

# Pausing to Connect Ideas within the Text

## *Teacher Reference*

### *What is it?*

Pausing to connect is an active reading strategy that engages students in thinking critically about information presented in texts. Even though the word “pause” implies a suspension of activity, “pausing” for this strategy begins an investigation into what the author is saying and how he or she says it. Although pausing to connect ideas within the text is a form of rereading, the purpose is quite different: a reader pauses and connects information within the text to deepen his or her understanding of how an author uses language to construct a particular passage or argument.

### *How do I use it?*

When we ask our students to pause and connect, we want them to take a moment to connect ideas within the text. Students may reflect on what they just read, synthesize the information that they have underlined or identified as relevant to the reading task, connect the reading aids to ideas presented in the text, or relate claims or key terms to the surrounding information. Once students have made connections within the text, they should document their connections in the margins or in their notes. For example, if a student works to synthesize a series of claims that an author has made in order to gain insight into the author’s argument, the student should write down his or her thoughts either in the text (if allowable) or on a page of notes.

### *When should I use it?*

As with all reading strategies, teachers should begin modeling this strategy until students learn what it means to connect ideas within a text. It is also useful to demonstrate for your students how long one might take to pause and connect ideas. Similar to rereading, pausing and connecting should happen as often as possible. Students need time to practice identifying information that is relevant to the reading task and time to learn how to connect that material to the surrounding text.

### *Why should I use it?*

A critical reader will often pause, reflect, and make connections to what he or she is reading. An author’s structure, word choice, arguments, and style are often times deliberate; therefore, a reader must pause and synthesize what has been said and make connections to the surrounding textual material. At times, key terms, concepts, ideas, and or beliefs will appear more than once in a text. A mature reader will identify such repetitions and seek to understand their significance. Mastering the ability to pause and connect will prove to be an essential skill for students as they experience increasingly sophisticated reading material.

# Pausing and Connecting

## *One-page Reference Guide*

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To help you get started, use the following questions to guide your thinking:

- What do I understand so far? What don't I understand?
- What information does the author need to clarify?
- Has the author used a particular word or term more than once? If so, circle the term whenever it appears.
- How does this term or that phrase connect to what the author is arguing? In other words, what is its function?
- How does what I just read connect to the above information?
- What is the author trying to get me to think about here, and here?
- What point is the author trying to make?
- What is the author's purpose?
- How has this section or paragraph helped my understanding of the text as a whole?