

Why Read Literature?

Whenever you read, you have a purpose, or reason. Your purpose will vary, depending on the content, genre, and style of the work you plan to read. Preview three purposes you might set before reading works in this unit.

1

Read to be inspired.

When we are younger, it can be difficult for us to appreciate how much our parents do for us. Two poets, Robert Hayden and Evelyn Tooley Hunt, reflect back on how the thankless sacrifices of a parent allowed them to live a better life in **"Those Winter Sundays,"** page 400, and **"Taught Me Purple,"** page 398.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s message of peace and justice brought out the best qualities in many people. Alice Walker discusses how King's eloquence and courage transformed her life in her inspirational essay, **"Choice: A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,"** page 364.



3

Read for the love of literature.

The poet Emma Lazarus was from a wealthy family. Nevertheless, she still felt sympathy for the vast numbers of poor immigrants streaming into New York City in the late 19th century. Witness the words that have inspired countless numbers of new and established Americans when you read **"The New Colossus,"** page 372.

Memorable literature can sometimes capture a feeling with pinpoint accuracy. You may feel a flash of recognition as you experience the conflicted emotions of the young girl in Gish Jen's story, **"The White Umbrella,"** page 384.

2

Read for information.

In 1920, more than eighty years ago, women won the right to vote. This right was achieved through a long and difficult struggle which is now largely forgotten. It is difficult to take this right for granted after reading the powerful words of early feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton in **"Arguments in Favor of a Sixteenth Amendment,"** page 404.



Take It to the Net

Visit the Web site for online instruction and activities related to each selection in this unit.

www.phschool.com

How to Read Literature

Interactive Reading Strategies

Interactive computer games can be more fun than simply watching television because you are more of an active participant. Interactive reading is similar. When you interact with the books you read, the experience becomes richer and more fun. Use these reading strategies to help you interact with the text.

1. Clarify details.

Most people encounter some moments of confusion when reading new material. When this happens, take time to clarify the details of the passage you have just read.

- Pause to think about what has happened in the story. Then reread the passage slowly and carefully to clear up any remaining confusion.
- If you still have questions, continue reading to see whether you can find answers in passages that lie farther ahead.

2. Recognize connotations of words.

A connotation is the implied, or suggested, meaning of a word or phrase. For example, if you call someone a “clown,” you are probably relying on the connotation of the word—more than its literal meaning—to get your message across.

- To determine a connotation, notice how a word or phrase makes you feel.
- Classify the word or phrase as positive or negative, depending on its context and your past experience.

3. Respond to a theme.

Poems and stories are most memorable when their themes generate an emotional reaction.

- Determine the main theme that the author is communicating.
- Note your reaction to the theme. You might respond with approval, anger, or any other type of emotion based on previous experience.

4. Predict

Predicting, or making guesses about what will happen later in a story, keeps you actively involved in a story. Use prediction to avoid missing details in a story that could be important and to check your understanding of what you have read.

As you read the selections in this unit, review the reading strategies and apply them to interact with the text.

