

Say, Mean, Matter

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Say, Mean, Matter

- **Say, Mean, Matter is the name for a strategy that helps students**
 - **question the text**
 - **search for deeper meanings**
 - **make connections between the text and their lives**

📌 Say, Mean, Matter is effective for all student levels from language learners to honors and AP students.

📌 It can be used with

📌 academic texts

📌 fiction

📌 verbal and non-verbal material

Three column chart

- overhead transparency
- chart paper
- chalkboard
- student's own paper

Say, Mean, Matter

SAY	MEAN	MATTER
<p>This is a <i>summary</i> of what the texts says.</p>	<p>This is about <i>interpretation</i>.</p>	<p>What are the <i>implications</i>?</p>
<p>What does the text say?</p>	<p>Ask questions like, “What makes you think that?”</p>	<p>(Possible outcomes or results?)</p>
<p>What happened? Cite text (quotation) or paraphrase.</p>	<p>“How do you know that?”</p>	<p>Why does it matter to me or others? Why is it important? (to the story as a whole?) What is the significance?</p>

Example of SAY, MEAN, MATTER

SAY

Mom comes home and says, “No TV tonight!”

MEAN

- I can't watch TV.
- Mom's angry from work.
- You did something wrong and got caught.
- Your grades came in the mail.
- She's mad at Dad.
- She wants to watch something!
- We're going out!

MATTER

- I'll be bored.
- I'll miss my favorite show.
- We'll have to walk on “eggshells.”
- I'll get grounded.
- There will be fighting and yelling between mom and dad.
- I'll have to listen to music.
- We're having family night.

- The third column is the most abstract and may prove to be difficult at first, especially with less sophisticated students.
- So what?
- What is the theme or message of the piece?
- How does this piece connect to your own life?
- What does it matter to you?
- What questions does this piece raise?
- What implications does it hold for a given group of people or for people in general?

📌 Next step

- 📌 The class generates a paragraph to explain or analyze the piece.**
- 📌 Use the ideas recorded on the chart to create the paragraph.**
- 📌 Start with statement from the “MATTER” column as a topic or thesis statement.**
- 📌 Draw on the “SAY” and “MEAN” columns for supporting details.**
- 📌 The first column provides the “text proof” (what the text says).**
- 📌 The second column provides the student interpretation (what the text means).**
- 📌 The teacher should model initial steps of the writing; then students can complete it on their own, or with a partner.**

• When SAY, MEAN, MATTER is applied to a longer text (a chapter book, a story, or even a novel) the columns can be used to help students structure an essay, using the same process as when writing a paragraph.

- Another writing approach is to chunk ideas according to a number of MEAN ideas and to support these with SAY items.
- The introduction and/or conclusion may come from a MATTER idea.
- The writer can start anywhere and build a coherent analysis of the text.

Variations

- Use a piece of artwork to demonstrate the strategy.
- Use a “Quote of the Day” and have students quickly practice the strategy with you or with a partner.
- For novels, students can keep a SAY-MEAN-MATTER journal/notebook for each chapter.
- When students complete their reading of the novel, they will have information to draw on for any final writing project.

- This strategy also can be used orally once students are familiar with it. The teacher can stop in the middle of a class reading and quickly do an oral run through of the three columns, asking,
 - “What is this saying?”
 - “What does it mean?”
 - “Why does it matter?”
- This encourages higher level thinking during reading and is especially useful when text is complex.

Literary Analysis

Claim

 **This can be taken from the MATTER column.**

Evidence

 **This can be taken from the SAY column.**

Elaboration

 **This can be taken from the MEAN column.**

Practice

Cartoon

 Analyze the cartoon

 Write a short paragraph