

## Appendix 5: Close Reading Organizer (CRO)

### Close Reading Organizer

This reading guide organizes some prompting questions to help you probe literary features you encounter in Austen’s novels. The literary features column includes the COVE tags in blue to help you link those with the literary features themselves. Please type the CRO tags into your COVE annotations just above the COVE tags. (I’ll show you how in class.)

CRO	
Literary Feature	Questions to Prompt Close Reading
<b>Voice</b> <b>(Perspective, POV)</b> (Textual, Linguistic, Interpretive)	1) Who is the narrator and how do you describe her voice: prominent, intrusive, consistent, multiple, reliable, and so on? 2) How close or distant is the voice to the people and details of the story: first-person, third-person, limited omniscient, omniscient? 3) What is the tone (teller’s attitude toward the subject matter) of the narrative voice? 6) What does the voice suggest about the other literary domains and about Austen’s cultural context and readership?
<b>Social Groups</b> <b>(Cultural, Historical)</b>	1) What social groups are depicted: families, classes, (men, women, youths, fathers, mothers, children, upper class-aristocracy & gentry, clergy, officers, middle class-merchants, working class-laborers, servants, soldiers, etc.), in what light, in what relation to the cultural issues of the period? 2) What traits or characteristics do these groups seem to show? What roles or work do members of these groups take up? 3) In what ways are their activities gendered? 4) How are individuals who step outside of their group and/or its accompanying roles treated/stigmatized/elevated? 5) Who seems to represent an ideal member of these groups? 6) What is significant about a character’s membership or place in the group(s) to which s/he belongs?
<b>Oppositions &amp; Cultural Issues</b> <b>(Cultural, Historical)</b>	1) What primary oppositions and cultural issues does the work present: think in terms of work, home, family, childhood, adulthood, class, sexuality, gender, public spaces, private domains, rural life, urban life, economics, wealth (inheritance, earned wealth), morality, religion, education, art (aesthetics), ideas of social structure, government, law, empire, war, marriage, etc.? 2) How are these cultural issues represented, what opposing or competing interests are at play? 3) What special connection (and how or why) do certain social groups have to these issues
<b>Structure &amp; Style</b> (Textual, Linguistic)	1) How would you map out the work’s overarching structure—what structural patterns or forms do you notice in the work? 2) How would you describe (the author’s overall style (the language used—diction, vocabulary, dialect, <i>and</i> the way it’s used—formal, erudite, colloquial, lyrical, poetic, journalistic)? What effect does the style have on the oppositions or issues in the work? 3) What literary devices do you notice in the language (allusion-literary or high culture references, metaphoric language, imagery, symbolism, insertion of other artistic texts or literary forms, etc.)?
<b>Genre</b> (Textual, Interpretive)	1) How would you classify the fiction—what kind of a novel is this (i.e., social realism, tragedy, comedy of manners, didactic, domestic, novel of sensibility, bildungsroman, fairy tale, cautionary tale, seduction story)? 2) How does the genre help to establish, complicate, or complement the meanings conveyed in the novel?

Assignment adapted from “Appendix 5: Close Reading Organizer (CRO)” by Bettina Tate Pedersen published in *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2021.