Some students may benefit from a review of the strategies on the following masters.

- BLM 1 Reading Short Stories
- BLM 2 Reading Poetry
- BLM 3 Reading Essays and Other Non-fiction
- BLM 4 Reading/Viewing Media Texts
- BLM 5 Reading Scripts
- BLM 6 Working in Groups
- BLM 7 Planning and Preparing Presentations
- BLM 8 Planning and Organizing an Independent Study Unit (ISU)
- BLM 9 How to Evaluate Visuals
- BLM 10 How to Conduct Research
- BLM 11 How to Write an Analytical Essay

These blackline masters can be used in several ways:

- Begin the year by providing students with copies of all or selected masters to use as they work on activities throughout the year. These masters can be kept in students’ notebooks or portfolios.

- Provide students with a copy of a specific master as they work on a particular project.

- Create an overhead and review the strategies as a whole class or with small groups.

- Post these masters on a bulletin board so that students can refer to the strategies and instructions easily.
READING SHORT STORIES

Here are some strategies to consider when reading short stories.

Before Reading

- Recall what you already know about the story or writer and the context in which the story was written.
- Preview the text (graphics, language, title).
- Consider what the title reveals about the story.
- Read any introductory text or pull quotes and consider what they reveal.
- Consider the genre or type of story—science fiction, survival, humour, et cetera.
- Predict what the story will be about.
- Set a purpose for reading.
- Determine a reading plan.

While Reading

- Ask questions about characters, setting, events, conflict, et cetera.
- Look for answers.
- Predict what will happen next and check predictions.
- Use story structure and elements to make meaning (for example, think about the characters and what motivates them; think about the setting and how it unifies other elements of the story).
- Identify the theme, message, or mood; consider how author’s context might have affected these elements and how your context affects interpretation.
- Describe the images created as you read.
- Note and interpret stylistic techniques (voice, use of foreshadowing, et cetera).
- Reread parts that are not making sense.
- Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words or try to determine their meaning by their context in the story.
- Make personal, social, or historical connections or references.

After Reading

- Summarize important ideas.
- Evaluate effectiveness of characterization and plot.
- Reflect on the content of the story. For example, what does the story express?
- Reflect on theme, mood, and message, comparing your interpretation with other’s.
- Assess the treatment of universal themes or global issues.
- Identify key events, key images, and effective language.
- Reread sections for a specific purpose.
- Analyse connections you and others have made.
- Describe how audience, purpose, and author’s context affected text.
- Respond to the story by writing, discussing, presenting, or representing.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies you chose.
READING POETRY

Here are some strategies to consider when reading poetry.

Before Reading

☐ Recall what you already know about the poem or poet and the context in which the poem was written.
☐ Preview the text (graphics, features, language).
☐ Identify the structure and characteristics (for example, patterns, shape, verses, stanzas, punctuation, and rhyme) of the poetic form.
☐ Consider what the title reveals.
☐ Predict what the poem will be about.
☐ Set a purpose for reading.

While Reading

☐ Ask questions about the meaning of words, lines, or stanzas.
☐ Look for answers.
☐ Use poetic structure (including stanzas, spacing, punctuation, et cetera) to make meaning.
☐ Check the accuracy of your predictions.
☐ Describe the images created as you read.
☐ Note and interpret stylistic techniques (rhyme, imagery, sound devices, et cetera).
☐ Reread parts that are not making sense.
☐ Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words or references or try to determine their meaning by their context in the poem.
☐ Read the poem aloud and assess how interpretation changes.
☐ Make personal, social, or historical connections.

After Reading

☐ Summarize important ideas.
☐ Reflect on the content of the poem; for example, what does the poem express?
☐ Reflect on theme, mood, and message, comparing your interpretation with other’s.
☐ Assess the treatment of universal themes or global issues.
☐ Identify the key events, key images, and effective language.
☐ Describe how audience, purpose, and author’s context affected text.
☐ Reread sections for a specific purpose.
☐ Analyse connections you and others have made.
☐ Respond to the poem by writing, discussing, presenting, or representing.
☐ Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies you chose.
READING ESSAYS AND OTHER NON-FICTION

Here are some strategies to consider when reading essays and other non-fiction.

**Before Reading**
- Recall what you already know or want to know about the topic, author, or context in which the selection was written.
- Decide if this text will be useful for your research.
- Begin a K-W-L (Know/Wanted to Know/Learned) chart for the topic.
- Preview the text and text features (graphics, title, headings, captions, charts, sidebars, etc.) and consider what they reveal.
- Identify the form (essay, editorial, article, speech, etc.) and choose reading strategies for that form.
- Recall the structure and characteristics of the form.
- Set a purpose for reading.
- Consider your expectations for this text.
- Determine a reading plan.

**While Reading**
- Ask questions about information and ideas.
- Look for the answers to questions you have.
- Identify the thesis and main idea of each paragraph.
- Identify any bias and inconsistencies in argument.
- Decide whether you agree with viewpoints, theories, or ideas.
- Use features (headings, pull quotes, captions, etc.) to make meaning.
- Identify structure (cause and effect, comparison/contrast, chronological, etc.).
- Note and interpret stylistic techniques (rhetorical devices, diction, etc.).
- Reread parts that are not making sense.
- Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words or references or try to determine their meaning by their context in the selection.
- Make personal, social, and historical connections with ideas and information.
- Reflect on usefulness of text for your needs.

**After Reading**
- Summarize important ideas.
- Identify key events, key ideas, or effective language.
- Describe how audience, purpose, and author’s context affected text.
- Evaluate the content and structure of the text.
- Reread sections for a specific purpose.
- Complete the K-W-L chart for the topic.
- Evaluate usefulness, relevance, and credibility.
- Compare and contrast with other similar forms.
- Analyse connections you and others have made.
- Respond to the selection by writing, discussing, presenting, or representing.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies you chose.
Here are some strategies to consider when reading/viewing media texts.

**Before Reading/Viewing**
- Recall what you already know about the media format, author, or context in which the media text was produced.
- Preview the text and text features (graphics, title, headings, captions, charts, sidebars, et cetera) and consider what they reveal.
- Identify the form (newspaper or magazine article, poster, radio ad, et cetera) and choose reading strategies for that form.
- Recall the structure and characteristics of the form.
- Set a purpose for reading/viewing.
- Consider your expectations for this text.
- Determine a reading plan.

**While Reading/Viewing**
- Ask questions about information and ideas.
- Look for the answers to questions you have.
- Identify any bias and the explicit and implicit messages.
- Consider the media codes and conventions that influenced the text.
- Identify any stereotypes or generalizations.
- Decide whether you agree with viewpoints or ideas.
- Use features (slogans, graphics, images, captions, et cetera) to make meaning.
- Identify connections between type and any images or graphics.
- Note and interpret stylistic techniques (persuasive language, slang, colloquialisms, rhetorical devices, et cetera).
- Reread parts that are not making sense.
- Make personal, social, and historical connections with messages and text.

**After Reading/Viewing**
- Identify messages, production options, audience, and purpose of text, and consider how these factors influenced the text’s producer.
- Analyse various relationships that affected production of text (between media work and industry practices, between text and government regulations, et cetera).
- Assess the treatment of universal themes or global issues.
- Evaluate the visual impact, content, and structure of the text.
- Reread/view sections for a specific purpose.
- Compare and contrast with other similar forms.
- Analyse connections you and others have made.
- Respond to the media text by writing, discussing, presenting or representing.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies you chose.
READING SCRIPTS

Here are some strategies to consider when reading scripts.

Before Reading
- Recall what you already know about the script or writer and the context in which the script was written.
- Preview the text (notes on setting and characters, language, title, et cetera).
- Consider what the title reveals about the story.
- Read any introductory text or pull quotes and consider what they reveal.
- Consider the genre or type of script (radio, stage, TV, or movie; science fiction, survival, humour, et cetera).
- Predict what the script will be about.
- Set a purpose for reading.
- Determine a reading plan.

While Reading
- Ask questions about characters, setting, events, conflict, et cetera.
- Look for answers.
- Predict what will happen next and check the accuracy of your predictions.
- Consider the media codes and conventions that influenced the text.
- Identify any stereotypes or generalizations.
- Use structure and elements to make meaning (for example, think about the characters and what motivates them; think about the setting and how it unifies other elements of the script).
- Identify the theme, message, or mood; consider how author’s context might have affected these elements, and how your context affects interpretation.
- Describe the images created as you read.
- Note and interpret stylistic techniques (tone, mood, use of foreshadowing or flashback, et cetera).
- Reread parts that are not making sense.
- Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words or references or try to determine their meaning by their context in the script.
- Perform the script and assess how interpretation changes.
- Make personal, social, or historical connections.

After Reading
- Summarize important ideas.
- Evaluate effectiveness of characterization and plot.
- Reflect on the content of the script. For example, what does the script express?
- Reflect on theme, mood, and message, comparing your interpretation with other’s.
- Assess the treatment of universal themes or global issues.
- Identify key events, key images, and effective language.
- Reread sections for a specific purpose.
- Analyse connections you and others have made.
- Compare and contrast with other similar forms.
- Respond to the script by writing, discussing, presenting, or representing.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies you chose.
WORKING IN GROUPS

The strategies you choose to use from those listed below will depend on the goal of your group—discussing a novel, writing a poem, producing a TV commercial, researching a topic, et cetera—and the role you play within the group. Some of the strategies and tips below will be helpful no matter what you are doing.

Getting Started

- Set a goal for the group work. What do you hope to achieve? How realistic is your goal? How will you meet that goal?
- Establish roles and tasks for each group member. Who is best suited to complete each task necessary to meet your goal? What roles do the group members naturally assume? Will these be the roles they fill this time?
- Reflect on the advantages of working with a group to meet your goal. How will working together be different from working alone to accomplish this goal? What will you do differently? What will you expect from your fellow group members?

Working Together

- Participate in the group process, fulfilling your assumed role.
- Support other group members in a successful completion of your task.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use academic language appropriate to the task and your role.
- Respect other group members.
- Constructively, question, challenge, or assess the information or ideas of others.
- Expand on the ideas of others.
- Contribute ideas or information.
- Make notes.
- Summarize ideas and information.
- Work toward group consensus and/or completion of your goal.
- Remain focussed on the purpose of your group work.

After the Group Work

Group Assessment
Together with other group members, answer the following questions:
- Did we accomplish our goal?
- What helped us accomplish our goal?
- What obstacles did we overcome? How?
- What would we do differently next time?

Peer Assessment
Ask a group member to answer the following questions about your group participation:
- Did I contribute to the group in a fair manner?
- Did I fulfil my assumed role or task?
- Did I demonstrate that I understood the topic of our discussion?
- Did I demonstrate that I understood the goal of our group?
- Was I clear, relevant, and logical?
- How did I present myself to other group members—confident, unsure, or unprepared?
- What should I do differently next time?
PLANNING AND PREPARING PRESENTATIONS

The strategies you choose to use from those listed below will depend on the type of presentation you are planning—formal, informal, dramatic, et cetera. If you are presenting information you have researched to your classmates, your presentation plan will be different from presenting a speech you have written to the school or a dramatic performance of a scene from a play. Some of the strategies and tips below will be helpful no matter what you are doing.

Planning your Presentation
Answer the following questions as the first step in planning your presentation. Your thoughts on these questions may change slightly as you go through the process of planning and preparing a presentation.

- Should I work alone or with others?
- What does my presentation entail (a dramatic monologue, a persuasive speech, a choral reading of a poem, the presentation of information I have researched, et cetera)?
- If I am presenting research, am I clear on my topic and have I completed enough research?
- What style of presentation should I give?
- Who will my audience be?
- What is my purpose?
- What do I hope to achieve with my presentation?

Preparing Your Presentation
As you complete the second stage of your presentation, remember the following:

- Organize the content of your presentation, as well as materials, evidence and information, props, visual aids, handouts, et cetera.
- If necessary, prepare memory aids.
- If you have developed a PowerPoint or similar type of presentation, decide how to incorporate the various components of such a presentation—visuals, text, and spoken word.
- Check that all elements of the PowerPoint presentation are working.
- Consider your language (formal, informal, academic, et cetera), and the impact it might have on an audience.
- Reflect on how you will use rhetorical devices (pauses, repetition, short and emphatic sentences, et cetera), imagery, and analogy to increase the impact of your presentation.
- Consider using appropriate interactive activities to engage your audience.
- Try to think of and plan for any questions or concerns that might come up during the presentation.
- Try to relax before your presentation and develop an action plan in case you lose your spot or get nervous.
- Rehearse (with props, visual aids, et cetera), memorizing your lines if necessary.
- Experiment with your voice, facial expressions, gestures, and body language—especially for a dramatic performance.
- Tape your rehearsal and listen to the tape to assess your performance.
Time yourself during the rehearsal—if your presentation is not taking the time designated for your presentation, cut or add material as necessary.

Revise your presentation to increase its effectiveness.

Remember your audience!

**Presenting**

Use the following strategies, as appropriate, when you finally face your audience:

- Begin with a short introduction that clearly states your purpose and intentions.
- Have your materials, props, visual aids, or handouts organized and close at hand.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Stand tall or sit-up straight (unless a dramatic performance requires a different posture).
- Present a professional, composed appearance (do not scratch your head or tug at your clothing).
- Make eye contact with various members of your audience as you speak, try to form connections with them.
- Remember to use rhetorical devices to capture the audience’s interest.
- If you lose your place, pause, take a deep breath, and begin from an appropriate point.
- Remain focused on the presentation.
- End by asking if there are any questions, then answer them.

**After the Presentation**

Find out how your presentation went by asking your audience some of these questions:

- Did I speak clearly and slowly enough?
- Did I assume and maintain an appropriate role and tone for my purpose and audience?
- Were the props or visual aids I chose helpful?
- Did I demonstrate that I understood the topic?
- Could you follow my argument?
- Did I have any omissions or assumptions in my argument?
- Was my presentation organized in a logical way?
- How did I present myself to my audience—confident, unsure, or unprepared?
- What should I do differently next time?
STRATEGIES FOR PLANNING AN INDEPENDENT STUDY UNIT

The strategies you choose to use from those listed below will depend on the type of Independent Study Unit (ISU) you are planning—essay, presentation, report, et cetera. However, some of the strategies and tips below will be helpful no matter what you are doing.

Planning Your ISU
- Choose a relevant, challenging, and unique topic.
- Make sure the topic appeals to you.
- Arrange a realistic schedule. It is important not to leave your ISU to the last minute.
- Develop a detailed outline or plan for all aspects of your ISU.

Working on Your ISU
- Research and read as much on your topic as possible. For instance, if you are studying two of Margaret Laurence’s novels, read as much as you can about the author and what critics and academics have to say about the two novels.
- Make notes as you read.
- Use separate folders or a binder to keep all of your initial notes organized.
- Compose your ISU on the computer, saving the file on a disk as well as on the hard drive. Print out each draft in case your teacher asks to see your rough work.
- Follow the organizational structure provided by your teacher. For example, if you have been asked to write an essay, make sure you follow the traditional essay structure.
- Make sure you have not plagiarized. Materials that are not your original work should not be claimed as yours. Reference all quotations and ideas that are not your own. For more on using quotations and citing sources, see Language Masters 28 and 15. Keep all drafts in case you need to prove the work is yours.

Before Submitting Your ISU
- Reread your ISU a few times, correcting spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and awkward wording.
- Ask a peer editor to read over your ISU.
- Double check to make sure you are submitting everything required.
- Keep all of your rough notes until after the teacher has returned your ISU. He/She may have a question regarding your ISU and may need to see these rough notes.
HOW TO EVALUATE VISUALS

A photographer, illustrator, or graphic designer (hereafter referred to as artist) composes a photo, illustration, ad, or layout to tell a story or convey a specific idea, message, or emotion, just as an author carefully selects words to express ideas. A visual, then, can express a point of view and is not just a reflection of reality. Artists must consider the following elements when creating visuals, and so should you as you evaluate visuals.

1. Content
   - Shape — the two-dimensional outline of an object
   - Texture — the surface characteristics of an object
   - Form — the three-dimensional aspects of an object
   - Colour — colour can have a profound effect on the viewer and can be used in many subtle (and not so subtle) ways

2. Composition
   - Pattern — the arrangement of the elements of a picture. This could include use of blank space and details in the foreground or background.
   - Framing — the boundaries of an image. As we view images, we see whatever part of the scene the artist chooses to show us. The artist composes boundaries that don’t normally exist when we look around us. The cutting off and selecting of what we see is called framing, or if done after the image is completed, cropping.
   - Motion — our eyes move as we look at an image, and the artist directs this movement through composition. If an artist freezes an image, leaving an action incomplete, he or she gives a feeling of motion because viewers complete the action in their minds.
   - Juxtaposition — the placing of seemingly unrelated objects side by side. The effect can please the viewer through symmetry or harmony or make the viewer uncomfortable through contrast or contradiction.
   - Lighting — may contribute to atmosphere or mood. Consider brightness/darkness, top lighting, side lighting, bottom lighting, back lighting, artificial lighting, and natural lighting. Also consider shadows and areas that are not lit. Lighting may be used to make the image appear realistic or stylized.

3. Camera Angle and Distance
   - Camera Angle — the angle from which the camera views the subject (can also be considered when viewing artwork)
     - high angle: the camera looks down on the subject, making it seem helpless, vulnerable, or insignificant
     - low-angle: the camera looks up at the subject, making it seem large and powerful
     - front angle: the camera is in the same plane as the subject, flattening it and making it seem ordinary
     - side angle: the camera views the subject from the right or left, sometimes suggesting motion
   - Camera Distance — the distance between the camera subject (can also be considered when viewing artwork)
     - a long shot shows the subject at a distance, making it seem small in relation to the setting
- A close shot shows the subject up close, revealing details and suggesting intimacy.
- A medium shot is between a long shot and a close shot, showing the subject in relation to the setting and suggesting that subject and place are equally important to the viewer.

**4. Captions or Titles**

Captions and titles can influence how you interpret an image. Elements to consider include word choice, use of adjectives, punctuation, juxtaposition, and design elements, such as font choice, size, and style.
HOW TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

You will find that strong research skills are useful in most of your classes and in life outside of school as well. Almost any research project involves the following basic tasks.

Define Your Research Goal
Before you start researching, have a clear idea of what you are trying to learn. Even though you will usually be asked to conduct research on an assigned topic, you will probably have to narrow that topic to something more specific.

Next you should define a research goal by drafting one or two specific questions that you will try to answer. It’s useful to brainstorm a whole list of specific questions you could answer, and then choose one or two that really interest you. Develop a research plan about how you will acquire the information.

Locate the Information
Now that you’ve defined your goal and developed your research plan, locate the resources that can best help you meet this goal. Probably your first stop will be the school library. Here are the most important resources:

- **Catalogues** and **indexes** are categorized lists that can help you track down other resources relating to your specific topic or goal.
- **Reference works** such as encyclopedias give general information.
- **Periodicals** (magazines and newspapers) are best for gathering information on current events or specific interests.
- **Books** contain detailed information on a wide variety of topics.
- The **Internet** provides instant access to a vast amount of data.

- **Videos** and other **non-print media** provide information in audio and visual forms.
- If you have problems, talk to the human resources—teachers and librarians. They can help by suggesting the resources you should go to first.

Select Information
Your next step is to select the resources and the information you are going to use. There are three things to keep in mind:

1. **Select reliable information.** Use the following questions to assess reliability:
   - What is the copyright date of the resource? It will tell you whether the information is up-to-date. If you are checking a Web site on the Internet, the home page should say when the site was last updated—but remember, just because a Web site says it has been updated, does not mean all of the pages in that site have been updated.
   - Who wrote/created the resource? Look for names of authors, institutions, or publishers who are well known.
   - Is the resource biased? Ask yourself whether the information comes from a person or group who might be trying to persuade people to hold a certain point of view. Are all sides of the topic presented?

2. **Select relevant information.** Information is relevant when it helps you answer your research question. You should also consider how much detail the resource is providing. For example, a magazine article written for the general public is probably a more useful resource than a lengthy government report filled with technical terms.
3. **Assess the information.** Analyse and assess the information and ideas you gathered from your sources. You should determine whether this information is accurate, current, sufficient, relevant, and suitable.

**Organize Your Findings**
Keeping your research findings organized is important because eventually you will combine information from many sources into one presentation. Use the information on Language Masters 28 and 15 (Using Quotations and Citing Sources) as references for how to set up quotations and footnotes/endnotes.

- Create a point-form outline showing the question you want to answer and possible subtopics. This will help you organize your notes. (You can revise your outline if your research gives you new ideas.)
- Use your note-taking skills to summarize relevant information from the resources you have selected.
- Record your notes on index cards. Each card should contain the following:
  - one important piece of information
  - a heading that tells what subtopic the information belongs with
  - full information about the source (title, author, publisher, place and date of publication, and page number)

- After you’ve gathered the information you think you need from all your sources, sort your notes into the subtopics you identified. Does your outline place your information in a logical, effective order?
- Using your research notes and outline, write your paper or plan your presentation.

**Self-Assessment**
Use the checklist below to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your research skills.

- I defined my research topic as a question.
- I located the most appropriate resources.
- I selected reliable and relevant information.
- I organized my notes by topic.
- When I used other people’s ideas, I acknowledged the source.
HOW TO WRITE AN ANALYTICAL ESSAY

Before Writing

1. If a topic has not been assigned to you, choose a topic for your essay. Make sure the topic is not too broad and not too limiting.

2. Brainstorm ideas for your topic. Once your brainstorming is complete, try to organize it into logical sub-headings. These sub-headings represent each supporting argument. Ideally, you should have at least three supporting arguments.

3. Formulate a thesis statement. Your thesis statement should be a meaningful, controversial, and defensible assertion about your topic. Ideally, a thesis statement is one sentence.

4. For each of your supporting arguments, find as much evidence as possible to prove this point. For instance, if you are writing an analytical essay based on a novel, go through the novel and find as many quotations and examples as possible that will assist you in proving your argument. Make sure that you keep track of the sources and page numbers of all references.

5. Organize these quotations and examples into a list of most useful quotations to least useful.

6. Create an outline for your essay. In your outline, you must include your thesis statement; a topic sentence for each supporting argument; a point form list of key points for each supporting argument; and a point form list of conclusions you wish to make in the final paragraph. Consider using an organizational pattern, such as compare and contrast or process analysis, to organize your arguments.

While Writing

1. Write your introduction first.
   - The introduction should consist of one paragraph that introduces the topic, the issue, or problem, and captivates the reader’s attention.
   - The first sentence of the introduction should be a general statement, which tells the reader the focus of the essay.
   - The next sentence (or sentences) narrows the focus of the topic, summarizes the supporting arguments, and defines any terms the reader will need to know in order to clearly understand the argument.
   - The introduction ends with the thesis statement.

2. Next write the body of your essay. This is where you expand on each of your supporting arguments. You should have a separate paragraph for each supporting argument.
   - Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence. Make sure you also use transitional words to help the reader make a smooth and logical transition from one argument to the next.
   - Each paragraph should have two or three examples (or quotations) from the text that helps prove your point.
   - After each example (or quotation), make sure you analyse how the example proves and connects back to your thesis. You need to answer the question, “What makes this example significant?” The analysis part is one area that many essay writers overlook.
   - At the end of the paragraph, offer a statement that links this argument to the next argument.
3. Write the conclusion. This is the final paragraph and the last chance you have to prove your thesis to the reader.
   • Begin the conclusion by restating your thesis. Do this differently than before.
   • Next summarize each supporting argument in a separate sentence.
   • Your final sentence(s) should summarize the relevance of this topic for the reader, and it should answer the question: Why is this topic important to the reader?

4. Include a bibliography and, on another page, your endnotes. Make sure you have not plagiarized. Materials that are not your original work should not be claimed as yours. Keeping all drafts can help you prove the work is yours. For more on using quotations and citing sources, see Language Master 28 and 15.

**After Writing**

1. Re-read your essay to check the grammar and sentence structure. Also, look up any words in the dictionary you are not sure how to spell.
2. Have a peer editor read your essay and make notes about any questions or concerns that he/she might have.
3. Go over the peer editor’s notes and make any appropriate changes.
4. If you haven’t done so already, type your essay into a Word processing program. After typing the essay, make sure you re-read it one last time.
5. Along with the essay, you will need to type a title page with the title of the essay, your name, the date, the course code, and the teacher’s name.