

# **Literacy in our Middle Schools**

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# The Changing Definition of Literacy

**Literacy is the ability to use available symbol systems...for the purposes of making and communicating meaning and knowledge.** Patricia Stock, Professor Emerita, Michigan State University (June, 2012)

**Literacy extends beyond the print-only world of reading and writing.**  
NCTE Policy Research Brief, Literacies of Disciplines (2011)

**Being literate is at the heart of learning in every subject area.**  
Principles for Learning (2010) ACTE, CoSN, NCSS, NCTE, NCTM, & NSTA

**Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies. These literacies—from reading online newspapers to participating in virtual classrooms—are multiple, dynamic, and malleable.**  
**Literacy has always been a collection of cultural and communicative practices shared among members of particular groups. As society and technology change, so does literacy.**  
NCTE Position Statement, Defining 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacies (2013)

# What is Active Student Learning?

## **CCSD Vision: Active student learning**

We want students engaged in experiences that involve meaningful inquiry, action, imagination, invention, interaction, hypothesizing, and personal reflection.

## **Students are actively engaged in learning by:**

- ▶ creating
- ▶ giving and receiving feedback
- ▶ reflecting and revising thinking and work
- ▶ hypothesizing, planning, trying and revising
- ▶ collaborating to solve problems
- ▶ having choice and voice in the learning process

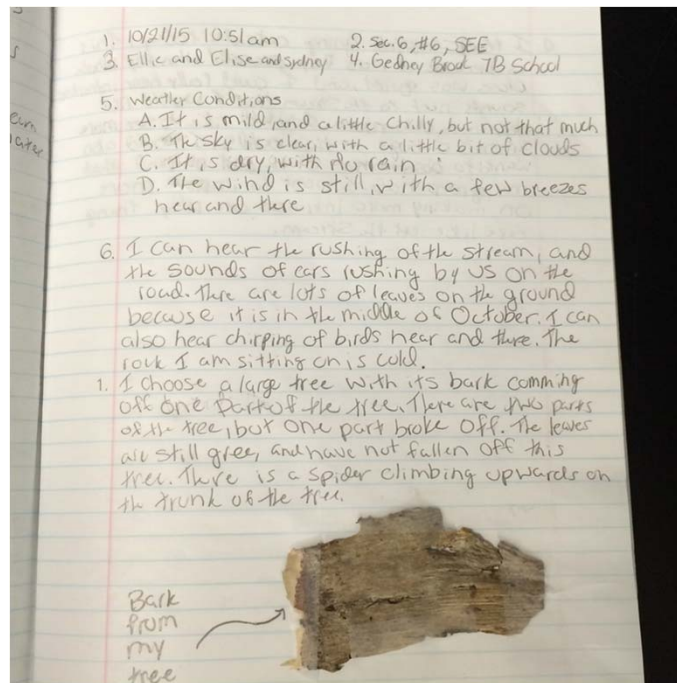
# Ongoing Literacy Work

- ▶ Matching students with texts
- ▶ English Language Arts curriculum review and professional development
- ▶ New Social Studies texts for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades

# Literacy Across the Disciplines: Common Structures

- ▶ Close Reading
- ▶ Read Aloud
- ▶ Book Clubs
- ▶ Multiple Texts
- ▶ Notebooks

# Science Notebooks



# Social Studies Notebooks

Scarcity

Tech nology

ideas, tools, machines, and materials that make life easier and better.

Profit

Profit of a company

Money/coins

The gain or benefit received from something.

Debt

Man who owes money

I don't owe money

You owe money so give #.

Business man.

Little or nothing

Purpose: to learn to take two column notes

Source: NY Times

Strategy: two column notes

My Notes	My Thinking
Tripoli-Rebels firing on loyalists?	Who are the loyalists?
Man firing machine gun from pickup truck	Are they rich?
hand signal	Are they connected to oil?
	It seems like people are used to fighting
	it's casual?
	Seem like planning
	Not Afraid.
	Where are they getting guns?

Political System

Power

The ability of people to influence the actions of others.

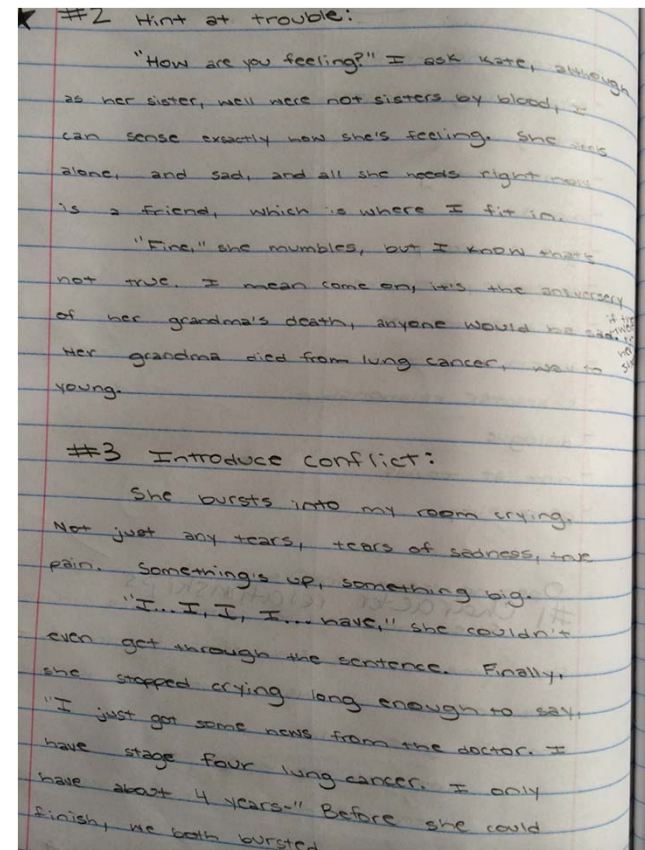
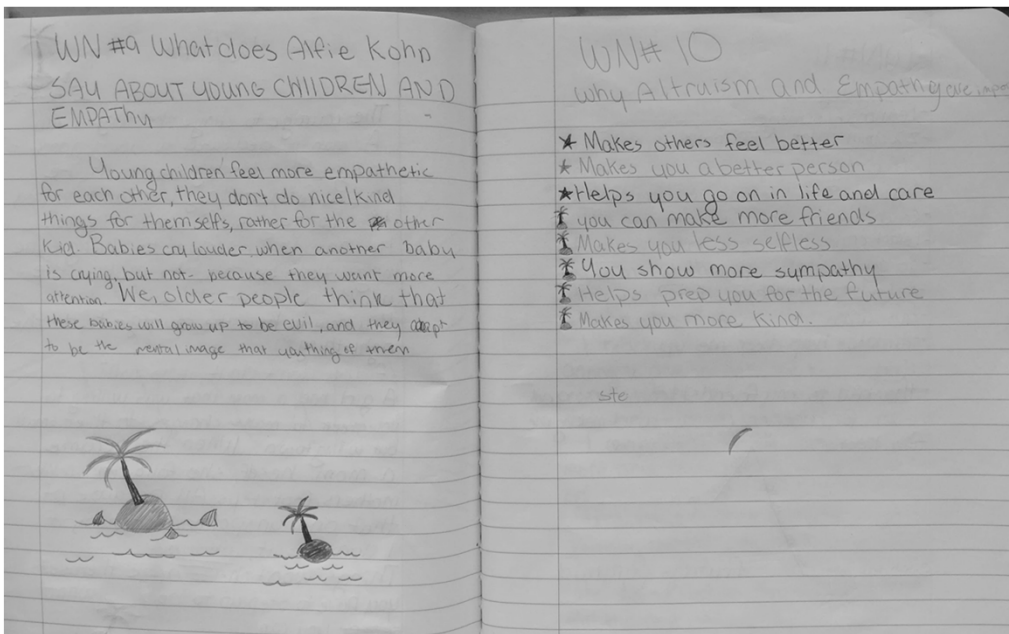
Democracy

A type of government. (dictatorship or democracy)

Nation

A form of government in which power is in hand of people; a government of the people; by the people and for the people.

# English Language Arts Notebooks





# Teacher Resources for Finding Multiple Texts

A screenshot of a Google Drive folder named "Texts4Teachers". The folder contains several text sets, each with a document icon, a name, an owner, and a last modified date. The text sets listed are:

Name	Owner	Last modified
Text Set for Critical Reading - Power, Positioning, Perspective	Carla Espana	May 18, 2015
Text Set for Lit Essay, Critical Reading, Memoir & Launching Reading	Carla Espana	Apr 28, 2015
Text Set for Historical Fiction	Carla Espana	Apr 27, 2015
Text Set for Literary Essay Unit & Analytical Reading - Grades 3-5 levels	Carla Espana	Mar 9, 2015
Breaking Through - Francisco Jimenez	Carla Espana	Nov 24, 2014
Text Set for Fantasy - Dystopian	Carla Espana	Oct 8, 2014
Text Set - Mentor Texts from UsS books	Carla Espana	Jul 29, 2014
Text Set for Literary Essay Unit & Critical Reading at Middle School Levels	Carla Espana	May 9, 2014
Nonfiction Research Text Sets	Carla Espana	May 9, 2014

A screenshot of the Chappaqua website home page. The page features a green header with the Chappaqua logo and a search bar. Below the header, the main content area is titled "HOME" and "Matching Students to Text". There are three main sections, each with an icon and a "MORE" button:

- Text Levels and Benchmarks**: Information on a variety of leveling systems and expectations for students.
- Resources**: Information and links on finding texts at a variety of levels.
- Assessments and Surveys**: Informal assessments to gather information on student reading.



# Reading Strategies

When I don't know a word while Reading...

**THINK** about story. What's happening now? **PICTURE** scene and ask **WHAT MAKES SENSE?**

**LOOK** closely at word. Is there another word **INSIDE** it? Does **PART** of the word make sense?

**READ** forward a bit. Does author **HELP** us out? Are there commas or parentheses with a definition or explanation?

**DECIDE** if word is **IMPORTANT** enough to figure out what it means. Is it **CONNECTED** to main character or key idea? Is it **REPEATED**? IF **IMPORTANT**, **research** it OR **keep asking**:  
 Now what do I think it means?

**Deeper Reading**

**Question** - I wonder...  
 - I am confused about...  
 - Infer  
 - Predict  
 - Explore

**Think**

**Connect** - Text-Text  
 - Text-Self  
 - Text-World

**Purpose** - Big ideas  
 - Theme (Author's Message)

**STOP Notice : Note**

**Contrasts & Contradictions** When a character does something that contradicts what you would expect.

**Ask** "Why is the character doing that?"  
 -> Predict  
 -> Infer

**STOP Notice : Note**

**Again and Again** When you are reading and you notice a word, phrase, or object repeated again and again.  
 "Why does this keep showing up again & again?"  
 - Theme  
 - Conflict  
 - Foreshadow  
 - Symbolism

**STOP Notice : Note**

**Aha Moment** When a character suddenly realizes, understands, or figures something out.  
 "How might this change things?"  
 - Conflict  
 - Theme

**Informational Reading Strategies**

**Create a Reading Plan**

1. Skim the text
2. Chunk sections
3. Interact with the text

**How to Interact**

**Annotate:**

- Write the gist
- Make connections
- Ask questions

**Then Purposefully:**

**Underline** \* **Star** \*  
**Highlight** **Circle**

**Develop Big Ideas!**

# Active Learning and Collaboration in Literacy

- ▶ Feedback on writing

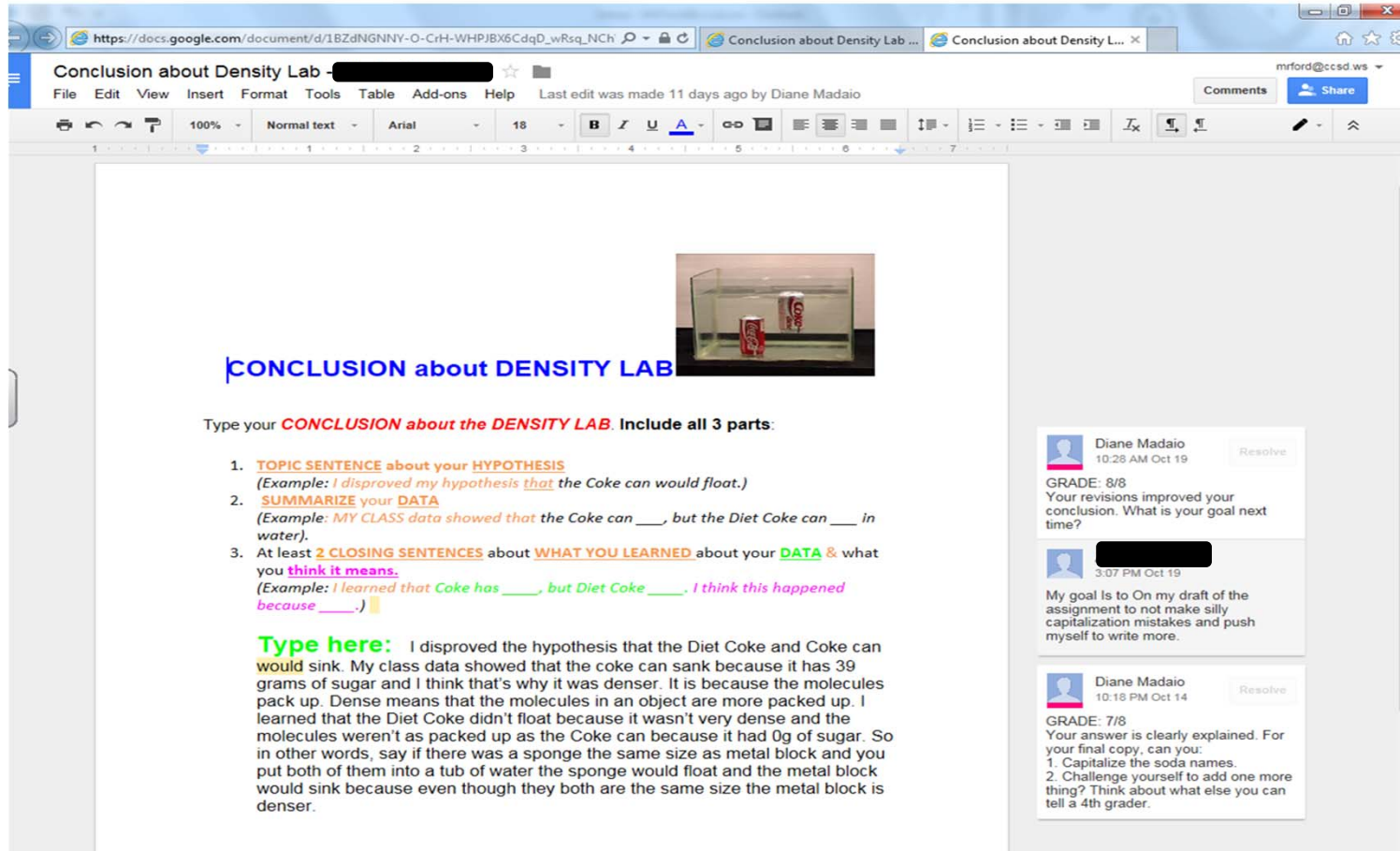
[Google Docs](#)

- ▶ Book clubs

- ▶ Small group and individual projects

[Collaborative research and informational webpages](#)

# Feedback Using Google Docs



The screenshot shows a Google Docs interface. The document title is "CONCLUSION about DENSITY LAB". The main content area contains a heading "CONCLUSION about DENSITY LAB" and a list of instructions for writing a conclusion. A comment thread on the right side shows two comments from Diane Madaio. The first comment, dated 10:28 AM Oct 19, says "Your revisions improved your conclusion. What is your goal next time?". The second comment, dated 10:18 PM Oct 14, says "Your answer is clearly explained. For your final copy, can you: 1. Capitalize the soda names. 2. Challenge yourself to add one more thing? Think about what else you can tell a 4th grader." There is also a comment from a user with a redacted name dated 3:07 PM Oct 19 that says "My goal is to On my draft of the assignment to not make silly capitalization mistakes and push myself to write more."

**CONCLUSION about DENSITY LAB**

Type your **CONCLUSION about the DENSITY LAB**. Include all 3 parts:

1. **TOPIC SENTENCE** about your **HYPOTHESIS**  
(Example: I disproved my hypothesis that the Coke can would float.)
2. **SUMMARIZE** your **DATA**  
(Example: MY CLASS data showed that the Coke can \_\_\_\_, but the Diet Coke can \_\_\_\_ in water).
3. At least **2 CLOSING SENTENCES** about **WHAT YOU LEARNED** about your **DATA** & what you **think it means**.  
(Example: I learned that Coke has \_\_\_\_, but Diet Coke \_\_\_\_. I think this happened because \_\_\_\_.)

**Type here:** I disproved the hypothesis that the Diet Coke and Coke can would sink. My class data showed that the coke can sank because it has 39 grams of sugar and I think that's why it was denser. It is because the molecules pack up. Dense means that the molecules in an object are more packed up. I learned that the Diet Coke didn't float because it wasn't very dense and the molecules weren't as packed up as the Coke can because it had 0g of sugar. So in other words, say if there was a sponge the same size as metal block and you put both of them into a tub of water the sponge would float and the metal block would sink because even though they both are the same size the metal block is denser.

**Comments:**

- Diane Madaio 10:28 AM Oct 19  
Resolve  
GRADE: 8/8  
Your revisions improved your conclusion. What is your goal next time?
- [Redacted Name] 3:07 PM Oct 19  
My goal is to On my draft of the assignment to not make silly capitalization mistakes and push myself to write more.
- Diane Madaio 10:18 PM Oct 14  
Resolve  
GRADE: 7/8  
Your answer is clearly explained. For your final copy, can you:  
1. Capitalize the soda names.  
2. Challenge yourself to add one more thing? Think about what else you can tell a 4th grader.