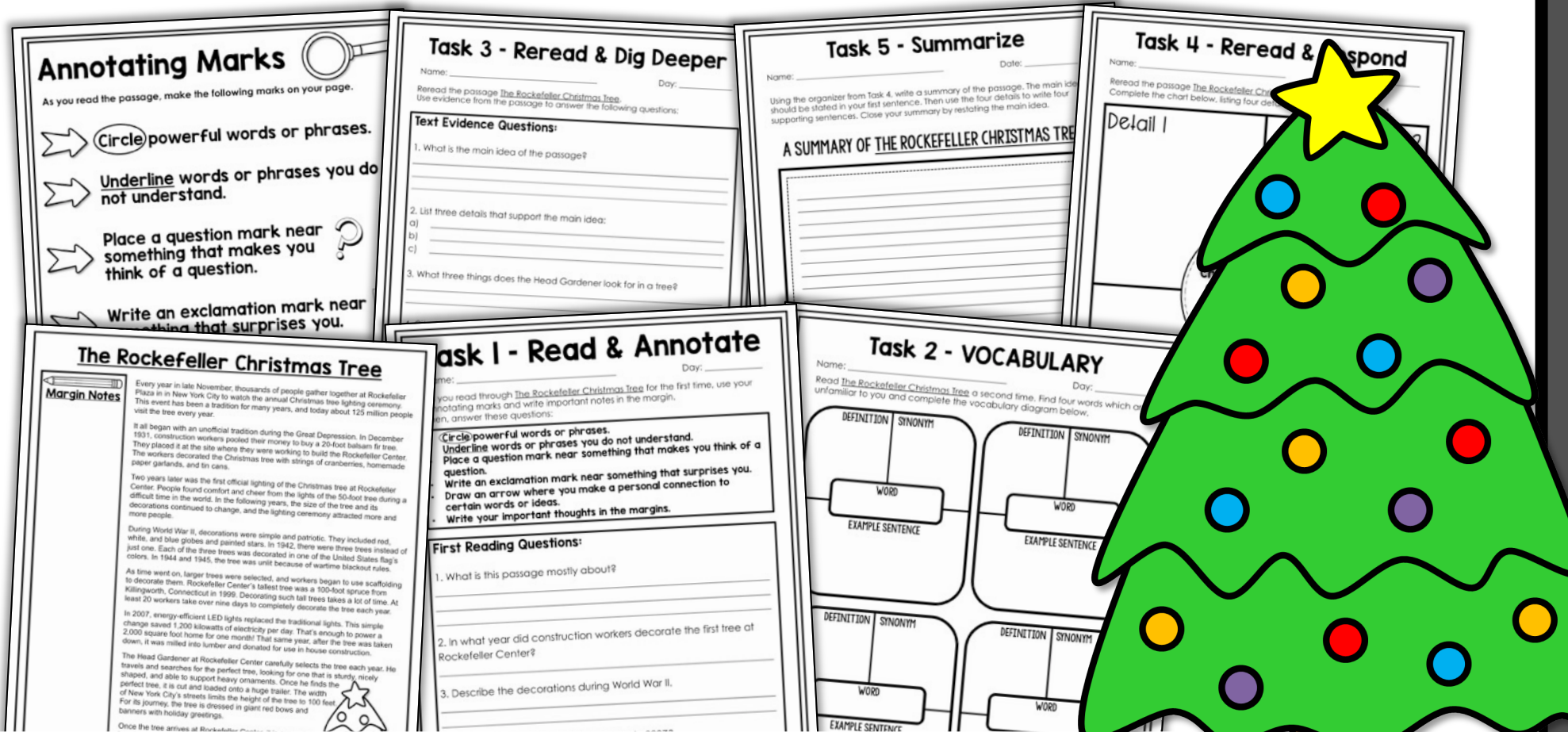


THE ROCKEFELLER TREE



Annotating Marks
As you read the passage, make the following marks on your page.

- ➔ Circle powerful words or phrases.
- ➔ Underline words or phrases you do not understand.
- ➔ Place a question mark near something that makes you think of a question.
- ➔ Write an exclamation mark near something that surprises you.

Task 1 - Read & Annotate
Name: _____ Day: _____
Read the passage The Rockefeller Christmas Tree for the first time, use your annotating marks and write important notes in the margin. Then, answer these questions:

First Reading Questions:

1. What is this passage mostly about?
2. In what year did construction workers decorate the first tree at Rockefeller Center?
3. Describe the decorations during World War II.
4. What change was made in 2007?

Task 2 - VOCABULARY
Name: _____ Day: _____
Read The Rockefeller Christmas Tree a second time. Find four words which are unfamiliar to you and complete the vocabulary diagram below.

DEFINITION	SYNONYM
WORD	WORD
EXAMPLE SENTENCE	EXAMPLE SENTENCE

DEFINITION	SYNONYM
WORD	WORD
EXAMPLE SENTENCE	EXAMPLE SENTENCE

DEFINITION	SYNONYM
WORD	WORD
EXAMPLE SENTENCE	EXAMPLE SENTENCE

DEFINITION	SYNONYM
WORD	WORD
EXAMPLE SENTENCE	EXAMPLE SENTENCE

Task 3 - Reread & Dig Deeper
Name: _____ Day: _____
Reread the passage The Rockefeller Christmas Tree. Use evidence from the passage to answer the following questions:

Text Evidence Questions:

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
2. List three details that support the main idea:
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____
3. What three things does the Head Gardener look for in a tree?

Task 4 - Reread & Respond
Name: _____
Reread the passage The Rockefeller Christmas Tree. Complete the chart below, listing four details.

Task 5 - Summarize
Name: _____ Date: _____
Using the organizer from Task 4, write a summary of the passage. The main idea should be stated in your first sentence. Then use the four details to write four supporting sentences. Close your summary by restating the main idea.

A SUMMARY OF THE ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE

Task 6 - Margin Notes
The Rockefeller Christmas Tree
Every year in late November, thousands of people gather together at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City to watch the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. This event has been a tradition for many years, and today about 125 million people visit the tree every year.

It all began with an unofficial tradition during the Great Depression. In December 1931, construction workers pooled their money to buy a 26-foot balsam fir tree. They placed it at the site where they were working to build the Rockefeller Center. The workers decorated the Christmas tree with strings of cranberries, homemade paper garlands, and tin cans.

Two years later was the first official lighting of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. People found comfort and cheer from the lights of the 50-foot tree during a difficult time in the world. In the following years, the size of the tree and its decorations continued to change, and the lighting ceremony attracted more and more people.

During World War II, decorations were simple and patriotic. They included red, white, and blue globes and painted stars. In 1942, there were three trees instead of rotors. In 1944 and 1945, the tree was unlit because of wartime blackout rules.

As time went on, larger trees were selected, and workers began to use scaffolding to decorate them. Rockefeller Center's tallest tree was a 100-foot spruce from Killingworth, Connecticut in 1959. Decorating such tall trees takes a lot of time. At least 20 workers take over nine days to completely decorate the tree each year.

In 2007, energy-efficient LED lights replaced the traditional lights. This simple change saved 1,200 kilowatts of electricity per day. That's enough to power a 2,000 square foot home for one month! That same year, after the tree was taken down, it was milled into lumber and donated for use in house construction.

The Head Gardener at Rockefeller Center carefully selects the tree each year. He travels and searches for the perfect tree, looking for one that is sturdy, nicely shaped, and able to support heavy ornaments. Once he finds the perfect tree, it is cut and loaded onto a huge trailer. The width of New York City's streets limits the height of the tree to 100 feet. For its journey, the tree is dressed in giant red bows and banners with holiday greetings.

Once the tree arrives at Rockefeller Center, it is decorated with thousands of lights and the famous Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree Song is played. The tree is lit up at 6:30 p.m. every year, and the lights stay on until 11:30 p.m.

DIFFERENTIATED CLOSE READING UNIT

2 Different Reading Levels

High-Interest Passage!

The **easier** passage has a ■ in the bottom left corner.

The **more difficult** passage has a ▲ in the bottom left corner.

The Rockefeller Christmas Tree

Margin Notes

Every year in late November, thousands of people gather together at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City. They are there to watch the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. This has been a tradition for many years. Today about 125 million people visit the tree every year.

It all began during the Great Depression. In December 1931, construction workers pooled their money to buy a 20-foot balsam fir tree. They placed it at the site where they were working to build the Rockefeller Center. The workers decorated the Christmas tree. They used strings of cranberries, homemade paper garlands, and tin cans.

Two years later was the first official lighting of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. It was a difficult time in the world. People found comfort and cheer from the lights of the 50-foot tree. Through time, the size of the tree and the decorations continued to change. The lighting ceremony attracted more and more people.

During World War II, decorations were simple and patriotic. They included white, and blue globes and painted stars. In 1942, there were three trees instead of just one. One tree was decorated in red. The next was in white and blue decorations. In 1944 and 1945, the tree was not lit because of wartime blackout rules.

As time went on, larger trees were selected. Workers used scaffolding to decorate them. Rockefeller Center's tallest tree was a 100-foot spruce from Killingworth, Connecticut in 1999. Decorating tall trees takes a lot of time. At least 20 workers take over nine days to completely decorate the tree each year.

In 2007, LED lights took the place of traditional lights. This simple change saved 1,200 kilowatts of electricity per day. That's enough to power a 2,000 square foot home for one month! That same year, after the tree was taken down, it was milled into lumber and donated for use in house construction.

The Head Gardener at Rockefeller Center carefully chooses the tree each year. He travels and searches for the perfect tree. He looks for one that is nicely shaped, and able to support heavy ornaments. Once he finds the perfect tree, it is cut and loaded onto a huge trailer. The width of New York City's streets limits the height of the tree to 100 feet. For its journey, the tree is dressed in giant red bows and banners with holiday greetings.

Once the tree arrives at Rockefeller Center, it is supported by wires and a steel spike at the base. Scaffolding is built around the tree. Workers hang about 50,000 lights and the famous Swarovski Star. This star has 25,000 Swarovski crystals. It is 9.5 feet across and weighs 550 pounds!

Today, more than half a million people visit the tree each day while it is on display. You can see the tree in person from late November through the first week of January. You can also watch the tree lighting ceremony on television. The Rockefeller Christmas Tree is an amazing sight to behold.

The Rockefeller Christmas Tree

Margin Notes

Every year in late November, thousands of people gather together at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City to watch the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. This event has been a tradition for many years, and today about 125 million people visit the tree every year.

It all began with an unofficial tradition during the Great Depression. In December 1931, construction workers pooled their money to buy a 20-foot balsam fir tree. They placed it at the site where they were working to build the Rockefeller Center. The workers decorated the Christmas tree with strings of cranberries, homemade paper garlands, and tin cans.

Two years later was the first official lighting of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. People found comfort and cheer from the lights of the 50-foot tree during a difficult time in the world. In the following years, the size of the tree and its decorations continued to change, and the lighting ceremony attracted more and more people.

During World War II, decorations were simple and patriotic. They included red, white, and blue globes and painted stars. In 1942, there were three trees instead of just one. Each of the three trees was decorated in one of the United States flag's colors. In 1944 and 1945, the tree was unlit because of wartime blackout rules.

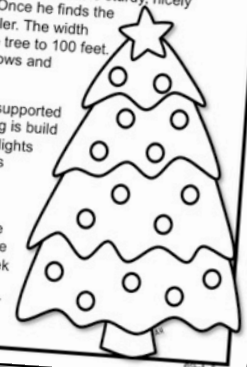
As time went on, larger trees were selected, and workers began to use scaffolding to decorate them. Rockefeller Center's tallest tree was a 100-foot spruce from Killingworth, Connecticut in 1999. Decorating such tall trees takes a lot of time. At least 20 workers take over nine days to completely decorate the tree each year.

In 2007, energy-efficient LED lights replaced the traditional lights. This simple change saved 1,200 kilowatts of electricity per day. That's enough to power a 2,000 square foot home for one month! That same year, after the tree was taken down, it was milled into lumber and donated for use in house construction.

The Head Gardener at Rockefeller Center carefully selects the tree each year. He travels and searches for the perfect tree, looking for one that is sturdy, nicely shaped, and able to support heavy ornaments. Once he finds the perfect tree, it is cut and loaded onto a huge trailer. The width of New York City's streets limits the height of the tree to 100 feet. For its journey, the tree is dressed in giant red bows and banners with holiday greetings.

Once the tree arrives at Rockefeller Center, it is supported by wires and a steel spike at the base. Scaffolding is built around the tree, and workers hang about 50,000 lights and the famous Swarovski Star. This star contains 25,000 Swarovski crystals, is 9.5 feet across and weighs 550 pounds!

Today, more than half a million people visit the tree each day while it is on display. You can see the tree in person from late November through the first week of January, or you can watch the tree lighting ceremony on television. Either way, the Rockefeller Christmas Tree is an amazing sight to behold.



Reference Chart, Annotating Guide, Close Reading Directions

CLOSE READING STEPS

The following steps are a **suggested sequence** in which you could approach the contents of this packet. This approach will require 3 separate readings of each passage, requiring students to dig deeper with each reading. Each task of the packet is to be completed in one day/lesson. With 5 total tasks per passage, each passage should take one week to complete.



1st Reading: Student reads the passage. As they read, they use their annotating skills to identify unfamiliar words, questions, and parts of the passage that they do not understand. Complete **Task 1: Read & Annotate**. This task also includes some basic recall questions.



2nd Reading: Teacher (or partner) rereads the passage a second time while students follow along. Have students complete **Task 2: Vocabulary**. This allows students to demonstrate their understanding of unfamiliar words from the passage, leading to a deeper comprehension of the text.



3rd Reading: Students reread the passage then responds in writing, citing text evidence. Students complete **Task 3: Reread and Dig Deeper**. This page of questions requires students to cite text evidence when answering questions. Additionally, students complete **Task 4: Reread and Respond** and **Task 5: Summarize**. These final tasks require students to use the text evidence to write a supported summary.

Annotating Marks

As you read the passage, make the following marks on the text:

➔ **Circle** powerful words or phrases.

➔ **Underline** words or phrases you do not understand.

➔ **Place a question mark** near something that makes you think of a question.

➔ **Write an exclamation mark** near something that surprises you.

➔ **Draw an arrow** where you make a personal connection to certain words or ideas.

➔ **Write your important thoughts** in the margins.

Wow! The character showed a lot of courage here...

ABOUT THIS PACKET

The first part of this packet includes 5 reading passages and one week's worth of reading activities for each passage. The Close Reading passages included in this packet are each provided at 2 different reading levels, so that you may more easily differentiate your instruction. The informational content of the 2 versions is the same, but the reading levels are different. All question sheets are the same. This makes it easy for you to provide reading passages on each student's level, but use the same question and activity sheets for the entire class!

NOTE:

The **easier** passage has a ■ in the bottom left corner.
The **more difficult** passage has a ▲ in the bottom left corner.

Each passage with its activities is designed for a 5-day time frame, following this schedule:

Day	Title of Activity	Purpose
1	Task 1: Read and Annotate	Read passage for the first time. Use annotation symbols to annotate. Answer surface level questions.
2	Task 2: Vocabulary	Read passage for the second time. Students choose vocabulary words that are unknown to them and complete the vocabulary activity using those words.
3	Task 3: Reread and Dig Deeper	Read passage a third time. Students answer deeper level questions, citing text evidence to support answers.
4	Task 4: Reread and Respond	Students use the graphic organizer to identify the main idea and supporting details of the passage.
5	Task 5: Summarize	Using the completed graphic organizer from Day 4, students write a summary supporting details for the passage.

The reading levels for each differentiated passage are provided in this chart:

Passage Title	Symbol	Lexile Level
Mozart – Musical Genius	■	720
	▲	940
The History of Little League	■	780
	▲	1,000
The Sweet Story of Honey	■	740
	▲	950
George Washington Carver	■	800
	▲	1,030
The United States Constitution	■	750
	▲	930

5 Days of Close Reading Activities for GREATER Reading Comprehension

Task 1 - Read & Annotate

Name: _____ Day: _____

As you read through The Rockefeller Christmas Tree for the first time, use your annotating marks and write important notes in the margin. Then, answer these questions:

- Circle powerful words or phrases.
- Underline words or phrases you do not understand.
- Place a question mark near something that makes you think of a question.
- Write an exclamation mark near something that surprises you.
- Draw an arrow where you make a personal connection to certain words or ideas.
- Write your important thoughts in the margins.

First Reading Questions:

1. What is this passage mostly about?

2. In what year did construction workers decorate the first tree at Rockefeller Center?

3. Describe the decorations during World War II.

4. What change was made to the tree in 2007?

5. How tall was Rockefeller Center's tallest tree?

Task 2 - VOCABULARY

Name: _____ Day: _____

Read The Rockefeller Christmas Tree a second time. Find four words which are unfamiliar to you and complete the vocabulary diagram below.

DEFINITION	SYNONYM
WORD	
EXAMPLE SENTENCE	

DEFINITION	SYNONYM
WORD	
EXAMPLE SENTENCE	

Task 3 - Reread & Dig Deeper

Day: _____

Read The Rockefeller Christmas Tree. Answer the following questions:

- What is the main idea?

- What is the main purpose?

- What is the main idea?

- What is the main purpose?

- What is the main idea?

- What is the main purpose?

- What is the main idea?

- What is the main purpose?

Task 4 - Reread & Respond

Date: _____

Read The Rockefeller Christmas Tree. Write four details supporting the statement.

Detail 2

The Rockefeller Christmas Tree is a tradition that has changed in several ways throughout the years.

Detail 4

Task 5 - Summarize

Date: _____

Write a summary of the passage. The main idea is _____ Then use the four details to write four supporting details by restating the main idea.

ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE

NO PREP!
Print and Go!

Answer Keys Provided

Task 1 - Read & Annotate

THE ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE ANSWER KEY

- Circle powerful words or phrases.
- Underline words or phrases you do not understand.
- Place a question mark near something that makes you think of a question.
- Write an exclamation mark near something that surprises you.
- Draw an arrow where you make a personal connection to the text.
- Write your important thoughts in the margins.

First Reading Questions: Answers may vary.

1. What is this passage mostly about?
This passage is mostly about the Rockefeller Christmas Tree and how it has changed through the years.
2. In what year did construction workers decorate the Rockefeller Center?
Construction workers decorated the first tree in 1931.
3. Describe the decorations during World War II.
The decorations were simple and patriotic, including stars and stripes and blue globes and painted letters.
4. What changed in 2006?
In 2006, the Rockefeller Center's tallest tree was 100 feet tall.
5. How tall was the Rockefeller Center tree in 1931?
The tallest Rockefeller Center tree was 100 feet tall.

Task 3 - Reread & Dig Deeper

THE ROCKEFELLER CHRISTMAS TREE ANSWER KEY

Text Evidence Questions: Answers may vary.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?
The Rockefeller Christmas Tree is a New York City Christmas tradition that has changed in many ways through the years.
2. List three details that support the main idea:
 - a) The first official tree was 50 feet tall.
 - b) In 1942, there were three trees instead of one.
 - c) As time went on, larger trees were selected, and workers began to use scaffolding to decorate them.
3. What three things did the Head Gardener look for in a tree?
The Head Gardener looked for a tree that is sturdy, nicely shaped, and able to support a lot of lights.
4. List three pieces of evidence from the text that show how the tree is different today.
 - a) The tree is supported by wires and a steel spike at the base.
 - b) Workers hang about 50,000 lights.
 - c) The Swarovski Star sits on top of the tree.
5. Explain how construction workers decorated the very first tree.
The workers decorated the Christmas tree with strings of cranberries, homemade paper garlands, and tin cans.
6. How many people visit the tree each day while it is on display today?
More than half a million people visit the tree each day today.

