

### Say Mean Matter: Close Reading Strategy

The Say-Mean-Matter close reading strategy, often attributed to literacy educator Kyleene Beers, that helps students engage deeply with a text by breaking down comprehension into three steps:

- 1) **Say:** What does the text literally say? (Summarize or paraphrase key points or facts.)
- 2) **Mean:** What does the text mean? (Interpret underlying ideas, messages, or themes.)
- 3) **Matter:** Why does it matter? (Explain the significance or relevance to broader concepts, contexts, or personal experience.)

One of the benefits of the Say-Mean-Matter strategy is it is easily differentiated. For example, for your high achieving students, you might present them with a blank Say-Mean-Matter chart. For students who might need more support, you may highlight excerpts from the text, but still have them select certain passages to use in their chart. You may choose to completely fill in the Say column for others. Finally, you might provide some of the Mean column for students who need additional scaffolding.

An example of a Say-Mean-Matter chart using Federalist No. 51 is shown below:

<b>Say</b> Specific information or quote from the text	<b>Mean</b> Analyze the meaning of the excerpt	<b>Matter</b> Connection to broader context, ideas, concepts, etc.
[1] In order to lay a due foundation for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent is admitted on all hands to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own; and consequently should be so constituted that the members of each should have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others. ...	<i>(This means...)</i>  <i>Madison argues that each branch of government must be independent from the others to protect liberty. He suggests that members of one branch should not have too much influence over who serves in another branch.</i>	<i>(It matters because...)</i>  <i>Madison is detailing the concept of separation of powers – which is still an important constitutional principle today. By having separation among the branches, corruption and abuse of power are less likely.</i>



*Founding Civics*  
STUDENT WORKSHEET

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**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

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After completing the Say-Mean-Matter chart:

- 1) **Identify** the author's claim.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) **Describe** two pieces of evidence the author uses to support their claim.
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.

