e. Symbols, themes, significance, and meaning
- 3) Comment on the human condition that the author is writing about.
- 4) Think about the author. Do you sense any bias from the author?
- 5) Were there any ambiguities or unclear points that exist after you have read the selection?
- 6) How did the writing relate to the course?



Glossing will help you in discussing a piece of literature.
It is a way of “talking” to the author while you read,
whether that author is you or someone else.