



EDUCARE & FUTURO

LINGUE STRANIERE

**TRA INNOVAZIONE
E SOSTENIBILITÀ**

Creating Excitement and Involvement in English Literature Teaching

How to find new paths
on traditional maps

Sara Albanese



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**Teacher, Writer,
Content Creator YouTube Channel 'Ad Maiora'**

- I graduated in Foreign Languages and Literatures from Ca' Foscari University in Venice.
- I have been teaching **English and German** language and literature both vis-à-vis and online for 20 years.
- My YouTube channel, **Ad Maiora**, is entirely dedicated to contents and strategies that can help people of all ages approach those subjects.
- In the meantime, I've have been writing novels, poetry and essays. My last novel, *Triskelion*, was published in 2020.



ENGLISH LITERATURE Teaching

- 1 Being a teacher in today's world
- 2 Teaching a mentality
- 3 Self-determination theory
- 4 Learners' short attention span
- 5 A three steps method to engage students
- 6 William Wordsworth: an example



What does it mean
to be a teacher
in today's world?

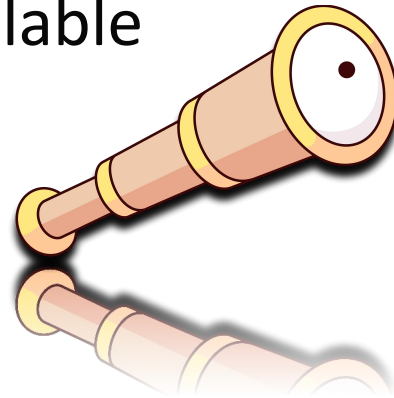
Are we supposed
to be entertainers?



NO!

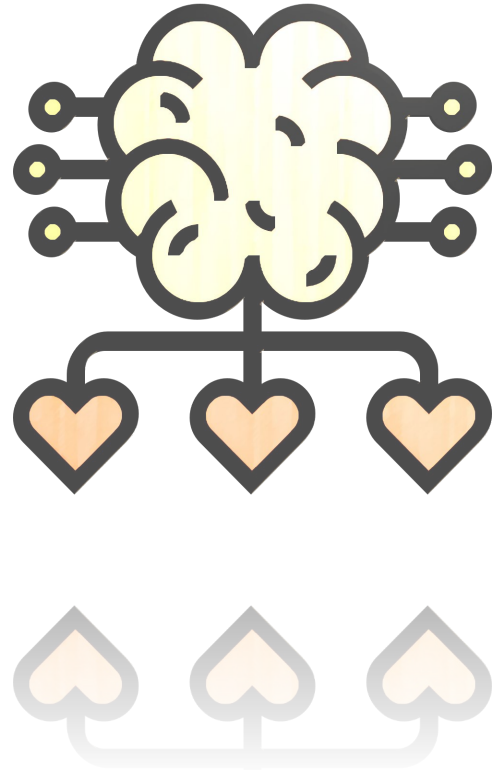
**We are not supposed
to be comedians or performers**

but we need to find a method
to spark curiosity and
make Literature available
in a modern and
relatable way



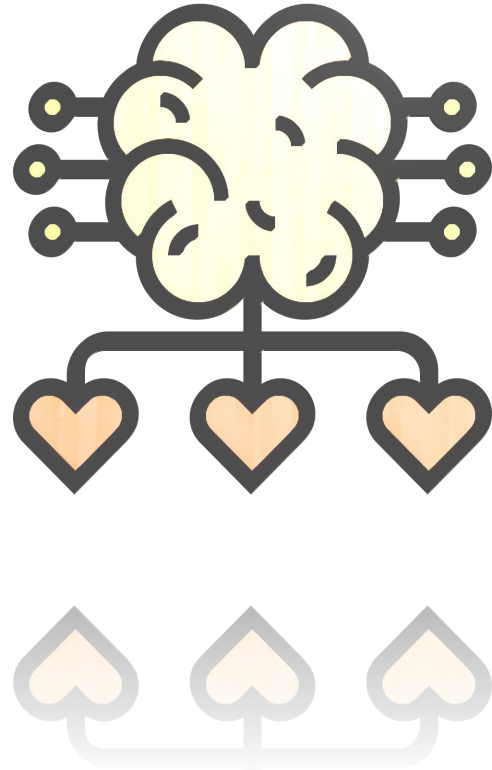
Our first task is to teach a mentality

- Curiosity is the key to love and understand a Culture
- Enjoying the Language helps engagement
- Triggering a personal and individual interest in our subjects (Language and/or Literature) can make them more relatable, so our students will incorporate them into their everyday lives
- «*Stealing knowledge*» is the best way to add tiny pieces of information to the learners' puzzle of expertise



This mentality should be part of our own mindset: we can never stop learning or being curious.

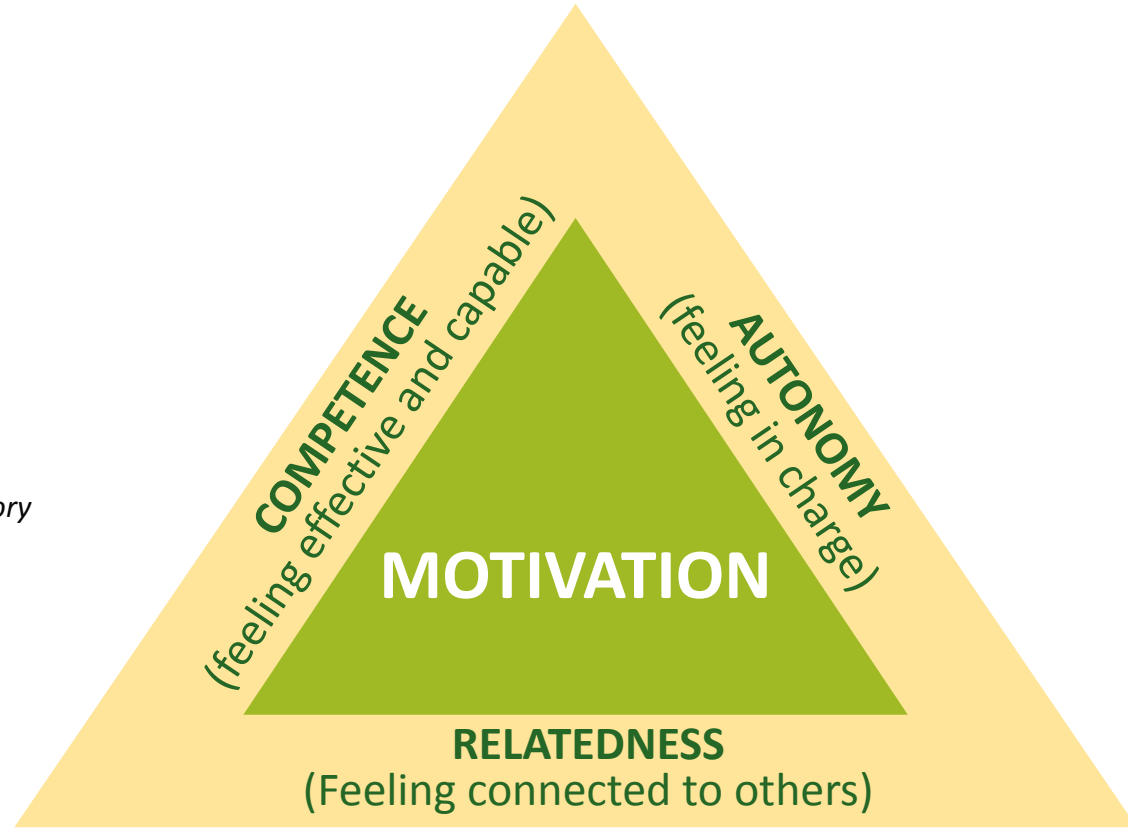
Once we stop going forwards, we start moving backwards!



SDT

Self-determination Theory

R.M. Ryan, E.L. Deci, *Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being*, 2000



Quiz

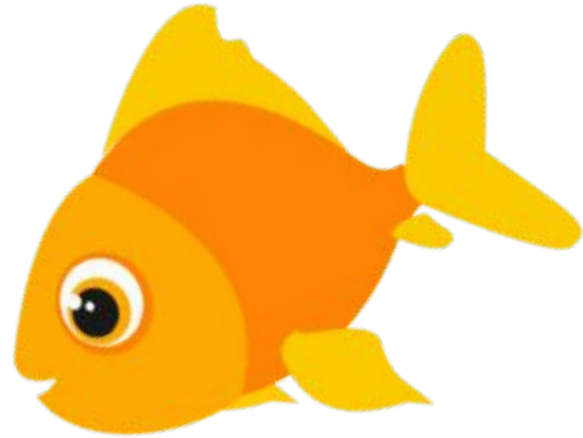
A recent study by Microsoft found out that the average **attention span** of an internet user is now:

- 8 seconds
- 10 seconds
- 15 seconds



Only 8 seconds!

That's shorter than the attention span of a goldfish!



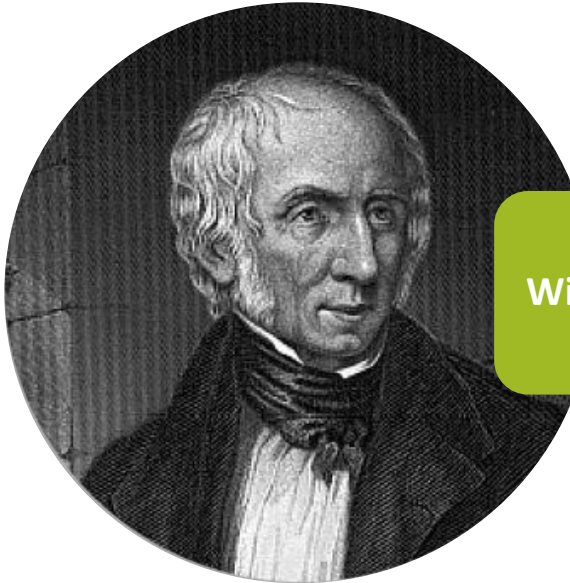
Back in 2004, it was around two and a half minutes on average, but throughout the years it has become much shorter.



What's your
technique
to engage
students' attention?



A METHOD to combine TRADITIONAL TOOLS and NEW TECHNIQUES



We will use
William Wordsworth
as an example



3 STEPS



An author in one minute

Mind maps

**A personal analysis of texts that
involves modern references
or sensory perceptions**

➔ Step 1

An author in one minute

Have you ever used **YouTube Shorts**?

Describing an author, a work or a movement in only **60 seconds** may be challenging!

This activity may help/force the teacher to pick every single word to say what's essential for each author.

We **take responsibility** for the precise twist and tone we give to the whole lesson and give a final "label" to add more emphasis.



➔ Step 1

An author in one minute

New generations are used to getting everything fast and easy, so these activities make our contents more **available** and **enjoyable**.

This activity can be useful as:

- an introduction at the beginning of the lesson,
- an effective recap at the end of the lesson.

The teacher will decide whether it is better to do this exercise in Italian or in English (or both).



→ Step 2

Mind maps

**Most students lose interest
in the topic because they get lost!**

Maps are traditional tools,
but an essential part
of the approach to
an author/work/movement.

Students need maps to get oriented.

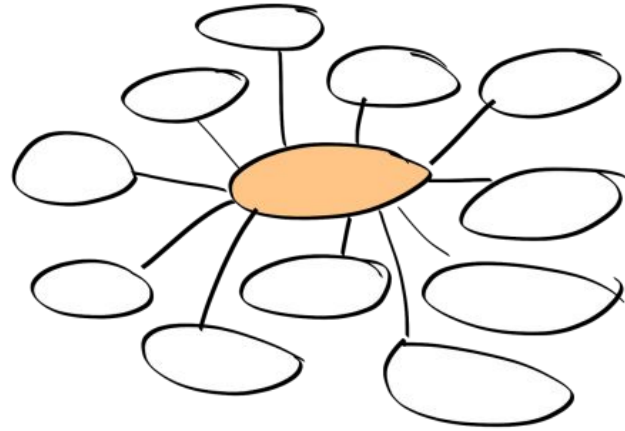


➔ Step 2

Mind maps

Learners should be offered a **simplified version** of what they can find in their book.

It is the teacher's job to collect and metabolize lots of information, to provide the most **accessible** version.



**Do you use mind maps?
What type do you prefer?**

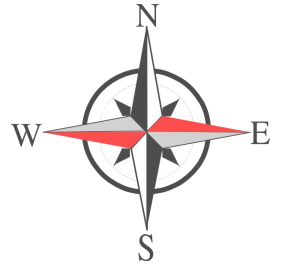
Step 2

Mind maps

It is possible to divide mind maps into two main groups:

GROUP nr. 1: UNIVERSAL MAPS

- available in good books;
- objective and academic web of references;
- standard language;
- background knowledge;
- extremely useful for exams;
- not necessarily suitable for the level/needs of the students, or to the intention of our lesson.



Step 2

Mind maps

It is possible to divide mind maps into two main groups:

GROUP nr. 2: PERSONALIZED MAPS

- created as we speak, allowing the learner to follow and take notes in an easier way;
- improvable and enhanceable, using different colours and references to our own previous lessons or other subjects;
- opportunity to work with the students and to make them interactive;
- suitable for every single student or group of students;
- key words we want students to remember.



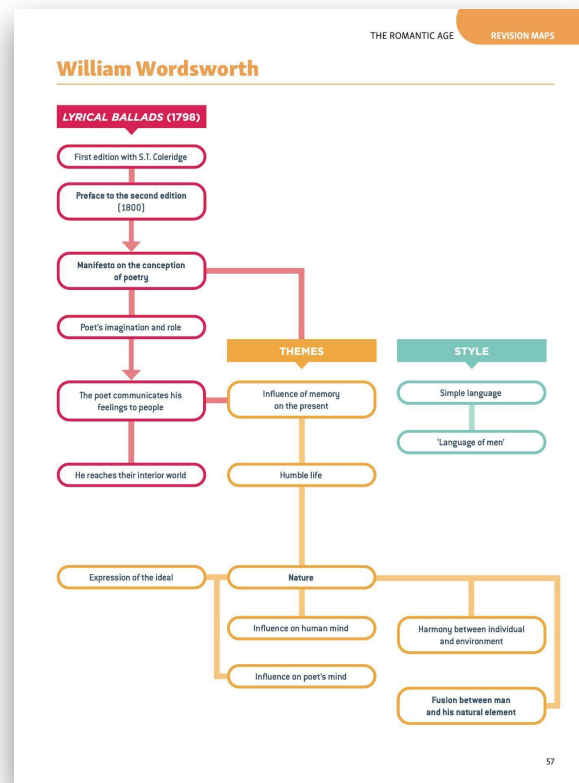
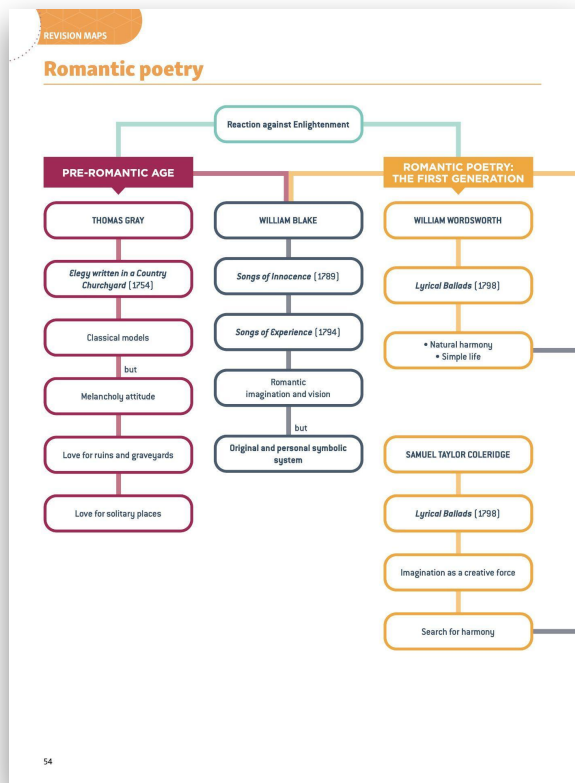
Step 2

Mind maps

UNIVERSAL MAPS

- movements, authors and works are connected;
- general concepts offer a big picture but require to be explained in detail.

Maps from E. Tonus, M. Gabbanelli, *Firewords – Study pack 1*, Deascuola 2022



Step 2

Mind maps

PERSONALIZED MAPS

- They are written step by step, as the teacher talks and contain the exact same concepts the students are listening during the explanation.
- They help the students understand the key words and take notes.
- They allow the teacher to decide what is important and to make precise choices while offering a selection of information.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

1ST GENERATION OF ROMANTIC POETS

- Nature → source of feelings (joy - peace ⇒ BEAUTY)
→ active force (organic, living whole)
- Childhood - "Ideal state of Nature" [Rousseau]
- Freedom → poet's gift ⇨ POET PROPHET → IMAGINATION MEMORY
↓
SIMPLE - PLAIN LANGUAGE

* I WANDERED LONELY
AS A CLOUD (LAKE DISTRICT)

* THE SOLITARY REAPER
(HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND)

(HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND)

* THE SOLITARY REAPER



Step 2

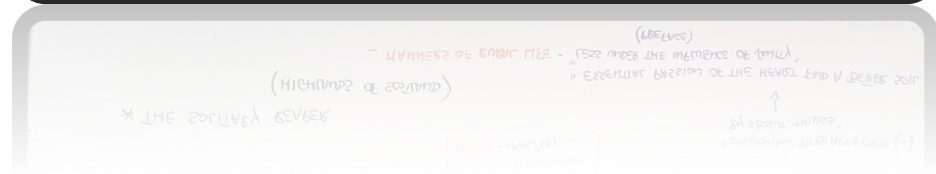
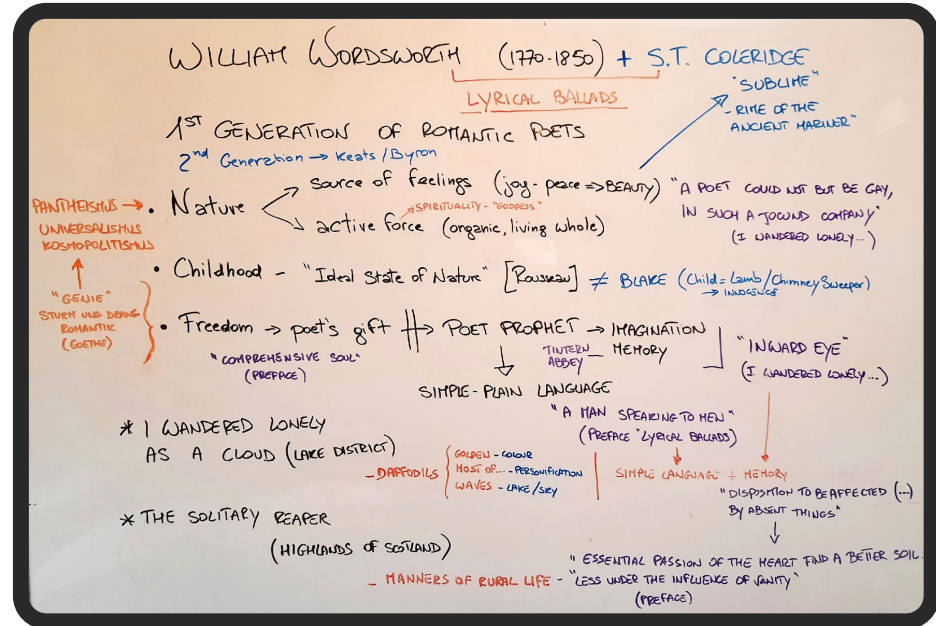
Mind maps

PERSONALIZED MAPS

The final version of an interactive map, created with the help of our students or while explaining the subject, should be multi-layered.

Different colours are used to add:

- **RED** – main work, further key concepts
- **BLU** – other authors
- **PURPLE** – quotes from texts the students have read
- **ORANGE** – links to other subjects or Literatures (in this case German Literature)



Step 3

A personal analysis of texts that involves modern references or sensory perceptions



I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William
Wordsworth,
*I Wandered Lonely
as a Cloud*, 1804



➔ Step 3

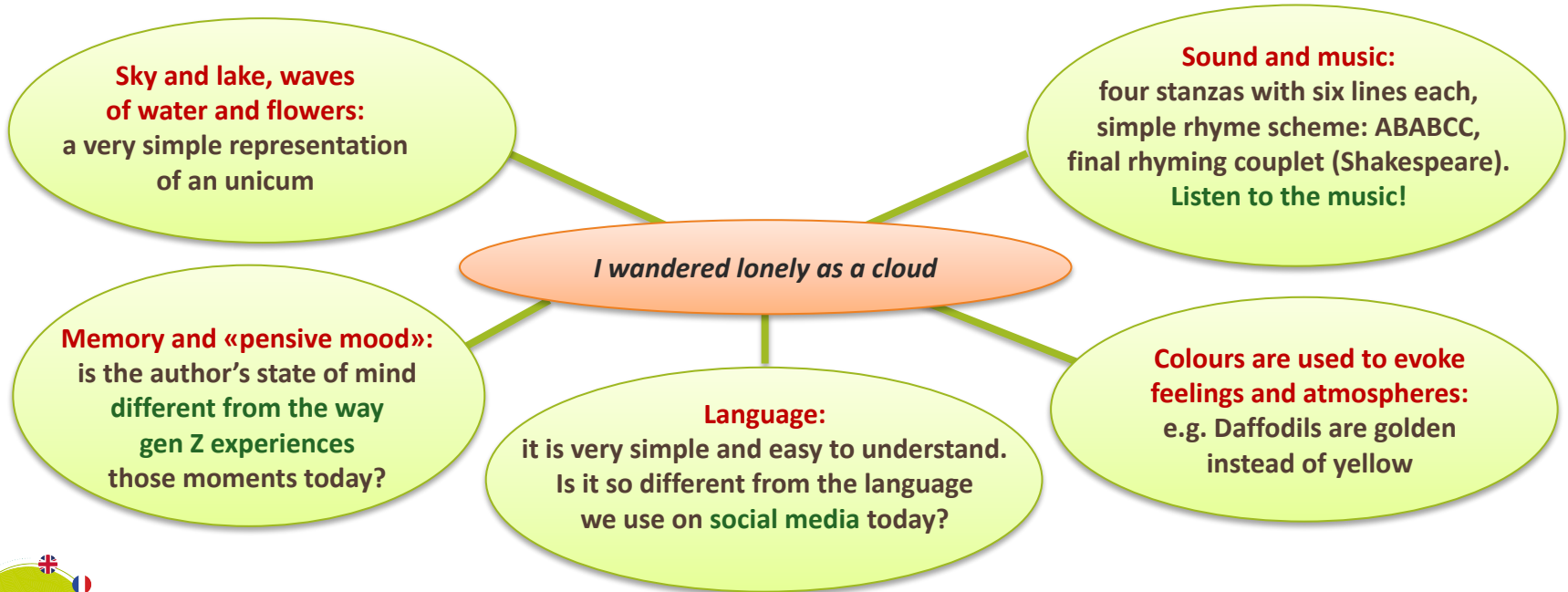
A personal analysis of texts that involves modern references or sensory perceptions

What kind of **insights**, **cues** or **ideas** would you give your students to help them with a personal analysis that makes the poem relatable?



Step 3

A personal analysis of texts that involves modern references or sensory perceptions



“

**If we can engage students' hearts
and minds, we can get them
where they need to go
and teach them how to learn
what they need to know
to go on learning, and to choose
to read for pleasure and information.**

”

Regie Routman

Teacher

On Education Week



Thank you very much!

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