

What is the C. I. A.—Collect, Interpret Apply—Approach?

Knowledge of text structure is vital to improving reading comprehension.

The C. I. A. Approach, developed by Sarah Collinge in 2011, teaches students to read for understanding with a text-structure approach. Before reading, **the student breaks the text into four quadrants** (taking the number of pages in the book and dividing by four). Sticky notes are placed in the book to mark these quadrants. The reader then reads each quadrant with a **purposeful plan of action**.

Collect the critical information as you read quadrant 1.

CHARACTERS
SETTING
IMPORTANT EVENTS
PROBLEMS



Write a retell summary.

Quadrant 1: Collect Critical Information

In the first quadrant of the book, the exposition, **readers read for details**. Readers create a character list, a setting map, and a list of problems and important events. At the end of the first quadrant, **readers summarize** in order to monitor comprehension. *Reading is slow in the first quadrant of the text, and the reader often has to re-read to make sense of the details.*

Interpret the author's craft as you read quadrant 2.

KEY REPEATED WORDS
AUTHOR'S CRAFT
SUBJECT
CENTRAL THEME



Name a line of thinking.
(Infer the central message)

Quadrant 2: Interpret the Text, Part 1

In the second quadrant of the book, the rising action, **readers infers details** while paying attention to the author's craft. As readers reach the half-way point in the book, **they infer the author's central message or theme**. This theory is termed a 'line of thinking'. *The reader gains speed as he becomes more confident.*

Interpret the author's message as you read quadrant 3.

EVIDENCE
TURNING POINT
CENTRAL MESSAGE



Write about the turning point.

Quadrant 3: Interpret the Text, Part 2

In the third quadrant of the book, the continuation of the rising action, **readers gather evidence** to support the author's central message. They reach the climax and turning point of the book—the place where the author's message is revealed. At the end of quadrant three, **the reader stops to write** about the turning point and the author's message. *The reader continues to gain speed as he becomes more engrossed in the story.*

Read without interruption as you read quadrant 4.

SYNTHESIZE
EVALUATE
INTEGRATE KNOWLEDGE



Write a synthesis summary & evaluation.

Quadrant 4: Apply the Text to Your Life

In the final quadrant of the book, the falling action and resolution, **readers synthesize the text** and integrate knowledge across texts. **They consider how the book might impact their lives**. *The reader reads quickly through the last quadrant of the text.*

“The Collect-Interpret-Apply Approach has changed my students’ lives as readers, writers, and learners. All students can access text and think deeply.”

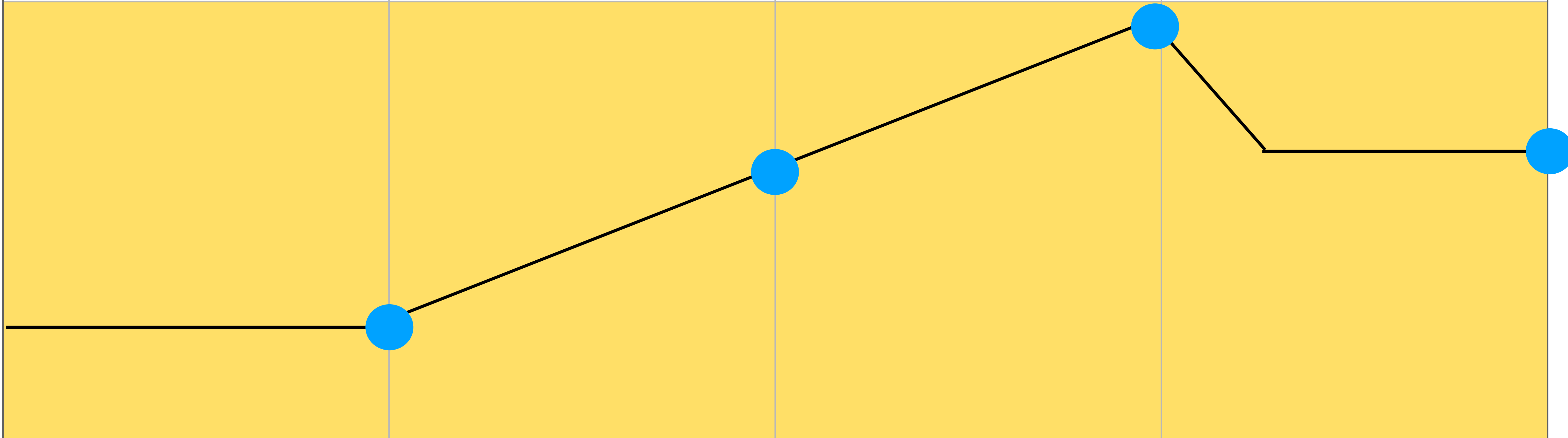
5th Grade Teacher, Ashley Jansons

Why does the C. I. A. Approach work?

The C.I.A. Approach teaches students to read a book in a way that is motivating. They learn a process for reading that can be used, not just in school, but also in their own independent reading. Students not only get excited about reading, they get exciting about *thinking*. Students begin to make the approach a habit-of-mind.

Dividing the text into four quadrants helps readers break the somewhat overwhelming task of reading into manageable steps. No longer is their goal to read to the end of the book, now they are reading to get to the next quadrant. **They stop to think about the text at critical moments in the plot**—when the major problem is revealed at the end of quadrant one, when they reach the heart of the story at the end of quadrant two, and when they reach the turning point at the end of quadrant three.

The C. I. A. Approach and the Plot Line

Quadrant 1 Exposition	Quadrant 2 Rising Action	Quadrant 3 Rising Action, Cont.	Quadrant 4 Falling Action
			
<i>The big problem is revealed at the end of quadrant 1.</i>	<i>The author’s message first becomes visible to the reader at the end of quadrant 2.</i>	<i>The turning point reveals the author’s message at the end of quadrant 3.</i>	<i>There is a resolution to the story at the end of quadrant 4.</i>

The design principle of this approach borrows from Adler’s (1940, 1972) system for reading a book and from the envisionment theory of Langer (1995). Both theories propose several stages of reading a book, beginning with structure, moving into interpretation, and ending with critiquing the text. **Collinge has made the approach accessible to middle grade readers** who are learning to make the transition from short series books to longer, more complex chapter books.

You can learn more about the C. I. A. Approach in Collinge’s book, *Raising the Standards Through Chapter Books: The C. I. A. Approach* (2011), and also in the *Read Side by Side Reading Program, Grades 3-6*.