Mr. P’s Reading and Writing TDA Workshop

“Uncovering a Mystery”

The picture above is a likely predictor of the PROGRESS you will make as a READER, WRITER, and THINKER between now and the PSSAs. 😊

Name_________________________________________  Class Period________
STEP 1: READ THE PASSAGE.
You must be able to read the passage from which the question is being asked, and you cannot only look over the words with your eyes. To prove what you know, and to prove that you can answer the question that is being asked, I recommend the following strategies:

CHUNK THE TEXT.
Break down the information by drawing lines across the page between paragraphs OR by numbering each individual paragraph of the passage. By doing so, you will be building your focus across the entire passage, which will help you understand the prompt later on.

SEARCH FOR CONTEXT CLUES.
When you come across a word you are not familiar with, read the words that come before the word you do not know as well as the words after. Consider this example:

“The runner lags slowly behind his competitor.”

1) ______________________________________
2) ______________________________________
3) ______________________________________

LOOK AT TEXT FEATURES.
If you are reading a NONFICTION passage, take note of the text features: headings, captions, illustrations, labels, figures, data, etc. That information and your ability to identify the text features will help you comprehend the passage and prompt at hand.

SUMMARIZE.
Beside each paragraph, write a KEY WORD, the MAIN IDEA, or an IMPORTANT DETAIL from that area of the text so that you can recall it more quickly when writing your prompt.

During the TDAs, you will be provided with a HIGHLIGHTER, a PENCIL, and SCRAP PAPER. Using all of those materials guarantees success.
“Uncovering a Mystery”  
by David L. Harrison

It is September 2001, on a sunny day in the Midwest near Springfield in Greene County, Missouri, and Journagan Construction is building a road. Bobby Page’s job is to remove part of a hill that is in the way by using explosives. He and his crew get ready. Their hydraulic drill chatters down into the rocky earth, digging a series of small holes nearly 30 feet deep.

The crew places sticks of powder in the bottoms of the holes and covers them with ammonium nitrate, an explosive ingredient that looks like mayonnaise. The powder will set off the ammonium nitrate. Fuses and ignition caps are in place. A long line runs uphill to a place where the blast will be set off by the push of a button. People living nearby have been told there will be an explosion. Traffic on the road has been stopped to protect motorists.

Fire in the Hole!

Bobby raises his right hand, ready to call out the familiar warning. In just a moment, part of the hill will erupt. Dust and clay will shoot 30 feet toward the blue sky like a geyser. A wave of shattered earth and stone will explode onto the roadbed. It will sound like a waterfall crashing onto rocks. Dust and smoke will swirl. The air will smell of burned powder like the stale remains of Fourth of July fireworks.

“Fire in the hole!”

The side of the hill explodes. Smoky clouds of dust and grit collide. But no wave of broken rocks crashes outward onto the roadbed. Instead, part of the hill vanishes into the earth.

People scramble toward the blast side for a look. They stare down into a wide, jagged hole. The explosion has blown through the wall of a cave!

Driven by curiosity, Bobby picks his way down through the rubble. The floor is littered with slabs of rock that shattered off the ceiling. Bobby holds a lighter above his head. A few steps beyond the weak sunlight he finds himself in a dark, silent place. Wisely, he turns back. This unexpected cave is a serious problem for the road builders. It must be reported right away.
Detectives on the Scene

What happens next shows just how much detective work is involved in cave science. When he learns about the cave, Dave Coonrod, the top Greene County official, notifies Ken Thomson, a geologist and cave expert. Ken identifies the rocks around this cave as limestone, a kind of rock that formed underwater when a shallow sea covered the area millions of years ago.

Ken Thomson can see that the newly discovered cave is big. It's hard to tell how far its tunnels might reach. He decides that it needs to be investigated. One of the first people he notifies is Matt Forir. Matt is a paleontologist, the kind of scientist who studies ancient life. Matt and team member Lisa McCann will be the first detectives to tackle the scientific mysteries of this unknown cave. They wonder if they are about to walk where no human has been, uncover secrets that no one has witnessed. They share a great responsibility, and they feel it.

“You can’t be too careful,” Matt says. “This may just be another cave. But there is always the possibility of finding priceless fossils that will help us understand what life was like in the past. A careless step might destroy something that can never be replaced.”

Walking into the Past

Matt and Lisa work down through the debris and enter the blast opening. The first chamber of the cave is large and fairly round. The far walls and ceiling are only dimly visible in the lights mounted on their helmets. Stone formations of many shapes and colors hang from the ceiling and grow out on the floor.

Matt and Lisa edge forward. They walk between floor-to-ceiling columns that look like ice sculptures. Beyond the columns they pass a shallow pool so clear that the water is invisible. The floor slopes downward to the lip of a wide pit 10 feet deep and 30 feet across. The explorers slide down the slippery bank, wade through cold water above their ankles, and scramble up the far side.

Clay is everywhere. It coats the walls and the floor, and clings to their wet boots. One hundred feet into the cave, they stop to look at a wall. Their lights crisscross the darkness like narrow searchlights. Suddenly the beams come together on the same spot. Several feet above their heads, enormous claws have left deep slashes in the clay. Sometime in the past a living creature—a very large living creature—had visited the cave!
A Startling Discovery

“Look at the size!” Lisa says. The marks are 7 or 8 inches wide and 14 feet above the floor. That’s 4 feet higher than a basketball hoop!

Matt’s mind is already busy figuring out what kind of animal did this. “Bear,” he says. But the only bear native to this area is the black bear, and black bears can’t reach half this high. Their paws are more than 5 inches wide. The bear in here was a giant. Matt feels a rush of excitement. “Only one kind of bear was ever big enough to make those marks,” he says. “The short-faced bear. The one that autographed this wall stood here more than ten thousand years ago!” That’s when the last ice age ended, and paleontologists believe that short-faced bears were already extinct by then.

As Matt and Lisa turn around, their lights shine on the far wall of the passage, picking up claw marks that look different from the bear claws marks. These scratches look like they were cut into the clay with knives.

Matt whistles. “Saber-toothed cat or American lion,” he says. “This was a busy place!”

The explorers have only been in the cave for 30 minutes, but they return immediately to the surface. Matt’s report to the others waiting near the entrance is simple and straightforward:

“We have to save this cave! You’re not going to believe what’s down there!”

Saving the Cave

Ken, Matt, county officials, and other scientists consult with the construction company and road engineers. They reach a major decision. They will reroute the road to one side to spare the cave. They name the cave Riverbluff.

A crew repairs the damaged cave wall with 20-foot sheets of ½-inch steel. The cave is buried again to keep it safe from intruders. Now it can only be entered by climbing down a 16-foot hole and crawling through an underground drainpipe with padlocked steel doors at both ends.

By spring of 2002, the scientists are finally allowed to start exploring Riverbluff Cave. There is an air of excitement as they begin.

Mapping the cave is one of the first priorities. A map specialist named James Corsentino agrees to take on the task with help from Matt, Lisa, and other team members. “Crawling
on your stomach through wet clay isn’t always fun,” says James, “but a good map is worth it.”

Like explorers above ground, cave scientists need a map of where they’re going. Geologists need to know the shape, size, and location of the cave to understand how it was formed. Hydrologists (scientists who study water) need a good map to discover the role that water plays in the cave. Paleontologists need to know where each discovery is made to understand what life was like in the area.

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**COMPREHENSION CHECK 1**

**Answer** the multiple choice questions below.

1. Which of the following is **not** a heading from the passage?

   A. “A Startling Discovery”
   
   B. “Saving the Cave”
   
   C. “Saber-toothed cat or American lion,” Matt says.
   
   D. “Detectives on the Scene”

2. A **geyser** is “a hot spring in which water intermittently boils, sending a tall column of water and steam into the air.”

   Dust and clay will shoot 30 feet toward the blue sky like a geyser.

   In the sentence above, which word best describes what a **geyser** is or what a **geyser** does?

   A. Dust
   
   B. Clay
   
   C. Sky
   
   D. Shoot
**COMPREHENSION CHECK 2**

**After Reading:** Now that you have CHUNKED, SEARCHED FOR CONTEXT CLUES, LOOKED AT TEXT FEATURES, and SUMMARIZED while reading “Uncovering a Mystery,” you will be able to COMPLETE the chart below. You are responsible for ONLY your assigned section. We will fill in the whole chart as a class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Title</th>
<th>Main Idea (1 Sentence)</th>
<th>Text Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire in the Hole!</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detectives on the Scene</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking into the Past</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Startling Discovery</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving the Cave</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE PROMPT.**

*READ* the prompt below.

**TEXT-DEPENDENT ANALYSIS PROMPT**

The author makes the point that “detective work is involved in cave science.” Write an essay analyzing how this point is supported throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

When dealing with TDA Writing Prompts, first utilize the CUCC Method (Circle, Underline, Count, Check).

- **Circle**
  - CIRCLE the ________________ words

- **Underline**
  - UNDERLINE the ________________ that follow the direction words

- **Count**
  - COUNT up the ________________ of directions

- **Check**
  - CHECK that you have followed _________ the directions

Now, practice the CUCC Method with the prompt.

The author makes the point that “detective work is involved in cave science.” Write an essay analyzing how this point is supported throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

It is ABSOLUTELY IMPORTANT that you READ BOTH the PASSAGE and the PROMPT. To write well, you have to read well. BOTH READING and WRITING require you to follow directions.

**The Writer’s Checklist is on the next page**
Writer’s Checklist

PLAN before you write
- Make sure you read the question carefully.
- Make sure you have reread the entire passage carefully.
- Think about how the questions relates to the passage.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map, outline, or other graphic organizer to plan your essay.

FOCUS while you write
- Analyze the information from the passage as you write your essay.
- Make sure you use evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Use precise language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions in your essay.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write
- I wrote my final essay in the answer booklet.
- I stayed focused on answering the questions.
- I used evidence from the passage to support my response.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

The Writer’s Checklist is a GREAT WAY for you to monitor and assess your own work before you turn in your test. Use the checklist to guide you through the process after reading.

😊😊😊😊😊😊😊 Phew…you are ALMOST THERE!!!!!!
Now that you have read the passage, the prompt, AND the Writer’s Checklist, you are FINALLY READY to kick this TDA right in its sorry behind! 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊
STEP 3: WRITE the TDA. (Outline)

What follows is an OUTLINE you will use for the Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt on “Uncovering a Mystery.” You will write a FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAY for this TDA.

PASSAGE TITLE: __________________________________________________________

AUTHOR: ______________________________________________________________

Recall the prompt.

The author makes the point that “detective work is involved in cave science.” Write an essay analyzing how this point is supported throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

YOUR CLAIM:

In _______________________________, author _______________________________ states that “detective work is involved in cave science.” What ____________________ means by comparing detective work to cave science is that _____________________________ _____________________________.

PASSAGE SUMMARY:

In this fiction/non-fiction (circle one) passage, ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
THESIS STATEMENT:

Detective work is like cave science because ________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(TOPIC #1), ____________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(TOPIC #2), and __________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(TOPIC #3).

BODY PARAGRAPH #1: TOPIC #1

TOPIC SENTENCE ( Explain what this paragraph will be about and how it will prove your
thesis statement to be true.)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

EVIDENCE #1 (Quote from the text, including pg. # ____________)

The author states… In the text, it states…

According to (author’s name)… In (passage title)…

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

SENTENCE STARTERS are PROVIDED FOR the EVIDENCE
and EXPLANATION SECTIONS. Use them so your paragraphs
FLOW smoothly.
EXPLANATION (Explain what the text is saying in your own words)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This illustrates…</th>
<th>This shows…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is significant because…</td>
<td>This is convincing because…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BODY PARAGRAPH #2: TOPIC #2

TOPIC SENTENCE (Explain what this paragraph will be about and how it will prove your thesis statement to be true.)

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

EVIDENCE #2 (Quote from the text, including pg. # ____________)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The author states…</th>
<th>In the text, it states…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to (author's name)…</td>
<td>In (passage title)…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________
EXPLANATION  *(Explain what the text is saying in your own words)*

**This illustrates…**  **This shows…**

**This is significant because…**  **This is convincing because…**

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION  *(Start wrapping it up!)*

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

RESTATE  *(What was your TDA about again?)*

______________________________________________________________________

FINAL THOUGHT  *(What was the point?)*

______________________________________________________________________

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!** You have survived Mr. P’s TDA Workshop and are now an honorary member of the TDA Survivors Club. Was it as treacherous as you thought?