

Connect Four: Close Reading for a New Topic

This anticipation guide helps to introduce students to a new topic and teaches them reading strategies that can work for any discipline.

Step 1: Just Read

- 1.) Begin by briefly introducing the topic. (Example: *Today we will be starting our discussion of postwar affluence and anxiety. Before we begin to analyze the historical realities of this era, we should attempt to define as a class these terms – affluence and anxiety – and how they shape this era. We will start with affluence.*)
- 2.) Assign reading using the text or provide a useful introductory selection from a journal or anthology.
- 3.) Ask students to *just read* the text, but encourage them to consider looking for terms that seem to apply to the day's topic (example: *affluence*).

Step 2: Annotate for Key Terminology

- 1.) When students have completed reading, encourage them to re-read for key terms. They then go back over the same article/text and annotate (underline, star, highlight) key terms or phrases pertaining to the topic (example: *affluence*) within the reading. (Key terms or phrases should be fewer than 4 words).
- 2.) After they have completed this, students then write their top five key terms or phrases found in their notes or on the top of the article.

Step 3: Table

- 1.) On the white board or using a projector, create a table that looks like this, leaving space for you to write what students suggest in the empty cells:

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3				
4				

- 2.) Using “overhead” or brainstorming language, ask students to simply shout out some of their key terms or phrases that they selected in the reading. As they respond with key terms or phrases from the reading, you or a student volunteer will populate the cells at random. Continue until all cells are complete.

Step 4: Partner Work

- 1.) **Individually:** Assign each student a column or row (repeats are ok, as students can eventually work in partners or groups up to 4). And have them **individually** brainstorm a definition using *all four key terms or phrases in their cell*. (This is why it called Connect 4).
- 2.) **Partner/Groups:** Students work in partners or teams to read and rewrite their definitions until they feel confident. Students should only work in teams that are assigned their same column or row.

Step 5: Share Out

- 1.) Student teams read their definitions of the concept.