

## Strategy Launch: “What and Why?”

### LITERARY FOCUS: LITERARY DEVICES

Writers use all kinds of literary devices to create meaning and to engage our emotions and imaginations. Writers use **images** to help us form mental pictures. Images may even help us to use our other senses to share an experience. Writers use **metaphors** and **similes**, imaginative comparisons between unlike things, to help us see surprising connections. Writers also use **symbols**—objects, places, or even people—that function as themselves in a text and as something much broader as well. Symbols deepen a text and add ripples and ripples of meaning to it.

### A STRATEGY THAT WORKS: “WHAT AND WHY?”

As good readers, we automatically note these “literary devices.” When we come upon a literary device in a story or poem, or in any text, we ask, “What literary device is this?” “Why does the writer use it?” (What is the writer trying to make me see, feel, or understand?)

### POINTERS FOR USING THE “WHAT AND WHY?” STRATEGY

- »»» Read the text. Use sticky notes to mark the literary devices.
- »»» Ask yourself **what** literary device the writer is using.
- »»» Once you’ve identified the type of literary device, ask yourself **why** the writer chose to use it. **Ask:** “What effect does this have on me, the reader?”



**Reading Standard 1.5**  
Understand and explain “shades of meaning” in related words.

**Reading Standard 2.7**  
Make reasonable assertions about a text through accurate supporting citations.

**Reading Standard 3.7**  
Explain the effects of common literary devices (for example, symbolism, imagery, metaphor) in a variety of fictional and nonfictional texts.

# Practice Read

## BEFORE YOU READ

Some people live lives full of adventure, suspense, romance, intrigue, and mystery. Cleopatra was one of them. Although Cleopatra lived two thousand years ago, she has never been forgotten.

## WHO WAS CLEOPATRA?

Richard Cohen

### WHAT & WHY?

Underline the **images** in the Shakespeare quotation that help you see and even smell Cleopatra's barge.

### WORD KNOWLEDGE

A *poop* (line 10) is an enclosure or small building on a ship's deck.

### WHAT & WHY?

Re-read the third paragraph to find the **analogy**, or comparison. Underline the analogy. Why does the writer use this analogy here?

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Her name is one of the most well known in all of history. But how much do you really know about Cleopatra? How fully can anyone today understand this great and brilliant queen?

She was so famous that William Shakespeare wrote a play about her and her love affair with Marc Antony. Here is how Shakespeare described Cleopatra's arrival in Tarsus, in Asia Minor (she is on her way to meet Antony):

10 "The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that  
The winds were lovesick with them; the oars were silver,  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke. . ."

(Act II, Scene 2)

All the information we have about Cleopatra comes from her enemies, the Romans. Can you imagine if we knew about George Washington only from British sources? Or Robert E. Lee from the generals who fought against him?

20 To most people Cleopatra was a seducer who stole the hearts of men. Maybe this is because so many glamorous movie stars have portrayed her onscreen.





What most people don't understand, however, is that Cleopatra was a brilliant and clever ruler. She was famous for her personality rather than for her beauty. (She probably had a large chin and a large nose.) Her famous thickly braided hair was almost certainly a wig. But she had beautiful liquid eyes, and when she spoke, the greatest rulers of her time listened. A Greek writer said her voice was like an instrument of many strings. Her charm was  
30 rooted in her intelligence, and she used her intelligence as a weapon. Cleopatra was highly educated, for she had all the advantages of a member of the royal Ptolemy (tāl'ə·mē) family.

The Ptolemies ruled Egypt for more than 300 years. They lived in the capital city of Alexandria, which was built by Alexander the Great. Situated on the banks of the Nile River delta, Alexandria was one of the most beautiful urban centers in the world. It was like a jewel in a beautiful setting. Its vast library contained 400,000 scrolls of papyrus. Its  
40 Pharos lighthouse was the world's tallest building—a soaring structure that commanded the skyline. The museum was a magnet for scholars, thinkers, poets, and students from many lands. Those people from many different nations—Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and Arabs—lived there in harmony. They enjoyed a public theater, a huge gym, and even a zoo.

Born in 69 B.C., Cleopatra learned Greek and Egyptian myths as a child. Later she studied philosophy, literature, art, science, and languages. She was the first Ptolemy who  
50 could actually speak Egyptian—the language of the local people. She also knew Arabic and Hebrew. She loved to discuss serious subjects with the most famous philosophers, scientists, doctors, and writers of the time.

#### WHAT & WHY?

Underline the **images** in lines 25–29 that help you imagine what Cleopatra looked like.

#### DECODING TIP

Some words and names in this text may be difficult to pronounce. Underline the words *Ptolemies* (line 32) and *Pharos* (line 40). *Ptolemies* is pronounced (tāl'ə·mēz), and the *ph* in *Pharos* is pronounced as an *f* (far'ōz). As you read the next paragraph, look for another word where the *ph* makes the *f*/ sound. Circle it.

#### WHAT & WHY?

Underline the **simile** in line 38 that helps you imagine the city of Alexandria.

#### Notes



### WRITE ABOUT IT

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that compares two unrelated things. Find and underline the metaphor in the paragraph that begins on line 69. What does the metaphor help you see?

### VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

**jeered** (jird) v.: made fun of; mocked.

Which word shows more disrespect—*laughed* or *jeered*?

**feuds** (fyōōdz) n.: long-running quarrels, usually between families or clans. How would a fight differ from a feud?

**deposed** (dē-pōzd') v.: removed from office or power; forced from the throne.

..... Notes .....

Cleopatra had five siblings and half-siblings. Each was raised separately, with his or her own guardians and servants. From a very early age, the six children knew that they were competing for the leadership of Egypt. They **jeered** each other rather than played with each other.

**Feuds** among them were common. For example, once

60 when their father was away in Rome, the eldest sister seized the throne. She was immediately killed by the second-eldest, who had the backing of the people. When Ptolemy returned, he retook the throne. How? Easy. He had his upstart daughter executed.

Cleopatra, the third-eldest sibling, became queen at age eighteen when her father died. She ruled jointly with her ten-year-old half-brother, Ptolemy VIII. (By the way, Cleopatra was officially Cleopatra VII.)

Cleopatra wished to return Egypt to its former  
70 greatness as a world power, but her path to the throne was a minefield of obstacles. Ptolemy's advisers wanted to destroy Cleopatra and grabbed every opportunity to do so. Their chance to overthrow Cleopatra came when she took a long journey up the Nile to learn more about her kingdom. When she returned to Alexandria, she found that Ptolemy had turned many of the people against her. Learning of a plot to have her **deposed**, Cleopatra fled to Syria, a nearby country. There she formed an army to try to retake command of Egypt. She joined forces with Julius Caesar, a  
80 Roman general, a war hero who was famous for his leadership and battle skills.

Caesar, fighting on the side of Cleopatra, defeated young Ptolemy in battle. The young king of Egypt, fifteen years old, drowned in the Nile while trying to escape. He was weighed down by his gold armor.

Caesar and Cleopatra were a powerful couple, reigning over the region for years. Caesar, however, was assassinated by Roman generals who feared his **ambitious** nature and thirst for power.

90 Following Caesar's death, Cleopatra joined forces with Marc Antony, a Roman leader who rose to power following Caesar's death. Although they were a powerful and **dynamic** team, Antony and Cleopatra angered other Romans with their leadership. Their forces came under attack by those of Octavius, Antony's former ally. Cleopatra and Antony lost everything in battle. Soon after the defeat, Marc Antony killed himself, mistakenly believing that Cleopatra was dead.

Cleopatra died soon after, in 30 B.C., while a captive of Octavius. She was only thirty-nine years old.

#### VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

**ambitious** (am-bish'əs) *adj.*: full of desire to gain power, fame, or wealth.

How might an ambitious person differ from a greedy person?

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**dynamic** (di-nam'ik) *adj.*: full of energy; forceful.

Which word, *dynamic* or *forceful*, has a more positive meaning?

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### OWN THE SELECTION

#### PRACTICING THE STANDARDS

**Literary Devices** Fill out the Literary-Devices Chart on the next page to survey the literary devices used in "Who Was Cleopatra?"

#### KEEPING TRACK

**Personal Word List** Record new words from this selection, with their definitions, in your Personal Word List.

**Personal Reading Log** Record this selection in your Personal Reading Log, and explain why you would or wouldn't want to read a novel about Cleopatra. Give yourself 2 points on the Reading Meter for reading "Who Was Cleopatra?"

**Checklist for Standards Mastery** Record your progress in understanding writers' use of literary devices on the Checklist for Standards Mastery.



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