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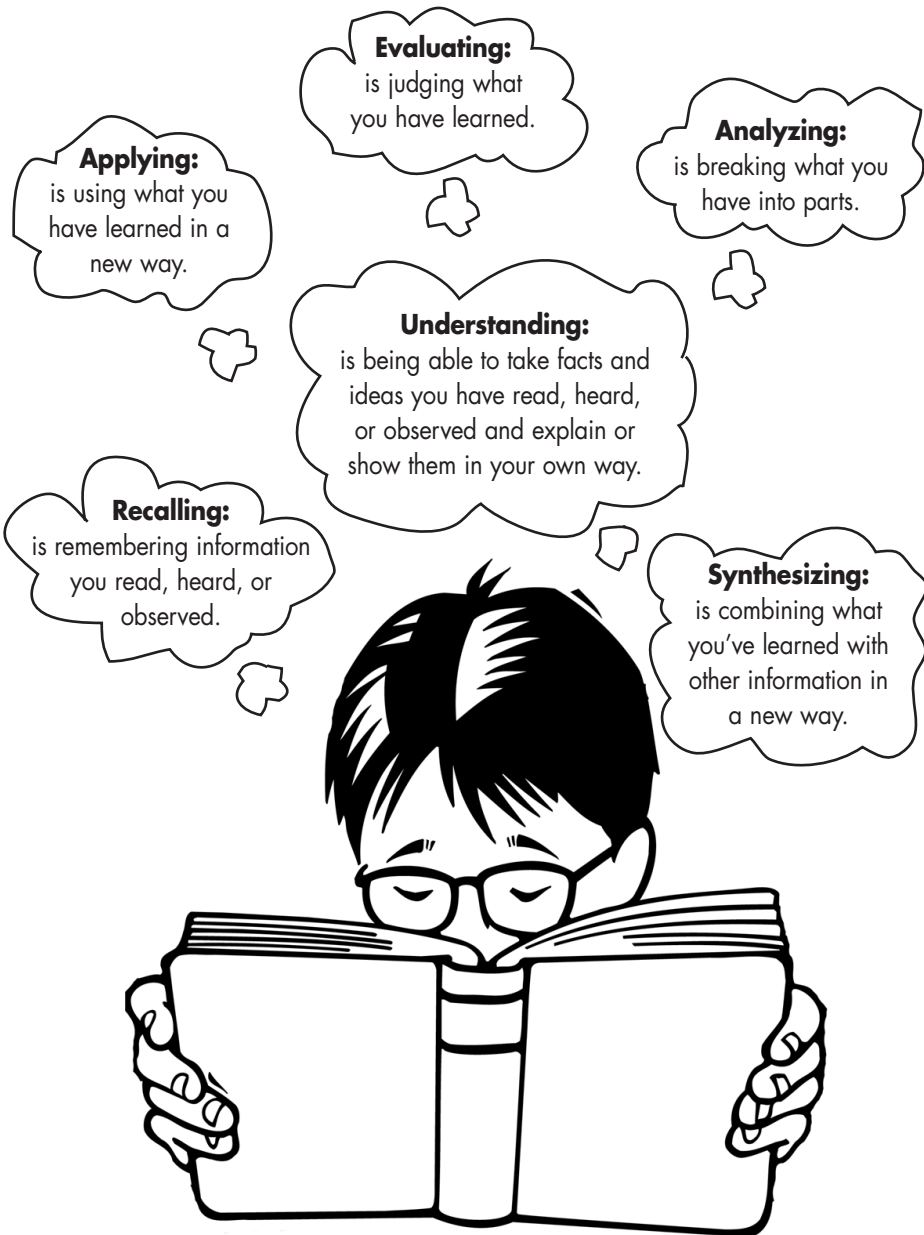
Becoming a Better Thinker

Thinking is an important part of what you do and who you are. You think a lot in school. You think when you read, write, listen, and speak.

Really, every time you are learning; you are thinking.

So, it makes sense that the better you think, the better you learn.

This section will give you some tips for becoming a better thinker.



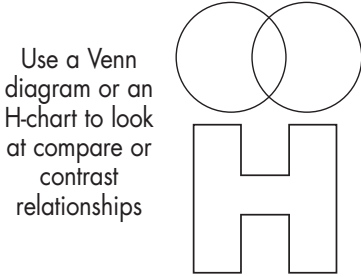
Guidelines for Thinking and Writing

Kinds of Thinking	You may be asked to ...		You should be ready to ...
RECALLING: is remembering information you read, heard, or observed.	List Cluster Identify Memorize Retell	Label Name Define Find	Remember what you've learned by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listing important details • defining terms • retelling a story
UNDERSTANDING: is being able to take facts and ideas you have read, heard or observed and explaining or showing them in your own way.	Explain Show Summarize	Sort Describe	Show that you understand what you've learned by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explaining how something works • giving examples • summarizing • interpreting • stating the main idea
APPLYING: is using what you have learned in a new way.	Select Organize Demonstrate Choose	Illustrate Locate Plan	Use what you've learned to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select the most important details • organize information • solve a problem
ANALYZING: is breaking what you know into parts.	Break down Examine Compare Contrast Map	Tell why Classify Give reasons Dissect Divide	Examine material closely to understand it better by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making connections • studying cause and effect • telling how things are alike or different
SYNTHESIZING: is combining what you've learned with other information in a new way.	Combine Invent Predict Develop Improve Change	Create Imagine Design Modify Construct Compose	Reshape material in a new form by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inventing a better way • predicting what will happen • adding some new ideas • telling what would happen if
EVALUATING: is judging what you have learned.	Judge Recommend Persuade Convince Prove	Rate Measure Argue Defend Decide	Judge the worth of the material by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pointing out the strengths and weaknesses • evaluating the clarity, accuracy, value, etc. • defending why it is/isn't the best choice • recommending it to someone else • giving your opinion

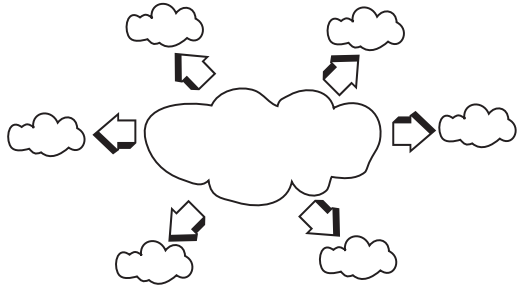
Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are tools you can use to sort information.

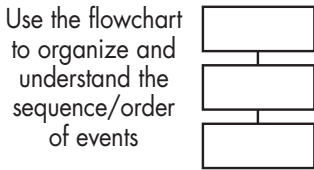
Graphic organizers can help you to: organize what you have read, heard, or seen;
see how ideas are connected or related;
show what you know;
plan your writing or a speech.



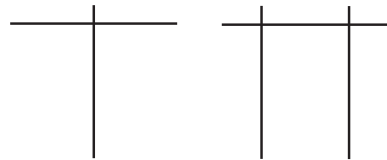
Use a Venn diagram or an H-chart to look at compare or contrast relationships



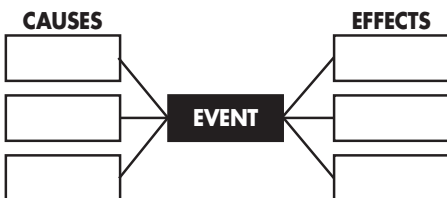
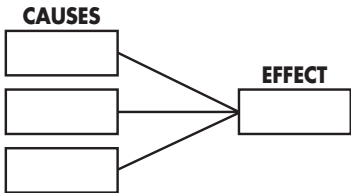
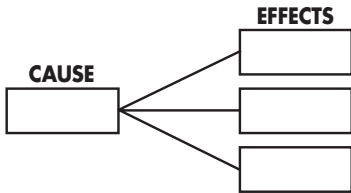
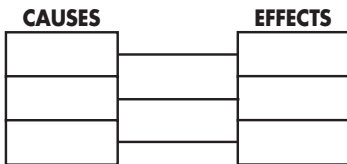
Use a web or mind map to organize details about a topic



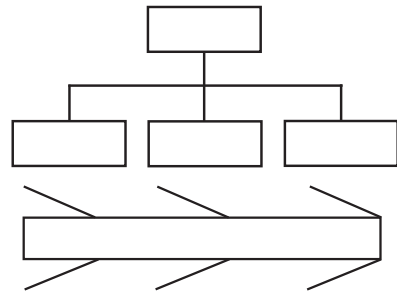
Use the flowchart to organize and understand the sequence/order of events



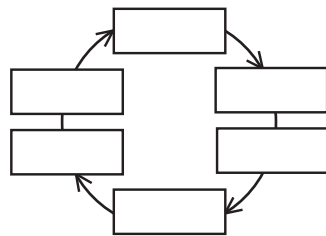
Use column charts to organize information and discover relationships



Use these cause and effect charts to understand these relationships



Use a tree chart or fish bone chart to organize main ideas and supporting details



Use a circular map to organize events/steps that follow an order and then come back to the beginning to start again

Answering Questions OR Responding to Prompts

When you answer questions or respond to prompts you are doing more than just writing or speaking. You are reading, thinking, organizing, and writing or speaking. Here are some suggestions to help you respond thoughtfully.

When you come across an essay question or writing prompt, be sure to

R. E. A. D.

the question carefully:

READ the question or prompt by paying careful attention to all parts.

EVALUATE the question or prompt by underlining or highlighting keywords or phrases that tell you exactly what your response needs to include (see the chart of command words below).

ARRANGE your response by making an outline, graphic organizer, or list of your ideas; you will probably only have time to produce a single draft of your response, so it's important to organize your ideas before you begin.

DRAFT your response, follow all directions, and do all parts; use details and descriptive language to develop your response.

Unpack the Question

You can use the letters of the word "unpack" to help you remember important things to do when you are answering a question or prompt.



Underline key words; use them in your topic sentence

Number the parts of the question

Plan how you will answer the question

AnsWER using specific details from what you have read or listened to

Check off each part of the question as you answer it

Keep up the great work

Test-Taking Strategies

Questions and prompts ask you to respond in many different ways.

Certain words in the question or prompt will help you to know how to answer. We call these words command words. The command words in the sentence tell you HOW to answer the question. Use the command words to help you to create better answers.

Refer to chart below to learn more about command words.

Command Words	Be prepared to . . .
Choose/Select	Pick or decide on something over other(s). <i>Choose the moral of the story.</i> <i>Select the most important details.</i>
Compare/Contrast	Compare: tell how things are alike. Contrast: tell how things are different. Sometimes you may be asked to do both. <i>Compare and contrast the United States with Mexico.</i>
Compose	Write to express ideas thoughtfully. <i>Compose a letter to your senator.</i>
Construct	Build or invent a way to explain an idea or concept. <i>Construct an isosceles triangle.</i>
Create/Invent/ Design	Use your imagination and experience to make up a new idea or object. <i>Create a new ending for the story.</i> <i>Invent a new way of getting to the moon.</i> <i>Design a flowchart to explain the food chain.</i>
Define	Tell what something means, what it is, or what it does. Be sure to use examples to make it clear. <i>Define evaporation.</i>
Describe	Tell how something looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and/or feels. Be sure to create a mental picture for the reader/listener. <i>Describe life in colonial America.</i>
Evaluate/Judge	Give a final opinion or decision about a topic. Be sure to give relevant reasons. <i>Judge whether the main character is good or evil.</i>
Examine	Investigate or inspect carefully to understand something fully. <i>Examine the character's actions to decide his most important character trait.</i>
Explain/Show/ Demonstrate/ Tell Why	Tell how and/or why something works, how and/or why it happens, or how to do it. Be sure to give many details and reasons. <i>Explain the life cycle of a frog.</i> <i>Show how you solved the problem.</i> <i>Demonstrate how an electrical circuit works.</i> <i>Tell why voting is a privilege.</i>
Find	Choose and list specific examples. <i>Find three examples of humor in the story.</i>
Identify/Name	Tell about facts or details that specifically characterize the object/topic. Be sure to choose what is most important. <i>Identify the causes of the Civil War.</i> <i>Name the five Great Lakes.</i>

Test-Taking Strategies

Illustrate	Clearly show how and/or why something works, how and/or why it happens, or how to do it by using pictures, figures, words, diagrams, etc. Be sure to give many details and reasons. <i>Illustrate the steps in the water cycle.</i>
Interpret	Use ideas and information to come up with your own ideas. After reading <i>Charlotte's Web</i> , interpret E.B. White's theme.
Label	Place a word or phrase on a picture, drawing, diagram, chart, etc. to identify it or its parts. <i>Label the parts of the brain.</i>
List	Give a number of facts, examples, reasons, or other details in a list form about a topic. <i>List five reasons why Lincoln was a good president.</i>
Locate	Find the exact position of something. <i>Locate Albany on the New York State map.</i>
Persuade/Convince	State your opinion or position. Give facts and reasons why someone should agree with you. Be sure to use words that are convincing. <i>Write a letter to the editor to persuade the town to build a skateboard park.</i> <i>Write a letter to convince others to protect the forest.</i>
Plan	Figure out or organize how to do something before hand. <i>Plan your essay on this page.</i>
Predict/ Make a Prediction	Tell about what could happen or follow based on what is already known. <i>Predict who might be the mysterious thief.</i>
Prove	Give facts and details (proof) which show clearly that something is true. Be sure to choose the most relevant facts and details. <i>Prove that a square is a rectangle.</i>
Recommend	Give reasons why an idea or object is worthwhile. <i>Recommend a good book to a friend.</i>
Retell	Tell the important parts of a story (characters, setting events, problem, solution) in a logical order. <i>Retell the story you just read.</i>
Solve	Find the answer to or work out the problem. <i>Solve the following problem to decide how fast the car was going.</i>
Sort/Classify	Group ideas, facts, objects, numbers, words, etc. by like qualities or put them in order. Sort words by part of speech. Classify the animals by their type of movement.
Summarize	Give a brief account of what you read/heard. Be sure to tell only about the most important events or facts about the topic. <i>Summarize the first two chapters.</i>

Question Answer Relationships

There is a connection between the type of question and the kind of answer you should give. When a question asks about something you have read, it is helpful to know how to go about getting the answer. Refer to the chart below to help you understand how questions and answers are related.

Kinds of Questions	How to answer the question	Words to Look For
Right There	The answer is "right there" in the text and easy to find. The words used to make up the question and the words used to answer the question are right there in the same sentence.	"Who is . . ." "What is . . ." "Where is . . ." "How many . . ." "When did . . ."
Think and Search	The answer is in the text, but you need to "think" about what you have read and "search" for the facts/ideas that will help you to answer the question. You may have to reread more than one paragraph to find the answer.	"What is the main idea . . ." "What caused . . ." "Compare/contrast . . ."
Author and You	The answer is not stated directly in the text. You need to think about what you already know, what the author tells you in the text, and how it fits together.	"How can you tell . . ." "Tell why. . ." "Do you think . . ."
On my Own	The answer is not in the text. You will need to use your own experiences and knowledge to answer the question.	"Based on your experience . . ." "Think about a time when . . ."

F Q R

Here is an easy strategy to use when you read nonfiction.

Divide your notebook page into three columns labeled: Facts, Questions, and Responses. When you finish reading a section of your text, complete the fact columns with facts that you feel are important, interesting, or new to you. Fill in the question column with questions that came to mind as you were reading. Fill in the response column with thoughts, connections, surprises, inferences, or thinking that occurred as you were reading.

Facts	Questions	Responses