

# Learning Goal:

**Students will learn how to use jot notes to help them become better readers**

**Passive vs active reading**

**What are jot notes and why should we use them?**

**Practice Example**

# ACTIVE READING

Use reading strategies  
to help understand  
and remember what is  
read

VS

# PASSIVE READING

Not using strategies-  
struggles to  
understand and  
remember what is read

# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**Students make  
sure they  
understand what  
they are reading as  
they go along**

**Students read until  
the assignment is  
completed**

# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**The goal is to learn  
something new.**

**The goal is to  
finish reading.**



# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**The mind is  
focused on what is  
being read**

**The mind wanders  
during reading**

# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**Can summarize  
what they have  
read and have  
opinions about the  
topic**

**Can't create a  
logical summary or  
form an opinion.**

# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**Has a pencil/  
highlighter in hand  
to make notes**

**Don't know what is  
important to make  
notes on**

# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**Make meaning of  
new words**

**Skip unknown  
vocabulary words**

# ACTIVE READING

VS

# PASSIVE READING

**Connects the text  
to something they  
already know,  
makes predictions**

**Words get read but  
do not get  
absorbed**

# ACTIVE READING

VS

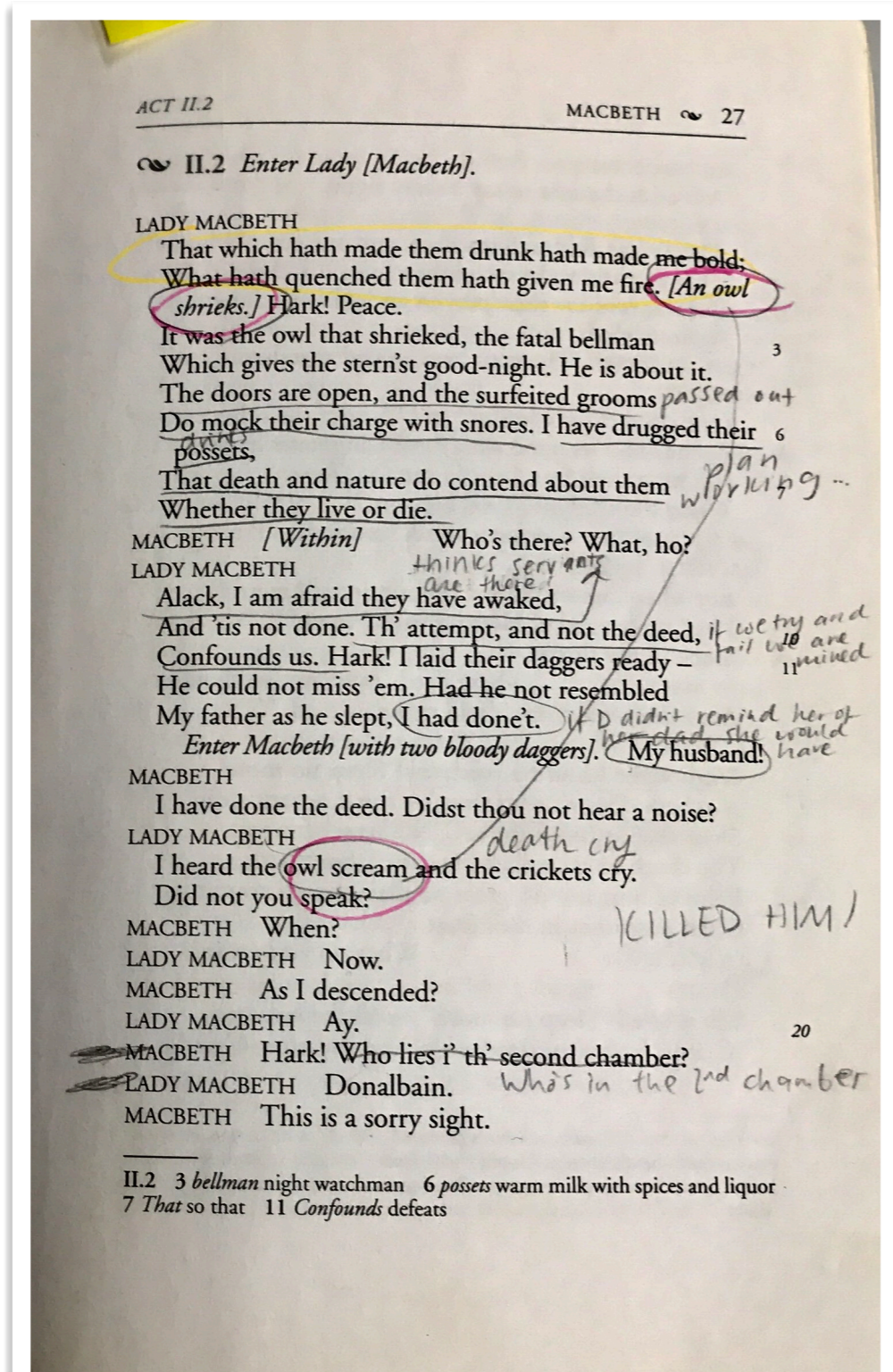
# PASSIVE READING

**Pictures the story  
in their mind- like  
watching a movie.**

**Words get read but  
do not get  
absorbed**



# An effective way to become an active reader is by using **jot notes**.



Four Skinny Trees

repetition in this section

isolated don't fit in misunderstood

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Four raggedy excuses planted by the city. (From our room we can hear them, but Nenny just sleeps and doesn't appreciate these things.)? Why is Nenny mentioned here?

"Four" repeated 3x  
The trees are  
• skinny  
• don't belong where they are  
• raggedy excuses put there by someone

fierce angry determined

Their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground. They grow up and they grow down and grab the earth between their hairy toes and bite the sky with violent teeth and never quit their anger. This is how they keep.

Very visual!  
First and last sentence are simple and direct.  
Strong adjectives and verbs.

simile

Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep, trees say when I sleep. They teach. POW!

each keeps the others strong  
repetition & rhyme

Here's the "so what"

I can picture that wall!

When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew to despise concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be.

"Four" repeated 3x  
The trees  
• grow to despise concrete  
• reach  
• know their reason

Excerpt taken from *The House on Mango Street* (1983)

concrete = barriers, limits, all the things that box us in

The trees are a symbol to the author.



# What are jot notes?

Jot notes are short, quick notes.

Jot notes are NOT full sentences.

Highlighted/Underlined text must be accompanied by a note in the margin.

Here is an example of what jot notes could look like.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

**Tone:** Celebratory  
Admiration

**Form:** Free form  
Broken down resembles Sonnet

**Language:** technical  
Colloquial  
Conversational  
monosyllables

**Digging**  
Digging = extended metaphor of digging and roots.  
Heaney digs into his roots, his heritage

Pen fat with what? → opening - coming to terms with self? → home

his window - ownership threshold to his heritage

In rhythm =  
In touch with  
In agreement with

Memory #1  
Under my window a clean rasping sound  
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:  
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds  
Bends low, comes up twenty years away  
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills  
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft  
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.  
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep  
To scatter new potatoes that we picked  
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade,  
Just like his old man.

Memory #2  
My grandfather could cut more turf in a day  
Than any other man on Toner's bog.  
Once I carried him milk in a bottle  
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up  
To drink it, then fell to right away  
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods  
Over his shoulder, digging down and down  
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap  
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge  
Through living roots awaken in my head.  
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb  
The squat pen rests.  
I'll dig with it.

**Seamus Heaney**

2 separate memories:  
Father digging potatoes  
Grandfather digging turf - peat bogs

The pen is mightier than the sword.

manual labor or digging with the mind?

power violence? protection A natural extension?

rasping connotes a living thing

remembering / to look down on has negative con. but the poem is positive + celebratory

connections with the past, former generations, traditions

survival nourishment

Symbol: peat living roots digging squat pen

Why squat? crouching ownership

skill, pride, dignity

- bragging rights

worked hard - work ethics strength - technique

- negative images traditions / livelihoods destroyed no longer available

an awakening of what? Follow in what way?

Reminders of home + hearth rests, snug, nestled

Onomatopoeia rasping gravelly squelch slap

Speaker - male patriarchal traditions reverent attitude

Admiration colloquial language

Transition

Admiration colloquial language

closure - Acceptance

weapon - tool

Follows tradition of fathers using the tools available to him.

Reminders of home + hearth rests, snug, nestled

Onomatopoeia rasping gravelly squelch slap



# What can we jot?

Questions

Tricky Words

Things the text remind you of

Feelings

New Learning

Interesting Parts

Opinions



# Why are jot notes helpful?

**To keep track of important details**

**To better understand a text**

**To show and remember what you are thinking when reading**

**To better prepare for discussion, to answer questions and to write**

**To help focus on what you are reading**