Charting the Text: *Analyzing the Micro-Structure*

At first, this strategy proves to be a difficult activity for most readers, but with practice students will be able to distinguish between what an author is *saying* in a particular paragraph and what an author is *doing* in that same paragraph. When we refer to what an author is *saying*, we are generally concerned with the "What." And when we refer to what an author is *doing*, we are interested in the author's actions. That is, when we chart what an author is *saying*, we focus on the actual content of a paragraph and when we chart what an author is *doing*, we focus on the deliberate choices authors make when constructing meaningful paragraphs. Over time, students will become more adept at distinguishing between what an author is *saying* and what an author is *doing*.

Below are some questions you should ask while analyzing what an author is *saying* in a paragraph.

• *What is this section about?*

• *What is the author saying?*

• *What is the content?*

• *What did I learn from this paragraph?*

• *What information is being presented?*

Here are some examples of what authors *do* in paragraphs. When articulating what an author is *doing*, begin with a verb.

• *Giving an example…*

• *Interpreting data…*

• *Sharing an anecdote…*

• *Summarizing research…*

• *Reflecting on a process…*

• *Contrasting one idea to another…*

• *Listing data…*

Student Handout 8.1: "Charting the Text Table: Analyzing the Micro-Structure" provides a table that students should use while learning how to chart the micro-structure of a text. The first table provides support for readers as they learn how to craft summary and charting statements. The second table offers more space for students to chart sections of a text. Student Handout 8.2: "Charting Verbs List" provides a list of verbs for students to help them be more successful when using the strategy.

Charting the Text: *Using the Margins*

As students become more comfortable with "Charting the Micro-Structure," ask them to write their summary and charting statements in the margins of the text. This is where students will eventually want to chart the text. A table works well for students who are learning how to chart, but as the strategy becomes more familiar, students should be able (and encouraged) to write directly in the margins. The following offers an authentic example of how a reader charted a section of text. Notice how the reader wrote summary statements on the left and charting statements on the right.

AVID Weekly
Decades *of College Dreams*

An excerpt from

A Big Problem

By The Washington Post

What does the author say in this paragraph?

Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in America and parents may outlive their children.

Research from various sources point to an increase in childhood obesity. The average weight among children ages 6–11 has increased.

These young people are at risk for diabetes, gall bladder disease, asthma, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

What does the author do in this paragraph?

Providing a direct quotation from a research project on childhood obesity

Citing research from individuals and groups who have studied obesity in America

Listing diseases and health concerns associated with obesity

(1) Of all the sobering facts in *The Post's* series on childhood obesity, this one stood out: "For the first time in history, American children could have a shorter life span than their parents." In just two decades, obesity has become an epidemic touching every stratum of society.

(2) According to acting Surgeon General Steven Galson, the prevalence of obesity has tripled among children ages 6 to 11 since 1980. A 2004 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that the average weight for 10-year-old boys and girls is 11 pounds more than it was in 1963. As Post writers Susan Levine and Rob Stein reported, almost a quarter of children through age 17 in Prince George's County, Md., and more than a third of 2- to 5-year-olds in Loudoun County, Va., are considered obese. In Washington D.C., 40 percent of schoolchildren and pre-adolescents are at least overweight.

(3) The extra weight devastates health. Type 2 diabetes has increased tenfold among children and teens, and gallbladder disease has tripled in children ages 6 to 17. That's on top of the increased risk of asthma, high blood pressure and heart disease.

LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST — 05-24-08

Charting the Text: *Sample Table*

This page offers an example of the "Charting the Text" strategy. In this example, the reader has utilized the table provided on Student Handout 8.1 "Charting the Text: Analyzing the Micro-Structure." This example offers statements that describe what the author says and what the author does in each of the three paragraphs.

An excerpt from

A Big Problem

By The Washington Post

1 Of all the sobering facts in *The Post's* series on childhood obesity, this one stood out: "For the first time in history, American children could have a shorter life span than their parents." In just two decades, obesity has become an epidemic touching every stratum of society.

2 According to acting Surgeon General Steven Galson, the prevalence of obesity has tripled among children ages 6 to 11 since 1980. A 2004 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that the average weight for 10-year-old boys and girls is 11 pounds more than it was in 1963. As Post writers Susan Levine and Rob Stein reported, almost a quarter of children through age 17 in Prince George's County, Md., and more than a third of 2- to 5-year-olds in Loudoun County, Va., are considered obese. In Washington D.C., 40 percent of schoolchildren and pre-adolescents are at least overweight.

3 The extra weight devastates health. Type 2 diabetes has increased tenfold among children and teens, and gallbladder disease has tripled in children ages 6 to 17. That's on top of the increased risk of asthma, high blood pressure and heart disease.

LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST — 05-24-08

¶	What does the author *say* in the paragraph?	What does the author *do* in the paragraph?
1	*Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in America and parents may outlive their children.*	Providing a direct quotation from a research project on childhood obesity
2	*Research from various sources point to an increase in childhood obesity. The average weight among children ages 6–11 has increased.*	Citing research from individuals and groups who have studied obesity in America
3	*Obesity leads to poor health; specifically, overweight children could develop Type 2 diabetes, suffer from gallbladder disease, or develop asthma, high blood pressure, and heart disease.*	Listing diseases and health concerns associated with obesity

Writing in the Margins:
Six Points of Literary Analysis

This table provides six ways of looking closely at texts to do literary analysis; these are ways to consider how an author crafts a text. Your teacher may assign a particular point to look for or you may determine a focus yourself. As you read, mark the text according to your focus and then use the questions at the bottom of the page to help guide what you write in the margins. Write down your responses in the margins of your text, on sticky notes or in your Cornell notes.

Elements of Language

In order to understand and interpret elements of language used in a text, **identify and mark** examples of:

- parts of speech
- unusual, purposeful or repetitive diction (word choice)
- use of phrases
- use of clauses
- patterns of sentencing (e.g., simple, compound, loose, periodic)
- approach to syntax (how sentences are constructed; e.g., use of conjunctions, parallelism, etc.)

Figurative Language

In order to understand and interpret the use of figurative language in a text, **identify and mark** examples of:

- metaphor
- oxymoron
- paradox
- personification
- pun
- idiom
- simile
- hyperbole

Literary Elements

In order to understand and interpret literary elements in a text, **identify and mark** examples of:

- characters (protagonist, antagonist, foil)
- setting
- plot
- point of view
- theme
- tone
- rhetorical shift

Literary Techniques

In order to understand and interpret literary techniques in a text, **identify and mark** examples of:

- allusion
- characterization
- dialogue
- irony
- satire
- persuasive appeals (ethos, logos, pathos)
- motif
- symbolism
- imagery

Writing in the Margins: Six Points of Literary Analysis
(cont.)

Sound Devices	Overall Voice and Style Analysis
In order to understand and interpret sound devices in a text, **identify and mark** examples of:	In order to understand and interpret voice and to analyze the overall style of a text, **identify and mark** examples of:
• alliteration	• active/passive voice
• assonance	• detail
• consonance	• diction (word choice)
• meter	• imagery
• onomatopoeia	• syntax
• rhyme	• structure
• rhythm	• tone shift

Based on what you marked in the text, address these types of questions in your margin notes:

Level 2:
• What language patterns do I see?
• How does the language (or figurative language) change over the course of the text or with different characters/narrators?
• What do I notice about the author's use of figurative language? Are there patterns?
• What are the details of a particular literary element—setting, for example? What makes up the setting (or who are the characters, what are the conflicts in the plot, etc.)?
• What do I notice about the author's use of allusion (or dialogue, motif, persuasive appeals, etc.)?
• What do I notice about the author's use of alliteration (or assonance, rhyme, etc.)?
• What stands out as important about the author's style? Is the imagery important (or the detail, syntax, etc.)?

Level 3:
• What is the author's purpose using language (or figurative language, sound, literary techniques, etc.) in this way—what effect does s/he achieve?
• How does this example impact the overall meaning of the text?
• How does the author's use of specific literary techniques help develop or support a theme or claim in the text?