

Chapter 2

The Reading Process

Exercises, Activities, and Teaching Tips

EXERCISE 2.1: Practice Active Reading (26)

Answers will vary.

“Only Connect . . .”: The Goals of a Liberal Education” by William Cronon

Questions for Discussion (26)

1. In his introduction Cronon says the question *seems* simple, but the reverence shown to the phrase “liberal education,” the endless “mantras,” and “tired invocations” don’t get to its meaning. He creates interest by suggesting the real meaning of liberal education is more than what the readers have heard before.
2. Cronon wants to separate his definition of liberal education from the somewhat contentious world of politics where the word *liberal* may have negative connotations for some readers.
3. Answers will vary. Here Cronon supports his notion of using one’s talents and abilities to connect with and support others.
4. Answers will vary. Cronon lists and identifies each trait in a clear and concise sentence. This approach lends focus and clarity.
5. Answers will vary. Cronon suggests people are often too busy and distracted to pay careful attention to what others say. The educated person must make time to listen in order to more fully empathize with the person speaking.
6. Cronon seems to define reading as tuning both the eyes and ears “to the wonders that make up the human and the natural worlds” (28). This broad definition allows him to expand the act of reading beyond printed text.
7. The third trait (being able to talk with anyone) and the fourth trait (being able to write clearly and persuasively and movingly) involve interacting with others and, more importantly, *connecting* with others. Cronon sees both written and spoken conversations as acts of “touching.” Understanding one’s audience is crucial to building this kind of connection.
8. Answers will vary. Cronon suggests that wisdom is the ability to put knowledge to work in support of what one values or sees as important.
9. Answers will vary.
10. Throughout his essay Cronon shows how one can use the traits acquired by a liberal education in service to others. The connection Cronon encourages is the connection to other people.

EXERCISE 2.2: Read As a Believer and a Doubter (33–35)

Reading as a Believer

1. Answers will vary. It seems reasonable to expect that family members will play various roles based on their ages. Parents may have different expectations for children based on the children’s ages. These expectations may shape the roles the children play in the family structure and exert influence on how their personalities develop.
2. The behavior is logically connected to the birth order. For example, it’s reasonable to imagine the first child—the oldest—having a lot of adult attention, thus developing strong people skills. Showing how the birth order ties to how the child is treated by parents and interacts with siblings supports Adler’s theory.

3. The author uses examples of well-known people whose basic personality traits may be familiar to most readers. The familiar traits of each celebrity correspond with those Adler claims as typical for his or her birth order.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.

Reading as a Doubter

1. Answers will vary. Are all family structures and roles the same or at least consistent enough for this theory to be valid? How do other variables shape one's personality from genetics to culture to socioeconomic background?
2. Answers will vary. What if a child is part of a blended family—the result of two people with children from previous relationships forming a partnership? What if a family has twins or triplets or other multiple births? A child in the family with a disability may receive different kinds of attention. Gender may also play a role. For example, an only boy with multiple sisters or an only girl with multiple brothers may receive different kinds of attention and responsibilities.
3. The author even acknowledges stereotyping when describing the traits of the youngest child. Trying to present an all-encompassing theory that puts people in categories is bound to have some degree of stereotyping.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.

EXERCISE 2.3: Read as a Believer and a Doubter and Use IDEAS (38–42)

Reading “Black Men and Public Space” as a Believer

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. In Paragraph 5 Staples acknowledges that women are “particularly vulnerable to street violence, and young black males are drastically overrepresented among the perpetrators of that violence” (40). Later in the essay Staples describes precautions he takes to make himself appear less dangerous to people, such as not standing too close to people on subway platforms and whistling classical melodies when he goes on walks at night. These precautions show that he understands how he might appear threatening to people.

Reading “Black Men and Public Space” as a Doubter

1. Answers will vary.
2. Some may suggest that Staples, knowing he can appear large and intimidating when he walks the streets late at night, should avoid doing so. Similarly, he might expect a woman working alone in a jewelry store might be frightened by him when he comes into her store just to “kill time.” However, Staples could also be justified in feeling frustrated and even rage that he cannot engage in simple public activities that most people take for granted without creating fear in those around him and putting himself in potential danger.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.

Discovering IDEAS in “Black Men and Public Space”

1. The word *victim* in the opening sentence leads the reader to believe a crime is going to take place. The rest of the descriptive details in the paragraph further suggest that the woman is in some kind of danger from Staples. Readers may be curious when their expectations are not fulfilled, and the woman simply runs away while Staples continues his walk.
2. Staples wants readers to understand that his “ability to alter public space in ugly ways” is based entirely on the way he appears to others. He emphasizes that he is a “softy” who

shies away from confrontation and violence after seeing friends and family members locked away or killed.

3. Although he grew up in an “angry, industrial town” where street violence was common, Staples saw the consequences of such “bravado” and remained “one of the good boys,” even going so far as to call himself “timid.” It’s because he is the opposite of what his “victim” perceives that his readers understand his reaction to her fear of him.
4. Staples illustrates what he means by “the language of fear” when he describes the people who quickly lock their car doors when he passes in front of them or those who cross quickly to the other side of the street when he encounters them during his walks. Even professionals—such as police, doormen, and cab drivers—react towards him in a way that suggests their fear of him based solely on his appearance.
5. Answers will vary. Staples also includes the examples of being chased through a magazine office when he was mistaken for a burglar and having a woman in a jewelry store getting a Doberman when Staples came into her store to browse.
6. Just as hikers can be in danger if they startle a bear, Staples realizes that he himself is in danger if people perceive him as a threat. He whistles classical melodies because most people would not suspect a violent criminal to know classical music.
7. Staples describes situations in which women would often feel fearful and vulnerable. He also acknowledges that women are often victims of street violence, so they are justified in their fears. However, Staples presents himself as a sensitive, articulate man, undeserving of the reactions he gets in public spaces.
8. When he describes his first “victim,” Staples says he feels like “an accomplice in tyranny” and “indistinguishable from the muggers.” While he has grown accustomed to people’s reactions, he was “never comfortable” with them and even says he finds “no solace” in understanding why women are so fearful. He probably waits until the end of the essay to state his anger, in order for his readers to understand more fully how undeserving he is of the way he is treated in public and to better understand his anger and frustration.
9. Answers will vary.
10. Staples makes use of vivid concrete details to bring his situation to life for his readers. They can picture the dark streets, the Doberman straining at his leash. His examples *show* what he means and hold the readers’ interest.

EXERCISE 2.4: Identify Appropriate Summaries (46–47)

- a. D This passage has details—such as examples of magazines, authors, and crops—that do not typically belong in summaries, which should present only the main ideas of a passage.
- b. P This passage contains sentences and phrases that are too close in style to the original.
- c. A This passage accurately covers all the key points in a style distinct from the original passage while maintaining the tone of the original passage.
- d. G This passage omits key points and does not give the reader a clear sense of what Cronon means about what one should be able to read and understand.

EXERCISE 2.5: Summarize a Point from Cronon (45)

Answers will vary. The following are examples.

1. *They listen and they hear.*
In his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” author William Cronon points out that while being able to listen may seem to be an obvious skill, it should be noted that despite their demanding lives with all the distractions, educated people make an effort to focus on what others say and to take note of the world. They

can approach a line of reasoning, detecting its strengths and weaknesses, yet also hearing and understanding the speaker's feelings.

2. *They read and they understand.*

This passage is summarized in Exercise 2–3: Passage C.

3. *They can talk with anyone.*

In his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” author William Cronon says that educated people can talk in a variety of situations, both formal and informal. They can speak with those who are highly educated, children, the elderly, blue-collar workers, and successful business people with the goal of learning more about others.

4. *They can write clearly and persuasively and movingly.*

In his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” author William Cronon says that educated people are able to express their thoughts and ideas in writing in such a way that readers are informed, convinced, and inspired. Just as a conversation can build connections between people, so does the best writing.

5. *They can solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems.*

According to William Cronon in his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” educated people understand complicated puzzles and problems by first breaking them down into their component parts. Then, they study and analyze these individual parts to determine how they relate to each other. Finally, to gain complete understanding of these issues, they must also be able to put all the pieces back together again.

6. *They respect rigor not so much for its own sake but as a way of seeking truth.*

According to William Cronon in his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” educated people know and respect the importance of hard work. However, just working hard at something is not enough. The hard work must end up in accomplishment if one is truly to learn something of value.

7. *They practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism.*

In his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” author William Cronon describes educated individuals as respectful of the beliefs and values of all others. The educated know and understand that it is through diversity of thought and action that we learn the most about other people and the world around us.

8. *They understand how to get things done in the world.*

In his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” author William Cronon says educated people have a responsibility to make the world a little better through their actions in life—for those currently living and for future generations as well. Although there is always the danger of acting in a way that harms, taking action in the world cannot be avoided, so it must be done with care and planning.

9. *They nurture and empower the people around them.*

In his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” author William Cronon expresses his belief that educated people understand that individual accomplishments are actually community accomplishments. Individuals support their community so that the community supports individuals. The most effective and powerful accomplishments come when people work together.

10. *They follow E.M. Forster's injunction from Howard's End: “Only connect. . .”*

According to William Cronon in his essay “‘Only Connect...’: The Goals of a Liberal Education,” the most important trait of educated people is their ability to see and make connections. The goal, in fact, of a liberal education is to empower individuals with “the power, the wisdom, the generosity, and the freedom” to make connections with the world and other people.

EXERCISE 2.6: Summarize “Be an Active Learner” (45)

Answers may vary. The following is a sample.

According to Taylor and Copeland in their textbook *IDEAS & Aims*, being a successful college student starts with showing up for class; however, it's not enough to just sit in the classroom. Truly successful college students are “active learners” who demonstrate both a desire to learn and a desire to produce quality work by practicing three basic strategies. First, they assume responsibility for organizing their lives in ways that make college a priority. They find out what material was covered and what work was assigned in any classes they must miss. They know how well they are performing in all their classes and always look for ways to do better. Second, successful college students are active participants in their classes, always coming to class prepared and participating by taking notes, asking questions and making comments—all showing their commitment to understanding the course content. These students also work with their classmates in the classroom as well as online. Third, successful college students know when and where to turn for help. They familiarize themselves with campus resources such as the writing center and the library. They know their professors' office hours and office locations and are willing to go there to discuss class matters and concerns.

EXERCISE 2.7: Identify Appropriate Paraphrases (49–50)

- a. G This passage leaves out key points, such as the role of self-control.
- b. A This passage includes all the information in words and style distinct from the original author's.
- c. I This passage is inaccurate because Brooks does not say that *all* young people who delay gratification will end up abusing drugs and alcohol.
- d. P This passage is plagiarized because the writer lifts distinct phrases such as “rote tasks,” “a series of failed ordeals,” and “a parade of foolish decisions” right out of the original passage.

EXERCISE 2.9: Identifying Acceptable Quotes (52)

- a. U This quote is unacceptable because it is not necessary to quote material that simply presents a series of facts from Mischel's research. The language is commonplace, and David Brooks is not a well-known authority. This kind of material should be paraphrased rather than quoted.
- b. A The introductory phrase identifies Cronon as a scholar and educator, which gives his words more credibility, and the short quote presents one of Cronon's key ideas succinctly.
- c. U This quote is unacceptable because it is simply dumped. There is no introductory phrase.
- d. A This quote presents distinctive language to describe the academic experiences of those unable to delay gratification.