**Charting a Text for What It Says/Does**

Adapted from the work of Katie Hughes

Charting involves annotating a text in order to show the “work” each paragraph or section (made up of multiple paragraphs) is doing. Charting has many benefits: it helps students to identify what authors are *doing* in various parts of the text rather than simply what s/he is *saying* (and this helps students to move away from summarizing and into analyzing); it can serve as a way to thoroughly understand in a detailed way how a text is put together; it brings rhetorical awareness of the specific choices and deliberate “moves” made by authors throughout a text.

**How do we do charting?**

Break down texts by section or paragraph to analyze what each section/paragraph is *doing* for the overall argument. Ask, what is the *purpose* of the section/paragraph? What is the author *doing*, *how*, and *why*? It’s important to select strong **verbs** to describe what authors *do*.

* For instance, maybe the author **makes** a claim, **supports** a claim, **illustrates** with examples/anecdotes, **describes** issues, **contextualizes** the topic, **clarifies** misconceptions, **rebuts** counter arguments, **criticizes** previous work, **appeals** to the audience (to their emotions or sense of logic), **builds** credibility for him/herself, **outlines** what happens next in the text, etc.

Here are some additional sample verbs to draw on (avoid thinks, believes, says/states, discusses):

Try this format: The author [VERB] [IDEA] by [EXPLAIN HOW].

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AcknowledgesAdvocatesAmplifiesAnalyzesArgues(Constructs an)**  **AnalogyAsserts****AssumesAttacksChallengesClaimsClarifiesCompares****Complicates****Concedes** | **Concludes** **ContrastsContradicts(Presents)**  **Counterarguments (Presents)**  **CounterexamplesDebatesDeconstructsDefinesDefendsDiscusses****Distinguishes**  **(between)****Exaggerates****Examines** | **Exemplifies ExplainsExtends ForecastsFaultsFramesIdentifiesIllustratesIntroducesImpliesInfers InvestigatesJustifiesOutlinesParodies****Predicts****Problematizes** | **Proposes (Sets up a)**  **parallelQualifies QuestionsRebutsRefinesRepeatsReframesRidiculesSatirizesStressesSummarizesSupportsSynthesizesTheorizes** |

Add some of your own: