



The Fluency Synthesis

Persuasion & Influence · Tier 3 · Component 6 — instructor overview

Grades: 11–12 **Time:** ~50 min (flexible) **Format:** whole-class reading, then individual or pairs

Where the whole strand becomes fluency rather than a checklist. Students learn to read a complex persuasion artifact across all three layers *at once* — the appeal, the architecture, and the system — moving between them the way a strong reader moves between word, sentence, and theme.

WHAT STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DO

- Name the three layers — appeal, architecture, system — and what each captures.
- Read a single artifact at all three layers simultaneously.
- Explain how a move at one layer serves a goal at another.
- Identify what becomes visible only when all three layers are held together.

WHY IT MATTERS

A real artifact works on all three layers at once, and reading only one misses how they reinforce each other. This component is the turn from analysis-by-list to genuine fluency — a habit of mind rather than a worksheet answer — and it prepares students for the capstone.

The running example is a **viral "miracle cure" post**, read at every layer, chosen because its surface appeal, its sequence, and its systemic distribution are all legible in one artifact.

PACING

SEGMENT	TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
Reading	14 min	Read the Student pages; the worked three-layer read.
Warm-up read	12 min	Activity Part A on the worked artifact.
Your artifact	15 min	Activity Parts B–C.
Debrief	10 min	Discussion prompts (Instructor p. 4).

MATERIALS

The 4 Student pages per student or pair. Optional: a shared artifact to read together at all three layers.



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The method in depth — part 1 of 2

The three tiers are three altitudes of the same phenomenon. Fluency means holding all three at once and seeing how a move at one altitude serves the others. The running example is a **viral miracle-cure post**: a dramatic before/after image, "doctors don't want you to know this," a wall of testimonials, a countdown timer, reposted by dozens of near-identical accounts.

THE THREE LAYERS

Appeal (Tier 1) is the surface move — the immediate hooks: the fear/hope image (pathos), "doctors don't want you to know" (a manufactured authority hook), the testimonials (social proof), the timer (urgency). **Architecture (Tier 2)** is the sequence — how framing, authority, social proof, identity, and escalation are ordered so each sets up the next: fear first to open you, then false authority to lower your guard, then social proof to make joining feel safe, then a small-yes escalation to the purchase. **System (Tier 3)** is the environment — how distortion (a survivor-only testimonial sample), manufactured consensus (the coordinated reposting accounts), and repetition operate across a population, and who profits from the belief becoming normal.

READING BETWEEN THE LAYERS

The point is not three separate lists. A single emotional image (appeal) is placed exactly where the architecture needs you committed, in service of a systemic goal of normalizing a product's claim across a market. Motivated reasoning links the layers: once identity is engaged at the architecture level, the systemic frame (framing effect) decides which appeals even register. Fluency is tracing those connections quickly — not cataloguing items in three boxes, but seeing the artifact as one designed system operating at three depths.



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The method in depth — part 2 of 2

MODELING THE MOVE BETWEEN LAYERS

The instructional heart of this component is demonstrating the *movement*, not the categories. Take the miracle-cure post's countdown timer. At the appeal layer it's simple urgency — a Tier 1 hook. But ask the cross-layer question: *why is the timer placed exactly there?* Architecturally, it lands right after the testimonials, converting a warm feeling of social proof into an action before doubt can surface — the timer's job is to prevent the pause where the architecture would fail. And systemically, the same urgency, multiplied across every copy of the post and every viewer, produces a wave of near-simultaneous purchases that itself becomes new social proof ("it's selling out!") feeding the next viewer. One small element, read at three depths, reveals the whole design.

Teaching students to ask that cross-layer question — *what is this appeal doing for the architecture, and what is this architecture doing for the system?* — is how a checklist becomes fluency. A strong reader doesn't finish the appeals list and move to the architecture list; they feel the timer as urgency, sequence, and systemic engine simultaneously.

WHAT ONLY APPEARS IN THE WHOLE

Some things are invisible at any single layer and obvious across all three. That the miracle cure *can't* work, yet spreads anyway, only makes sense when you see truth is irrelevant to the system's goal — the architecture is built to convert, not to convince, and the system rewards spread, not accuracy. That insight lives in no single layer; it emerges from holding them together.

ONE LINE TO CARRY

Zoom, don't fixate. A strong read moves between the word, the sequence, and the system, and asks what only becomes visible when all three are held at once.



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Discussion guide — modular; assemble to fit your period

These blocks are timed so you can build a lesson from them: a single period, or a full unit day. Run the activity with an opener before and a debrief after — pick what fits.

TIME BUDGET — MIX AND MATCH

BLOCK	TIME	USE
Opener (before)	5–8 min	Pick one, below.
Activity	20–25 min	The student pages.
Debrief (after)	~5 min each	Pick 1–4 prompts.
Close	3 min	The takeaway.

Single period: opener + activity + one debrief + close. **Full lesson:** opener + activity + two or three debriefs + an extension.

BEFORE — THE OPENER (PICK ONE · 5–8 MIN)

FORMAT: think-pair-share or a quick hands-up. GOAL: surface what students already notice and pose the question. END RESULT: every student has committed to a prediction or named a real example you can return to in the debrief.

- **Predict.** Show the miracle-cure post; read just the countdown timer aloud and ask what it's doing — model the cross-layer move.
- **From their world.** Have students pick the artifact they'll analyze; a few named aloud seed ideas.

THE ACTIVITY (BUDGET 20–25 MIN)

CONCRETE GOAL — STUDENTS CAN: read one artifact at all three layers at once and explain how a single element serves the architecture and the system.

AFTER — THE DEBRIEF (PICK 1–4 · ~5 MIN EACH)

FORMAT: whole-class; call on the examples students generated in the opener and activity. END RESULT: students can state the takeaway in their own words and back it with one concrete example from their own life or the activity.

- What can you see across all three layers that you miss reading only one?
- Give an example of a single appeal that serves a whole-system goal.
- How does the system layer decide which appeals even land?
- When does "fluency" replace "checklist" — how do you know you have it?

CLOSE (3 MIN)

Have a few students state the takeaway in their own words: **Appeal, architecture, system — read them together, and the whole design appears.**



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Leading the discussion — pacing, redirects, and warm-ups

The previous page is the plan; this page is for running it. Budget the period from the total below, and keep the redirect moves handy — most discussions falter in one of these four ways.

DOES IT FIT THE PERIOD?

ONE PERIOD (~45–50 MIN): opener 6 + activity 20–25 + one debrief 5 + close 3 = **34–39 min.** BLOCK (~90 MIN): add two more debriefs and a differentiation extension from the facilitation page.

WHEN DISCUSSION STALLS OR DERAILS

IF...	MOVE
Silence, or “I don’t know”	Shrink the question: “Just name the first thing you noticed.” Give 30 seconds of silent think-time, then call on a pair, not an individual.
One or two voices dominate	“Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t gone yet.” Run it as think-pair-share first, so every student has an answer ready to offer.
It turns personal or heated	Move the trial from the person to the message: “What in the text makes you say that?” Keep the claim on trial, never the classmate.
Answers stay on the surface	Push for evidence: “Where exactly — quote the line.” Then “What would change your mind?” to surface the reasoning underneath.

WARM-UP BANK (SWAP IN FOR ANY OPENER)

Interchangeable with the opener on the previous page. Vary them across a unit so the hook stays fresh.

- **Two-minute hunt.** Find one real example of today’s move on your phone right now; keep the best one for the debrief.
- **Steelman it.** What’s the most honest reason someone would use this technique? Persuasion isn’t always dishonest — name the legitimate version first.
- **Rate and defend.** Put one message on the board; everyone rates it 1–5 for how persuasive, then defends the spread of answers.
- **Odd one out.** Three short examples, one isn’t the move — which, and how can you tell?



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Facilitation, anticipated moves & answer key

ANTICIPATED STUDENT RESPONSES & MISCONCEPTIONS

- **Three lists, no links.** The defining miss — students fill three boxes but never connect them. Relentlessly ask the cross-layer question: what is this appeal doing for the architecture / system?
- **"Which layer is it *really*?"** The point is that one element lives at all three (the timer is appeal *and* architecture *and* system). Resist forcing single categorization.
- **Layer confusion.** Some blur architecture (sequence) with system (environment). Keep the anchors: architecture = order of moves; system = distribution across a population.
- **Stopping at labeling.** Fluency is explanation, not identification. Push "how" and "why placed there," not just "what."

DIFFERENTIATION & EXTENSIONS

Support: provide the worked miracle-cure read as a model to imitate before students choose their own. **Stretch:** students read two artifacts and compare their three-layer designs, or find an artifact where the three layers conflict and explain the tension. **Cross-curricular:** synthesis and close reading in ELA; systems analysis.

ANSWER KEY — ACTIVITY

ITEM	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Appeal	<i>Fear/hope image + "doctors don't want you to know" + testimonials + timer.</i>
Architecture	<i>Fear → false authority → social proof → urgency escalation to purchase.</i>
System	<i>Coordinated reposts manufacture consensus; survivor-only testimonials; profit motive.</i>
Cross-layer (timer)	<i>Urgency (appeal) placed to prevent doubt (architecture) and mass-timed to create new social proof (system).</i>
Whole-only insight	<i>Truth is irrelevant to a system built to convert and reward spread.</i>



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Reading all three layers at once

A post goes viral: a dramatic before-and-after photo, the headline "doctors don't want you to know this one trick," a wall of glowing testimonials, and a countdown timer — *offer ends in 9:59*. It's reposted by dozens of accounts that all look oddly alike. You already have the tools to take this apart. What this final component asks is harder and more powerful: read *all* of it at once — the surface hooks, the sequence they're arranged in, and the system spreading it — the way a strong reader feels a word, a sentence, and a whole theme in a single pass.

Real persuasion works on three levels simultaneously. Reading only one misses how they lock together. Fluency is holding all three at once.

LAYER 1 · APPEAL (TIER 1)

The immediate hooks. In the post: the fear-then-hope image (pathos), "doctors don't want you to know" (a fake authority hook), the testimonials (social proof), the timer (urgency). The stuff you feel first, before you think.

LAYER 2 · ARCHITECTURE (TIER 2)

How the hooks are *ordered* so each sets up the next. Fear first, to open you up. Then false authority, to lower your guard. Then social proof, to make joining feel safe. Then urgency, to push the purchase before doubt catches up. Rearrange them and it stops working — the order *is* the machine.

LAYER 3 · SYSTEM (TIER 3)

How it moves across a population. The testimonials are a survivor-only sample (the people it didn't work for aren't posting). The identical reposting accounts manufacture consensus. Repetition across your whole feed makes the claim feel familiar and true. And someone profits every time the belief spreads. This layer isn't about you; it's about the environment the post lives in.



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Moving between the layers

THE POINT ISN'T THREE LISTS

Here's the leap from checklist to fluency. Don't finish the appeals list and move to the architecture list. Instead, take *one* element and read it at all three depths at once. The countdown timer, for example. On the surface, it's just urgency — a Tier 1 appeal. But ask: **why is it placed exactly there**, right after the testimonials? Architecturally, its job is to convert that warm social-proof feeling into a purchase *before* doubt can surface — it exists to kill the pause where the whole sequence would fall apart. And at the system level, the same timer, multiplied across every copy of the post and every viewer, triggers a wave of near-simultaneous buying that becomes *new* social proof — "it's selling out!" — which feeds the next viewer. One tiny element, read at three depths, reveals the entire design.

That's the move to practice: for any piece, ask *what is this doing for the architecture, and what is this architecture doing for the system?* When you can feel the timer as urgency, sequence, and engine all at once, you're reading fluently.

WHAT YOU CAN ONLY SEE IN THE WHOLE

Some things are invisible at any single layer and obvious across all three. The miracle cure *can't* actually work — yet it spreads beautifully. That only makes sense once you see all three layers together: the architecture is built to *convert*, not to convince, and the system rewards *spread*, not truth. Whether the cure works was never the point. You can't see that from the appeals alone, or the sequence alone. It emerges only from the whole.

THE ONE LINE

Zoom, don't fixate. Move between the word, the sequence, and the system — and always ask what becomes visible only when you hold all three at once.



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Name: _____ Date: _____

The three layers: Appeal (the hook) · Architecture (the sequence) · System (the environment)

PART A — READ THE WORKED ARTIFACT

The miracle-cure post from the reading: a scary before/after image, "doctors don't want you to know," a wall of testimonials, a countdown timer, reposted by dozens of identical accounts. Fill each layer.

LAYER	WHAT'S OPERATING HERE?
Appeal	
Architecture	
System	

READ BETWEEN THE LAYERS

Take the **countdown timer**. Explain what it does at the appeal layer, the architecture layer, and the system layer — all three.



YOUR ARTIFACT

Choose a real persuasion artifact you can examine closely. Read it across all three layers.

Appeal — the surface hooks:

Architecture — the sequence, and how each move sets up the next:

System — the environment and who benefits:

THE WHOLE DESIGN

What can you see about this artifact *only* when you hold all three layers at once?
