Purpose of the Strategy
Originated by Taylor (1953), a Cloze passage contains systematically deleted words. The Close procedure is used to (1) determine what students already know about a given topic and (2) to assess the suitability of a new text for students by testing their prior knowledge and language competence as they attempt to fill in the deletions.

Using the Cloze Procedure

ADMINISTRATION

1. Copy the attached Cloze passage and distribute one blank copy to each student
2. Read through instructions as class and clarify that students should fill in the one word that seems most appropriate for each blank
3. Verbally emphasize the following:
   • Take time
   • Test will not be graded
   • Guessing is encouraged—you should fill in all the blanks
   • Spelling does not count
4. Prior to filling in the blanks, direct students to silently read through text and then read text aloud to class.

SCORING

1. Compare student Cloze passage to Cloze passage key
2. Score one point for each exact replacement
   a. Synonyms are incorrect
   b. Incorrect spelling is not penalized
   c. Different word endings are incorrect
3. Double raw score (number of correct words) to find percentage
   (Ex. If there are 35 correct replacements, 35 x 2 = 70%)
   • Interpret Results Using the Chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Level</th>
<th>* Instructional Level *</th>
<th>Frustration Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60% and Above</td>
<td>40%-60%</td>
<td>40 % and Below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Material is too Easy)</td>
<td>(Material is About Right)</td>
<td>(Material is Too Difficult)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anderson, BYU, 2010
The road in front of the house ran due north through that line where the last glacier had melted in some distant age and left its final load of ______, a line that separated ______ rich, black loam culture ______ northern Illinois from the ______, hard-packed clay culture ______ the south.

Jethro regretted ______ melting of that glacier; ______ it could have hung ______ another hundred miles, life ______ have been very different ______ him and his family. ______ then it hadn't, and ______ he loved the dog ______ and the silver poplars ______ the hedge of lilacs ______ the south that separated ______ well-drained kitchen garden ______ the dooryard. He doubted ______ there were such wooded ______ or winding creeks in ______ cornbelt of the north ______ one could find by ______ dozens in the clay ______, and he could not ______ contentment in any other ______ than this one, which ______ father had chosen thirty ______ before. But it was ______ pity about the glacier. ______ another hundred miles!

Anderson, BYU, 2010
Jenny poured fresh water into big basin so that mother and Jethro could their faces and wash dirt and grime from hands.

“Nancy and the tykes are here,” she to Ellen. “We got nice meal fixed fer.”

Jenny had swept back shining black hair high her head because of heat in the kitchen the food was prepared an open fireplace, and drops of sweat stood under her eyes and a very firm chin. grinned at Jethro and him briskly on the as he came up to the kitchen well.

“I’ve got a crock of lettuce fer you, Jeth, though I’m terr’ble wasteful in pickin’ it too young. But I know how you been dreamin’ green things as fur back as last December.”

(Hunt 15)
The road in front of the house ran due north through that line where the last glacier had melted in some distant age and left its final load of **drift**, a line that separated **the** rich, black loam culture **of** northern Illinois from the **poor**, hard-packed clay culture **to** the south.

Jethro regretted **the** melting of that glacier; **if** it could have hung **on** another hundred miles, life **might** have been very different **for** him and his family. **But** then it hadn’t, and **anyway** he loved the dog **fennel** and the silver poplars **and** the hedge of lilacs **on** the south that separated **Jenny’s** well-drained kitchen garden **from** the dooryard. He doubted **that** there were such wooded **hills** or winding creeks in **the** cornbelt of the north **as** one could find by **the** dozens in the clay **lands**, and he could not **imagine** contentment in any other **spot** than this one, which **his** father had chosen thirty **years** before. But it was **a** pity about the glacier. **Only** another hundred miles!

Jenny **had** poured fresh water into **a** big basin so that **her** mother and Jethro could **cool** their faces and wash **the** dirt and grime from **their** hands.
“Nancy and the little tykes are here,” she called to Ellen. “We got a nice meal fixed fer you.”

Jenny had swept back her shining black hair high upon her head because of the heat in the kitchen where the food was prepared over an open fireplace, and little drops of sweat stood out under her eyes and over a very firm chin. She grinned at Jethro and whacked him briskly on the seat as he came up to the kitchen well.

“I’ve got a crock of lettuce fer you, Jeth, though I’m terr’ble wasteful in pickin’ it too young. But I know how you been dreamin’ green things as fur back as last December.”

(Hunt 15)
Because *Across Five Aprils* contains somewhat specific farm terminology, Revolutionary War vocabulary, and rural dialect, the cloze procedure is an important strategy to use before reading the book to make sure students have sufficient background knowledge and can comprehend the sentence constructions in this particular book. While a book may be leveled for a specific grade, there can be a wide range of topics and sentence constructions within the same grade level. Because each group of students is unique in their knowledge and comprehension abilities, this strategy provides a nice way for a teacher to get an overall glance at whether this book is a good reading level for the majority of students, and especially struggling students, before beginning the book as a class.

However, a couple disadvantages arise with the cloze procedure. One boy to whom I administered this particular test, expressed frustration that there were several words that might have fit in the blank. It seems somewhat senseless that if a student doesn’t guess the exact word that the author used, they are counted off for not having sufficient background knowledge or not understanding sentence structure—even if they picked an equally appropriate or synonymous word. For example, my college friend scored a 44% on this test, even though he reads at a college level. He was counted down for writing “said” instead of “called,” and “on” instead of “upon”. Clearly he understood the sentence structure; he just couldn’t read the author’s mind. These observations lead me to question the accuracy of this
strategy; while it seems like it would be helpful to assess whether a text is too easy for a student, it may inaccurately measure the difficulty of the text for the students.

While the Cloze Procedure has many drawbacks, I can see it being helpful in my future classroom to assess students’ knowledge of sentence construction and flow. Seeing whether or not the answers they inserted make sense in the flow of the sentence will not only help me know if the reading level is too hard or easy, but will also help me to see what else they need to learn about sentence construction.