Talking to the Text (T4):

A Brief Explanation

Purpose: Text talk is a reading strategy used to help you comprehend (understand and remember) what you read. Good readers learn to talk to the text in their head as they read. By communicating on paper what you think in your head, you can help sort out and make sense of anything confusing or blocking your ability to understand (a reading "roadblock").

Follow these simple steps:

1. In the white spaces and margins surrounding the text or between the lines, if there is room, write what the words and sentences make you think about as you read. These might be notes, questions, comments, predictions, etc. Use lines to connect your thoughts to the location in the text (see example on back).

2. Highlight any words or phrases that seem important or that you can identify with and write why you identify with them.

3. Circle unfamiliar words so you can deal with them later, if you need to.

4. Please note: Simply highlighting or underlining words or phrases is NOT talking to the text and will not be counted as such.

You will be scored on the thoughtfulness and critical reflection of your notations. There is no correct or incorrect answer, but there should be a progression of sophistication that you move toward as a goal.

The following are suggested notations you should be making on the text (you will find an example on the back):

- what the title might indicate about the text
- identify the genre/text features (fonts, italics, bold, etc.)
- identify the author and source
- connections and background knowledge
- a prediction based on the title, first sentence, author, etc.
- questions that surface as you read
- what it reminds you of (personal experiences, other texts, movies/TV/songs, etc.)
- ideas you have as you read
- interesting words, phrases, or sentences
- additional information that you wonder about, wish you had, or need to continue
- inconsistencies that you notice about the author's writing
- what confuses you (roadblocks)
- big ideas that seem important to the text as a whole (themes)
- pictures that pop into your head
- summaries that capture the whole idea of a paragraph, page, or whole story/article/passage
- Inferences you can make about what is NOT in the text
- identify the main idea or gist
- use synonyms for unfamiliar words using context clues
- paraphrase (put into your own words) confusing sentences
- your thoughts, comments, judgments, opinions, observations, clarifications...
Words By Heart

They dream in every lesson.

Lena's mother had taken in other directions, and all that was left of her dream were the words he said softly to himself in the garden.

That was when she began memorizing verses—back in Scattered Creek. If that were something she could do to make it up to Papa. She would say them shyly after supper, watching Papa's eyes go away into a secret place, while Claude moved around the kitchen,促同伴吟诗，就不是，不是闷声的。“It's three minutes to the time,” she saidPLYm said, her hands clenched tight. "I don't know what I'm going to do."

"You could save his breath. Because he meant to say more verses than Winslow Starmer. If he said five hundred."

"In the silence that followed, she said distinctly, "PAPA.""

"For eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot—"

"Somebody burst out laughing. There were rolled letters all over the room, and the applause crashed again for Lena's fifty verses, and Jaybird Kelby shook his head, embarrassed. But he laughed, too.

They went five more rounds. Winslow stopped in the middle of a verse, strained to remember, and changed to another one—"

"Everyone looked at Mr. Kelby, their eyes asking him, "What is it?"

"He looked at the preacher. The preacher got up slowly, adjusted his cuffs, and said, "Winslow, Lena, you've each heard fifty verses. You are beautifully matched—no one could call it anything but a perfect tie, if you would like to stop. It has been a fine and happy evening for everyone of us. Now if you'd like—"

"I want to go on," Lena said. "She hadn't come this far to be half of a perfect tie. Winslow's face turned red at her respectfully, and slid away.

"All right."

"The preacher raised his cuffs again. Then the bell went off."

The crowd edged forward expectantly. Lena put her big slab of a cat jumped up into the window and looked out at her with a white beard of milk under its chin. It was twice the size of her cat, but she was wild a little coming—and it soared every last word out of her mind. Just a second she was sure she saw the little hungry face of Scattered Honey glide through the light and she wondered why it hadn't come inside. But she felt Jaybird Kelby writing hopefully with his pencil, rear end, and the stammered out, "For many who are called, but few are chosen." And it took him back.

Suddenly Jaybird Kelby rose up just as Winslow finished a verse, and said, "Women and children, that was fifty verses for Winslow Starmer. Let's give him a big hand."

Everybody clapped enthusiastically while Lena flustered with anger, waiting to say her initial verse. Mr. Kelby couldn't be faulted for appreciating spry brains, but he was a little afraid, remembering her voice. She was an odd one, that, and who was that?

"I had one the too other person, did she won?"

Lena said.