Comprehension Strategies

Summarising, Synthesising & Determining Importance

This document is the fifth in a series of support materials. It contains a synthesis of material from a variety of on-line and printed sources. It has been designed to support the Northern Adelaide Region Comprehension focus 2010-2012

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Determining Importance

The strategy of determining importance helps a reader make decisions as to what parts of a text deserve the most attention. Not all information presented by an author is of equal importance.

This includes:
- Distinguishing between important and unimportant information to identify key ideas or themes
- Determining topic and main idea
- Determining author's message
- Utilizing knowledge of narrative or expository text features/structures
- Determining relevance

What is *determining importance*?

According to Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000) in *Strategies That Work*, determining important ideas and information when reading is central to comprehension and moving toward insight. In their discussion, the authors explain that determining importance varies by genre:

- In narrative genres, determining importance requires the reader to identify main ideas and infer themes of the story.

- In nonfiction, however, determining importance is more about retaining important information and learning from the text; readers must be able to sift through information and decide what is most important. To determine importance in nonfiction, readers must understand the many features and structures specific to the genre. These text features and structures for organization help readers identify not only main ideas, but also what is worth remembering. For example, understanding that bold print is used to draw attention to important vocabulary and concepts signals the reader to slow down and make sure these words or concepts are understood.

How can *determining importance* be taught so that it supports reading comprehension?

BEFORE READING

Think-Aloud

The think-aloud allows students to hear the kind of self-talk, problem solving, and thinking that effective readers use so the students can practice the same effective processes. During a think-aloud, allow the students to hear what you are thinking while using strategies.

Example
After reading *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, demonstrate, through a think-aloud, how you reflect on the story to determine themes and main ideas.

After reading a good book, I often ask myself what are the bigger ideas the author was trying to convey? I think to myself, what was this story mostly about? After finishing this book, I think about how determined Grace was to be Peter Pan even though her classmates discouraged her. I think about how supportive Grace's family was in helping her believe she could reach her goal.

The themes of family and believing in yourself are important in this book The main idea of this story seems to be that Grace's family helps her believe in herself so that she can achieve her goal of becoming Peter Pan in the school play. I can support my thinking with details from the text. Let's look back at pages 15 and 16. Her mother is telling Grace that the kids at school were wrong and that she can be not only Peter Pan, but anything else she wants to be.

Let's look at the next few pages. Grace's Nana takes her to the ballet to see a "stunning new Juliet" who is from Nana's home of Trinidad. Of course, Nana and Ma are so proud of Grace at the end when they see her in the play.

The main idea and supporting details can be recorded on a main idea web like the one below.

Main Idea Web

BEFORE READING
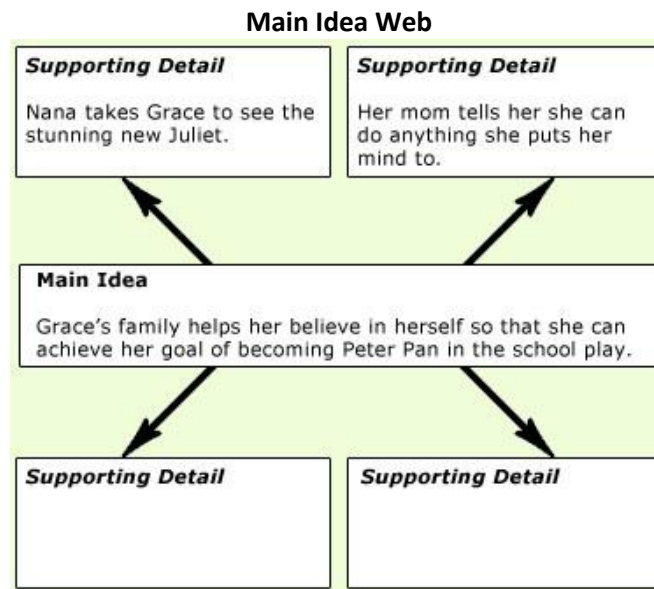
Mini-Lesson for Introducing and Modelling Determining Importance

Present a whole-group mini-lesson that defines and models how features in nonfiction can help readers determine main ideas and important information. According to Gay Su Pinnell and Patricia L. Scharer (2003), a mini-lesson has four components: introducing the strategy, explaining why the strategy is important to readers, demonstrating the strategy, and clearly stating what readers should do. The mini-lesson should be interactive and invite student engagement.

Example

Introducing the Strategy
Explain that there are many features in nonfiction that signal to the reader that something is important. Select one to two features to focus on, such as bold and italicized print or headings and subheadings.

Explaining Why the Strategy Is Important to Readers
Explain that the author uses certain features in nonfiction to let the reader know that something is important or to organize information. For example, changes in the style or size of the print (often also referred to as type or font size) help readers know that something important will be explained and that pace should be adjusted accordingly, and headings give important clues about the main ideas.

Demonstrating the Strategy
Use a nonfiction big book or text that all students can see to explicitly model for students how the feature or features you've discussed help you determine and remember important information.

The author put this word in bold print. I know that means this word is important to helping me understand the topic I am reading about. I better slow down a bit to make sure I understand this word.

Or: *The author put a heading here. I know the heading tells me what this whole section is going to be about. I know the heading is going to be related to the main idea of this section.*

Clearly Stating What Good Readers Should Do Remind students that good readers use features in nonfiction to help them determine the main ideas and the information that is important enough to remember and that pace may need to be adjusted accordingly. Ask students to brainstorm other nonfiction text features that might signal them that something is important. It would be helpful if pairs of students had nonfiction texts to refer to for examples. This will help with their brainstorming. Chart responses.

Additional Mini-Lesson Ideas Related to Determining Importance

Here are some other mini-lesson ideas about determining importance that you can explore with your students:

- Main ideas are supported with details.
- In nonfiction, there is often a main idea in every section.
- Readers use many text features to help them distinguish important from unimportant information.
- Good readers slow down when they think something is important or worth remembering.
- "Central idea" is another way of saying "main idea."
- Sometimes the theme of a story must be inferred.

DURING READING

Guided Practice

Immediately following a mini-lesson or think-aloud, provide guided practice in which students have an opportunity to practice with support. For example, after the think-aloud using *Amazing Grace*, read aloud another short book with a clear main idea, such as *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka, and ask students to discuss with a partner, or pair-share, the main idea.

After the mini-lesson on using nonfiction text features to help determine what is important and worth remembering, students might read a short article with their partner and highlight examples of such text features.

DURING READING

Independent Practice—Marking Examples in Independent Reading

Remind students that good readers are always using information from authors or are using features in the text to help them determine what is important. Give students each two Post-it notes, and ask them to keep these with them during independent reading, buddy reading, and managed independent learning (center time). If they encounter a text feature that signals to them that something is important, they should mark the page in the book. Allow time for sharing daily as students practice at the independent level.

DURING READING AFTER READING

Double-Sided Journal: Main Idea–Details Recording Sheet

Students can use a main idea–supporting details recording sheet like the one below to help them differentiate main ideas or topics from supporting details as they read informational texts.

Main Idea

Supporting Details

Tornadoes are very powerful and dangerous.

1. They can reach speeds of more than 200 mph.
2. Tornadoes have caused many deaths and much destruction in the U.S.

Students can also use the main idea–supporting details recording sheet to help them differentiate main ideas from supporting details after reading informational texts.

AFTER READING

Response Journal

Ask students to record the main idea and supporting details of their independent reading book in their response journal, or have them respond to the following question: What do you do during reading that helps you remember important information?

Main Idea–Supporting Details Sort

After a read-aloud, write the main idea and three to four supporting details, each on its own note card. Allow small groups to discuss each note card in order to distinguish the main idea from the supporting details. Students should be prepared to share their thinking.

AFTER
READING

Main Idea Web

Students can create a main idea web in which the main idea is in the middle and supporting details are placed in boxes connected to the centre by "threads."

AFTER
READING

Consensus

As described by Paula Guisinger in the AdLIT "Determining Importance" reading strategy, this "coming to a consensus" activity asks students to start by listing the three most important ideas from a read-aloud or text that the entire class has read. Students then work with a partner to share their ideas and come to a consensus about what is most important. Only three ideas may be recorded, and so the students must work together to determine importance. Next, each pair joins another pair and again shares and comes to a consensus about the three most important ideas. Finally, the class comes together to share and decide upon the most important ideas (Beers & Howell, 2003).

AFTER
READING

Nonfiction Text-Features Resource Book

Students can create their own ongoing nonfiction text-features resource book in which they record and illustrate various features and explain how the features help them as readers. For example, on a page labeled "Picture Captions," students might draw a picture and write a caption underneath. Next, they would explain how picture captions help them as readers. As new text features are introduced, students can add these to their resource books at a centre. Harvey and Goudvis (2000) include student examples on pages 123 and 124 of their book.

How can *determining importance* be used to teach vocabulary?

Remind students that understanding new vocabulary is critical to determining importance and remembering and connecting to what was read. Explain and model the different ways in which authors help readers understand important vocabulary within a text:

- Define words within context.
- Define words in a glossary.
- Demonstrate words within illustrations.
- Define words in text or vocabulary boxes.

How can *determining importance* be practiced in a literacy centre?

- Select a book for the listening centre that has a clear main idea. After students listen to the book, they should discuss the main idea and supporting details with a partner or small group. The main idea and supporting details can be recorded on the main idea web.

- The main idea–supporting details sort is an activity that's very well suited for the listening center. Choose a book that has a clear main idea. Write that main idea and several supporting details, each on its own note card. After listening to a book, students can discuss what is written on each note card and distinguish the main idea from supporting details. They can explain their thinking in their response journals.

- Have the main idea of a short article posted for students to see. As they read the article, they should highlight or underline any supporting details.

- Allow students to create an illustration that demonstrates the main idea of an independent reading selection or a book that has been read aloud.

- Let the students use the main idea–details recording sheet to help them differentiate main ideas or topics from supporting details in a short article or text that you have selected. It is possible that you may want to fill in part of the recording sheet to scaffold learning. For example, you might fill in the main idea, and students might fill in details; or you might fill in one supporting detail, and students could fill in the main idea as well as additional supporting details.

How can instruction for *determining importance* be differentiated in the following settings?

Whole-group setting

- Reading aloud to students, rather than asking them to read independently, allows students at all levels to focus on the strategy of determining importance without worrying about solving words.

- Allowing all students to respond through a pair-share, rather than calling on individual volunteers to talk while the majority simply listens, forces all students to be engaged.

- Listening to students share their thinking with partners gives you the opportunity to informally assess student understanding. When students leave the whole-group setting to go to independent reading or centres, you can keep those students back whose responses indicated they need more specific examples and support.

Small-group setting

- *Small-group guided-reading setting:* Select texts at the instructional level of the group. This allows students to practice strategies at their specific level.

- *Strategy group:* Work with a group of students who show evidence of struggling with the same strategy, such as determining importance. Provide additional think-alouds and examples to support learning and clear up misconceptions. Select texts that all students can read and that support the practice of the specific strategy being taught.

Literacy centres

- Practicing strategies at the listening centre allows students to focus on a specific strategy without worrying about solving words.

- Centres in which the students are asked to read independently or with a buddy should include books and articles at various levels.

- Responses will vary depending on a student's diverse strengths and areas of difficulty. Some students may draw pictures to complete graphic organizers and centre work, while others may write lengthy, well-developed ideas.

How can assessment be integrated into teaching the strategy of *determining importance*?

- Listening to students discuss and respond in partner sharing, reading conferences, and small-group and whole-group settings gives you valuable information about student understanding.

- The work that students complete during and after reading as well as at centers becomes valuable assessment data.

- Ask students to respond both orally and in writing to questions that reflect how they are tested on Ohio Achievement Tests or other tests required by your district. Almost all selections on the OAT have a question about the main idea. Often these are multiple-choice questions in which the student must pick the main idea from supporting details. Sometimes the main idea is given and students must provide supporting details from the text. Students may also be asked to write the main idea and supporting details. This may be in list or web form.

- Ask students to write a journal entry in which they explain how they determine the main idea from supporting details or in which they describe nonfiction features that help them know something is important.

Where can I go for additional ideas or resources related to *determining importance*?

- Harvey, Stephanie, & Goudvis, Anne. (2000). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding.* York, ME: Stenhouse.
Chapter 9 of this idea-packed text includes several strategy lessons and student work samples related to determining importance.

- Miller, Debbie. (2002). *Reading with meaning: Teaching comprehension in the primary grades.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
Chapter 9 of this teacher-friendly text includes several primary lessons and student work samples related to determining importance.

- Outsen, Nicole, & Yulga, Stephanie.(2002). *Teaching comprehension strategies all readers need: Mini-lessons that introduce, extend, and deepen key reading skills—and promote a lifelong love of literature.* New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

   Chapter 8 of this teacher-friendly text includes mini-lessons to introduce and extend the strategy of identifying big ideas.

Key terms and definitions

Guided reading: In guided reading, the teacher works with a small group of students who have similar strengths and needs and who are at the same or a similar instructional level. The ultimate goal is comprehension. Texts are selected based on the specific level and needs of the group. The structure of a guided-reading lesson is as follows: selecting the text, introducing the text, reading the text, revisiting and discussing the text, and teaching for processing strategies. Working with words and extending the meaning of the text through writing are optional components that the teacher includes or excludes based on student needs (Pinnell & Scharer, 2003, p. 42).

Guided practice: According to Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (2000, p. 13), guided practice involves a gradual release of responsibility to students. Immediately after a strategy has been modeled, the teacher and students practice together. The teacher scaffolds student attempts, provides feedback, and allows students to share with peers.

Main idea: the main idea is the gist, central thought, or chief topic of a passage. The main idea may be stated or implied. It is a statement in sentence form which states the major topic of a specific passage or text.

Mini-lesson: A short, often whole-group, lesson in which the teacher introduces a strategy, explains why the strategy is important, demonstrates the strategy, and clearly states what good readers do (Pinnell & Scharer, 2003, p. 176). The mini-lesson is interactive and is based on student needs.

Pair-share: Following a mini-lesson, think-aloud, or specific teacher prompt, a pair of students engage in a discussion, practice a strategy, or respond together as a way of making meaning and connecting to what has been learned (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, 39).

Strategy group: Students who are grouped based on evidence of need with a specific strategy, rather than instructional level. In strategy groups, texts are selected that support practice with the skill or strategy being practiced (Szymusiak & Sibberson, 2001, p. 64).

Think-aloud: Instructional demonstrations in which the teacher models the processes and specific self-talk that he or she uses as an effective reader (Harvey &Goudvis, 2000, p. 33).

Theme: a theme is a major idea broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work. The theme may be stated

or implied. Clues to help determine theme are found in the ideas that recur or are given special prominence throughout the work.

References

Beers, S., & Howell, L. (2003). *Reading strategies for the content areas.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Fountas, Irene C., & Pinnell, Gay Su. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K–8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Harvey, Stephanie, & Goudvis, Anne. (2000). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension to enhance understanding*. York, ME: Stenhouse.

Miller, Debbie. (2002). *Reading with meaning: Teaching comprehension in the primary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Pinnell, Gay Su, & Scharer, Patricia L. (2003). *Teaching for comprehension in reading, grades K–2: Strategies for helping children read with ease, confidence, and understanding*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

Szymisiak, Karen, & Sibberson, Franki. (2001). *Beyond leveled books*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Getting Started: What's Important?
From: http://www.liketoread.com/read_strats_importance.php

Determining what is most important is critical to building life-long success. (Think buying a house or car, choosing a career, investing in stocks, etc.) In school, understanding main ideas (determining importance) is tested more than any other concept on standardized tests. However, I find that naming the most important idea is tough! Defending why we think the idea is important is even tougher.

Ellin Keene, author of *Mosaic of Thought*, writes, "Determining what is important - arguing and defending - helps build reasoning skills. Most students are competent readers. They pronounce words correctly, miss few words and sound out words they didn't know."

Keene continues, "But many were so disconnected from the text, especially expository text, that they were often unaware of what they were reading..."

She found the same to be true of adult learners. When adults come together to discuss a text, "*All defend their beliefs. None absolutely agreed with one another.*" That is a good thing. The adults understand enough to have a belief and are articulate enough to defend it. That's where I want my students to be: comfortable with their opinions and able to support their ideas with evidence.

Minilessons

To support your conferences, you need minilessons. I like to introduce determining importance by asking students to fill a construction-paper suitcase with 10 of their most important items - or 5 items in the primary grades. (See photo of mine, right.) They can draw pictures or cut pictures out of magazines. When forced with choosing *the most important* items in their lives, they begin to grasp the process their brains work through in order to prioritize. I can build on this concrete exercise when talking about main ideas in reading and writing.

Retelling

Another place to start is with retelling. Whether the students retell orally or in writing, they will be forced to choose the important details to tell. Plenty of practice will improve their writing and reading skills. I also like that tutors, volunteers and parents can listen to the kids tell stories and ask questions so students become aware of important, missing details. A retelling centre is a very easy centre to keep up all year. All you need is a basket of books which the

teacher updates occasionally and an assessment sheet. Partners go there to read together and retell the stories to one another.

Small Groups

Also, schedule time for conversation in small groups of 4-6 children. Just talking about selections in a more intimate environment gives children the opportunity to think out loud and consider other perspectives more thoroughly. It's in reading groups that, students *"defend, rethink, question and draw their own conclusions."* I can't imagine that metacognition can be unleashed with such power when thinking in front of the whole class.

Many of my lessons are all about breaking down how people talk to one another: how we listen, show others we are listening, disagree with one another, and reach consensus, for example. Structure these groups in such a way that students must talk about main ideas, author's purpose, and themes and support their ideas with evidence. Talking, even for brief periods of time, will help students determine what's most important, comprehend their texts and tests, and prepare them for their futures. In addition, you will know where comprehension breaks down and will teach directly to the misunderstandings.

With conferences, small groups, effective conversation, and targeted lessons, students are sure to succeed with determining importance. Below, I offer some more of my favourite lesson ideas.

Favorite Determining-Importance Lesson Ideas

Determining important ideas and information in text is central to making sense of reading and moving toward insight... When we teach the strategy of determining importance, we often introduce it in nonfiction. They go together. Nonfiction reading is reading to learn. Simply put, readers of nonfiction have to decide and remember what is important in the texts they read if they are going to learn anything from them. Strategies That Work, Harvey & Goudvis.

1. **VIP (Very Important Point):** Give each child 3 sticky notes and a selection to read. Ask them to mark what they find to be the most important points in their reading with the sticky notes. They can read a selection from a magazine or a chapter from a book. Tell them that when they come back, they will need to defend one of their sticky notes as the **most important point** using references from the text. Over time, with guidance and debate, students become quite adept at finding the main ideas of the text. They begin to use chapter titles and nonfiction headings as clues for locating the main idea sentences. They also learn that main idea sentences are often the first sentence of nonfiction selections.

2. **Overviewing**: Overviewing is a form of skimming. Students need to look over the whole text before they read. Teach students to note the length of the text, the structure, headings and subheadings, what to read, what to pay careful attention to, what to ignore, what to skip, what they already know about the subject, and whether the information needs to be skimmed or read carefully. Many adults still ignore these features and miss critical information.

3. **Marking a text (coding) & highlighting**: "*No one ever taught me how to determine what was important in a text. I was simply asked to highlight the important parts. Asking someone to highlight what's important is easy. Choosing <u>what</u> to highlight is the challenge.*"

   We know that! Hand a child a highlighter and everything is yellow! Authors Harvey & Goudvis outline a plan for teaching students to highlight in their book *Nonfiction Matters*. If students are to highlight successfully, model how. Put a copy of text on the overhead and show how you determine what to highlight. (See my overhead, right.) Here's a highlighting guideline: do not highlight more than 1/3 of the text. Now, consider this question as an inquiry study. Figure out what 1/3 you highlight and why. Agree on guidelines. The conversation alone will help students understand not to use up their markers when highlighting.
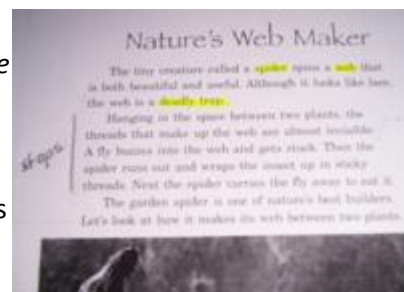
4. **Informal outlines of important facts**: The simple act of writing a list from a paragraph is very difficult for some children to grasp. When we outline, we select the most important information. We list the main ideas

and the details underneath. Model how you choose what is a main idea, what is an important detail and what is an unimportant detail, not even to be included. Use the science or social studies text to meet two objectives: learn about content studies while determining what is most important.

5. **Reciprocal teaching**: The best way I know to teach how to determine important ideas is with reciprocal teaching. First, students or teachers divide the reading into sections. Students read each section 3 times - the first time to figure out vocabulary they don't know, the second time to figure out questions they have, and the third time to write a summary. They continue in this way until the entire selection is read. If you haven't started reciprocal teaching in your class, this would be a great month to start.

6. **Writing a teaching book**: Another way to teach writing and main ideas at the same time is to ask students to write a "teaching book" or an "expert book." (*Strategies That Work*) Students research a topic of interest. They determine which details are the most important to share in a book. They write a nonfiction book, complete with pictures, captions, bold and italic print, sidebars, titles and subtitles, and the works. I teach students how to begin each page with a generalized sentence, a main idea, that unites the details on the page.

7. **Nonfiction conventions book**: Students make a dictionary of nonfiction text features. Page 1 - they draw a picture and explain what a picture is and how it helps the reader. Page 2 - they draw a picture and write a caption and explain how a caption helps a reader. Each page identifies another aspect of nonfiction text with an explanation and a visual: title, subtitle, caption, map, headings, table of contents, glossary, index, photograph, chart, graph, diagram, summary, bold print, italic print, etc.

8. **Make a nonfiction page**: Students study nonfiction texts to determine what makes a book nonfiction. This is an innovation on a text gone nonfiction! Once the children understand the conventions of the text, they create their own nonfiction page on a self-selected topic. The goal is to understand what details are most important to write on the page while at the same time investigating what writing nonfiction is all about: engaging readers by telling stories and then, once hooked, disclosing the facts and using nonfiction conventions appropriately.

9. **I-Search papers** or (KWL): Writing what you know about a topic, what you want to know, and what you find out is a GREAT way to research nonfiction topics of interest. In the process, students study features of nonfiction text that make reading nonfiction easier. Condensing the information into "What I learned" focuses children on selecting the most important facts in an authentic way.

Determining Importance in Nonfiction

Anchor Chart of Tips for Reading Nonfiction
By Stephanie Harvey

- Think of facts, questions and responses. Write these down as you read.

- Reading nonfiction takes time. You may have to reread to make sure you understand.

- Reread so you don't forget what you are reading.

- Reading fiction is like watching a movie. Nonfiction is more like a newscast or watching a slide show.

- Stop often and ask yourself if what you are reading makes sense.

- Important to abbreviate when you take notes.

- Think before you write.

- Nonfiction reading is reading to learn something.

List of mini lessons for nonfiction texts

- Scanning
- Skimming
- Accessing the text through the index
- Using headings and signposts to the information we want
- Strolling through the pictures in order to orientate ourselves to the text
- Not reading the text in order
- Accessing the text through the table of contents
- Reading the picture captions
- Activating prior knowledge or schema
- Noting characteristics of text length and structure
- Noting what type of organizational pattern the text is using
- Determining what to read in what order
- Determining what to pay careful attention to
- Determining what to ignore
- Deciding to quit because the text contains no relevant information
- Deciding if text is worth careful reading or just skimming
- Pay attention to surprising information. It might mean you are learning something new.

Strategies That Work
Stephanie Harvey

Chapter 9 Determining Importance in Text: The Nonfiction Connection

"Throughout Stephanie's education, teachers had instructed her to highlight the important parts. But no one had shown her how. She assumed that if the writers of these massive textbooks had written it down, it must be important. So she highlighted just about every letter of print. Highlighting is easy; determining what to highlight is the challenge (page 117)."

Stephanie Harvey writes, "Determining Importance means picking out the most important information when you read, to highlight essential ideas, to isolate supporting details, and to read for specific information. Teachers need to help readers sift and sort information, and make decisions about what information they need to remember and what information they can disregard (page 117)."

"Readers of nonfiction have to decide and remember what is important in the texts they read if they are going to learn anything from them. (page 118)"

Debbie Miller says, "We must teach our students what nonfiction is. Teaching our students that expository text has predictable characteristics and features they can count on before they read allows them to construct meaning more easily as they read."

- Nonfiction books are organized around specific topics and main ideas
- Nonfiction books give you information that is true.
- Nonfiction books try to teach you something.
- When readers read nonfiction books they make predictions about the kinds of things they expect to learn. They activate their schema and the topic and what they know about the type of text they are about to read.
- Nonfiction books have features.

Reading with Meaning
Debbie Miller

Determining Importance at a Glance
What's Key for Kids
- Readers distinguish the differences between fiction and nonfiction.
- Readers distinguish important from unimportant information in order to identify key ideas or themes as they read.
- Readers use their knowledge of narrative and expository text features to make predictions about text organization and content.
- Readers utilize text features to help them distinguish important from unimportant information.
- Readers use their knowledge of important and relevant parts of text to answer questions and synthesize text for themselves and others.

Reading with Meaning, pages 149-150

Identify what the conventions of nonfiction text are and how they help us as readers. Debbie Miller suggests spending one day on each convention. The teacher should bring in examples of at least five places in nonfiction texts that support that convention. Then the children look for the convention and share them with a partner, small group, whole group. It is not enough to identify the convention and purpose, we must also identify how they help us as readers.

Conventions	Purpose	How they help us as readers
Labels	Help the reader identify a picture or photograph and/or its parts.	
Photographs	Help the reader understand exactly what something looks like.	
Captions	Help the reader better understand a picture or photograph.	
Comparisons	Help the reader understand the size of one thing by comparing it to the size of something familiar.	
Cutaways	Help the reader understand something by looking at it from the inside.	
Maps	Help the reader understand where things are in the world.	
Types of print	Help the reader by signaling, "Look at me! I'm important!"	
Close-Ups	Help the reader see details in something small.	
Table of Contents	Help the reader identify key topics in the book in the order they are presented.	
Index	An alphabetical list of almost everything covered in the text, with page numbers.	
Glossary	Helps the reader define words contained in the text.	

Have the students look at nonfiction and fiction texts and determine what are the characteristics of both types of text.

Make a Venn Diagram reflecting what they learned.

FICTION	BOTH	NONFICTION
Beginning middle end	Title	Bold print
Setting		Index
Characters	Illustrations	
Problem		Table of contents
Events	They help you learn	
Resolution		Photographs
	They are fun to read	
Stories		Captions
	Words	Headings
		Cutaways
Themes		
		Information
Pictures		Ideas
Read from front to back		Amazing facts
		Read in any order

http://ohiorc.org/adlit/strategy/strategy_each.aspx?id=5#what2

What is *determining importance*?

Determining importance is the ability to get to the heart of the text. What are the most important ideas or information in this reading? What should I remember? According to Harvey and Goudvis, determining importance is "making sense of reading and moving toward insight" (p. 118). Since 90 percent of what adults read is nonfiction, this discussion on determining importance will focus on informational text.

In order to determine what is important and worth remembering, students need to understand both the external and internal text structures in informational text. External text structure, such as a table of contents, headings, charts, and guide questions, provides organizational aides to facilitate reading. Students need to learn how to utilize these structures to determine what the most important information is.

Internal text structures level the information in the text. The most important ideas are at the top level, the next level supports these ideas, and the bottom level provides the supporting details for each idea. Struggling readers need to know this hierarchical relationship to determine how text structure will help them determine what is important in their reading. Teachers need to help all students understand how to use internal text structure to comprehend and retain the material that they are expected to learn.

How does *determining importance* support reading comprehension?

In determining importance, readers identify important ideas and facts, enabling them to mentally organize and thus more easily comprehend the essence of what they are reading.

What activities support students in *determining importance*?

DURING READING

Two-Column Note Taking
Many nonfiction texts are written with headings. These headings usually reflect the main idea, and the text supplies the details that flesh out the main idea. Modelling how to read a nonfiction article using a two-column note-taking technique can help students see this structure and determine the important ideas.

In modelling the technique, first read each heading and section to decide if the heading reflects the main idea or if you need to restate it. Then write the main idea in the column headed "Heading" or "Main Idea." Next, read the section and list the details that support or explain that topic or idea.

Emphasize to students that *support* and *explain* are key words to keep in mind. Details that support or explain are the important details. List the important details in the "Notes" column. Start with well-organized material, and have the students practice this skill before moving on to more challenging materials.

| Topic (or title of article or chapter): Ancient Rome	
Main Idea	**Notes (Important Details)**
Building and Technology	1. Excellent builders 2. Roads—some Roman roads still around 3. Bridges and aqueducts to carry water—some still around 4. Plumbing—underground sewers 5. Mills to grind grain
Farming	1. Fertile land 2. Olives important crop 3. Honey 4. Sheep for wool and making cheese 5. Goats and pigs 6. Oxen for plowing and pulling heavy wagons
Markets and Sellers	1. Goldsmiths—made objects out of gold 2. Butchers 3. Bakeries 4. Fruit 5. Flowers 6. Oil 7. Wine 8. Fish tanks that held fish—some fresh water, some salt water 9. Some shops in buildings with five floors 10. Slaves shopped for rich people

AFTER READING

Consensus
In this activity, students identify the main ideas in a series of "coming-to-a-consensus" processes (Beers & Howell, 2003).

1. Have students identify individually the three most important things (three main ideas) they learned from the text that they read. They should list them on a piece of paper.
2. Pair students to share their most important information (main ideas) and come to a consensus about the three most important pieces of learning (main ideas), again listing them.
3. Then have each pair join with another to form a group to discuss their findings and again come to a consensus about the three most important pieces of learning (main idea).
4. Finally, ask the groups to come together as a class, and have them exchange ideas and come to a class consensus of the three most important main ideas. As they do, list the class's main idea on the board.

Graphic Clusters

The image that most people picture when they hear the term *graphic organizer* is a drawing with a circle in the middle and rays extending out from the circle. This kind of organizer, sometimes referred to as a *graphic cluster* (Tompkins, 2004), is very handy for reviewing a topic. Students write the topic in the circle (or shape of your choice—rectangles and squares work equally well). On the rays, they fill in information they learned about the topic.
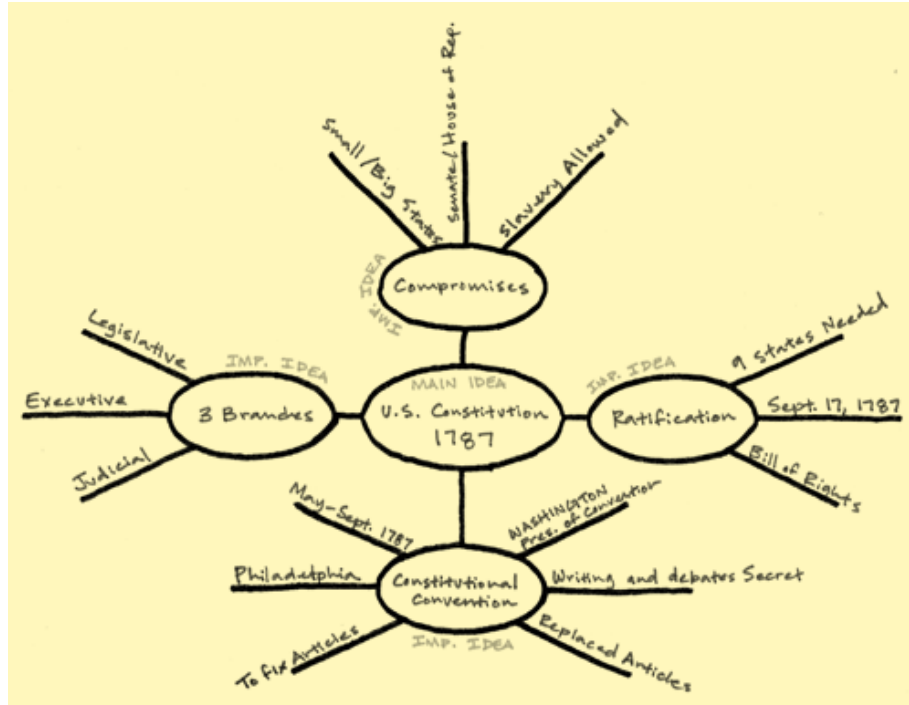
How can *determining importance* be used to teach vocabulary?

Try the following tournament activity with your students. They can do it as part of a reading assignment.

1. The students read a chapter or short story.
2. While they read, they select four words for a particular purpose. For example, they might select four words that best describe the main character, or they might choose four words that best define the major problem in the story. The ideas for selecting the words are endless.
3. After pairing off, the students fill out the tournament activity sheet. One child writes his or her words on lines 1, 5, 8, and 4. The other writes his or her words on lines 3, 7, 6, and 2.
4. The students begin the battle. They must convince each other that their word is the best word to go on to the next level. They must use evidence in the text to support their views.
5. Once they narrow their words to the one word that they believe is the best word for the topic, they present their word to the entire class. They must tell why they selected that word and defend their choice.

1
3
5
7
8
6
4
2
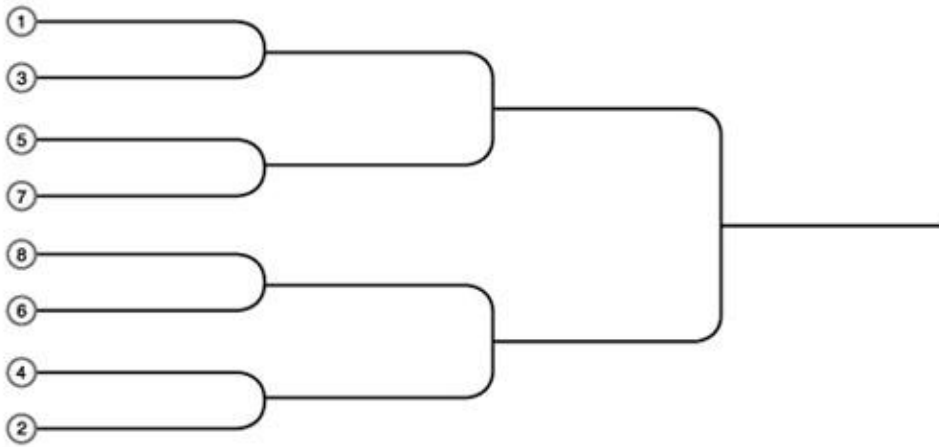
Helping Your Child Determine Importance

- Model the strategy for your child using short pieces of text, such as a newspaper article.

- Talk to your child about the titles, bold headings, pictures, charts, timelines, and other text features that hint at what might be important information.

- Point out that many nonfiction books do not have to be read in order. You can "skip around" and read the interesting chapters first.

- Pictures on the page often reflect the most important information on the page. Stress the value of looking at the pictures and reading the captions.

- Model how to use the glossary in the back of the book to check the meanings of important words.

- Stimulate your child's curiosity. Curiosity spurs people to uncover information that is important to them.

- Have your child imagine that he/she was constructing a test on the material. What questions would be important enough to ask?

- Model how you determine importance in making decisions in real life. How do you decide which car to buy or which place to visit on vacation? How do you determine which candidate gets your support in an election?

http://www.readinglady.com/

Finding Important Information

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Importance
Lesson: Finding Important Information

Days 1-5:
Read nonfiction books aloud to students. After the reading of each book talk to students about what you think some of the important information is. Talk about the illustrations in the books, too. Point out any characteristics of the illustrations, such as labeling, graphs charts, etc. Once students have the idea start to ask them to share what they think was important. (This can last longer or shorter than five days depending on your students.)

Day 6
Tell students that reading nonfiction books can be really hard because there are new ideas in every sentence. When really good readers read nonfiction books that have lots of new ideas in them they have to think hard about which ideas are most important. Tell them that you are going to show them how you do this. Reread one of the nonfiction

books you have previously read. As you read record the facts you think are important.

Day 7
Look at the list of important facts you made the previous day. Model for students your thinking as you choose the 4 most important facts. Stress that different people might make different choices, but talk to them about your thinking behind the choices you make.

Day 8
Have students select a book that they would like to read and write about. After they have had time to read their book, have students record important facts and put a star by the 4 most important facts. Remind students that they are going to have to think hard about which things are most important because there will be lots of new information in their book.

Days 9-10
Give each student a sheet of 12x18 white construction paper and have them fold the paper into 4 rectangles. They will record one fact in each box and then illustrate that fact. They can use ideas about illustrations from their book. They may want to label their illustrations.

Days 11-12
Have students cut apart their 4 rectangles, order and number them, make a table of contents, title page, about the author page, and cover. These can then be stapled together and become mini-research reports. You can include all or some of the parts mentioned. It may be helpful to students if you provide forms for the title page, about the author page, and table of contents.

Follow up
Students can share their reports in the whole group, in small groups, etc. Make sure that students not only share their reports, but also their thinking about why they chose the information included.

This page written and submitted by Cheri Summ.

GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING AN AUTHOR'S MAIN IDEA

I developed the following set of guidelines with a group of seventh graders over several weeks.
The process of creating such a list of problem-solving strategies is incredibly effective, so while you should use this example to guide your thinking, you should also invite students to collaborate on one of their own.

1. IDENTIFY THE TOPIC OF A PIECE
To find clues to topic:
a) Look at the title.
b) Look at the first and last paragraph—the topic is usually named.
c) Ask yourself: What is discussed throughout the whole selection? What subject spreads across the whole text?
d) Look at captions, pictures, words in bold, headings, and so forth for clues to topic. What do all of these have in common?
e) Remind yourself: The topic must include all the major details and events from the selection.
Caution: Not every detail has something to do with the topic. The topic is the common element or connection between major details.
f) What do all major details share in common?
Check Yourself: It's Not the True Topic if…
a) It's too general or too big. (Topic statement suggests or could include many ideas not stated in the text.)
b) It's off the mark, totally missing the point.
c) It only captures one detail, rather than all of the key details.
d) It captures only some of the details, for example, maybe you didn't think about the ending.
Questions to Check Yourself:
a) Does the topic I've identified give an accurate picture of what the whole selection is about?
b) Was I as specific as possible?

c) After naming the topic, can I now specifically picture in my mind what happened or was communicated in the text? or might I picture something different that also fits my topic statement? If so, how can I change my topic statement to correct the problem?

2. IDENTIFY ALL DETAILS/MAJOR EVENTS
Authors often plant important ideas in:
a) Details that reflect or refer to the title.
b) Details at the beginning of a text.
c) Details at the end.
d) Surprises, revelations, whenever your expectations are not met.
e) Repetition.
f) Lots of attention given to a detail, for instance, long explanation or description.
g) Subheads and italicized text.
h) Changes in character, tone, mood, setting, plot twists.
i) A question near the beginning or the end.
Check Yourself: It's Not a Key Detail if…
a) It's interesting, but it doesn't develop the topic/lead to the central focus.
b) It remind us of something and is even personally important, but if you were to remove it from the piece, the piece wouldn't lose any significant meaning or impact.
Questions to Check Yourself:
a) Are all the details related to the topic?
b) How do the key details relate to each other?
c) What pattern do they make?
d) What point do they repeat or add up to?

3. IDENTIFY THE CENTRAL FOCUS (the main idea or point the author makes about the topic):
a) The statement of central focus you name must make a point about the topic and cover the whole selection.
b) Ask yourself: Is the central focus directly stated? If not, it must be inferred.
c) Which details help me decide on the central focus? Why are these details important?
d) The central focus considers how the details relate to one another or lead to one another (what caused or led to what).
e) The central focus must consider the ending and how the details or events led to this final conclusion.
Check Yourself: It's Not the Central Focus Statement if…
a) It is so literal and specific it doesn't allow the reader to apply the main idea to his own life.
b) It is too general—more like a topic statement than a main idea.
c) It is true but misses the point of the text. Wasn't what the author was talking about.
d) It misses the point.
e) It only fits one detail or event, not the whole text.
f) It does not incorporate all details.
g) It doesn't fit ending or final situation.
Questions to Check Yourself:
a) What point do the key details repeat and add up to?
b) Is the central focus a statement about the topic?
c) Is it something useful that can help you to think or act in the world?
d) Also consider: Do you agree with the statement as applied to life? Why or why not?

http://www.powayusd.com/projects/literacy/CriticalThinking/DetermineImptce.htm

Lesson- Determining Importance – Cross-out Strategy

Purpose/ Rationale:

When asked to highlight the important parts of text, many students underline or highlight the entire article. The Cross-out Strategy teaches students to focus on the important words because they cross out the unimportant words. Once these words are eliminated, students are asked to do something else with the leftover words such as put them into Cornell Notes by synthesizing the important ideas. Students may then be asked to write a summary of the information.

Materials:

Short piece of text, preferably non-fiction (2 to 3 paragraphs) copied for each student; pencil or 2 highlighters of different colors; binder paper for Cornell Notes; overhead of the article.

Process:

Read the piece to the students, as they follow along. Model the cross-out process on the overhead by "thinking aloud" as you cross out the non-essential words in the first paragraph. Depending on the sophistication of your students' skill level, you may wish to alert students that you are crossing out most of the prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, and articles. Leave most of the nouns, proper nouns, and verbs.

After the first paragraph, ask them to help you with the second paragraph, asking them for the words to cross out.

Students complete the remainder of the article on their own. After completion, students can be asked to transfer the remaining information into Cornell Notes format, placing the important words to the left of the line, and an explanation or definition in their own words to the right.

Finally, students are ready to write a summary at the bottom of their Cornell notes page.

Any or all of the Cornell Notes and summarizing procedure may need to be modelled with the students, depending on their level of competence.

As students become more familiar with the strategy, less scaffolding and modelling will be required.

Determing Importance – Vertical Arrow Graphic Organizer

Purpose/ Rationale:

After you have front-loaded the vocabulary associated with your lesson, students may be prepared to determine the important facts or ideas about a piece of text. One way to accomplish this is to ask students to answer questions about the information, and place the information into a graphic organizer. By using the same graphic organizer with several different subjects, students become accustomed to asking about the five W's and the H when they encounter new material in any subject and establish a thinking pattern that can assist them in comprehension. Having students answer questions about a piece of text creates curiosity in the material for the students. Once they have answered the simple questions of the Five W's, they have a mindset to create their own questions and dig deeper into the material.

Materials:

Vertical arrow for each student, overhead for the teacher, or, if doing in groups, large butcher paper arrows to be hung around the room.
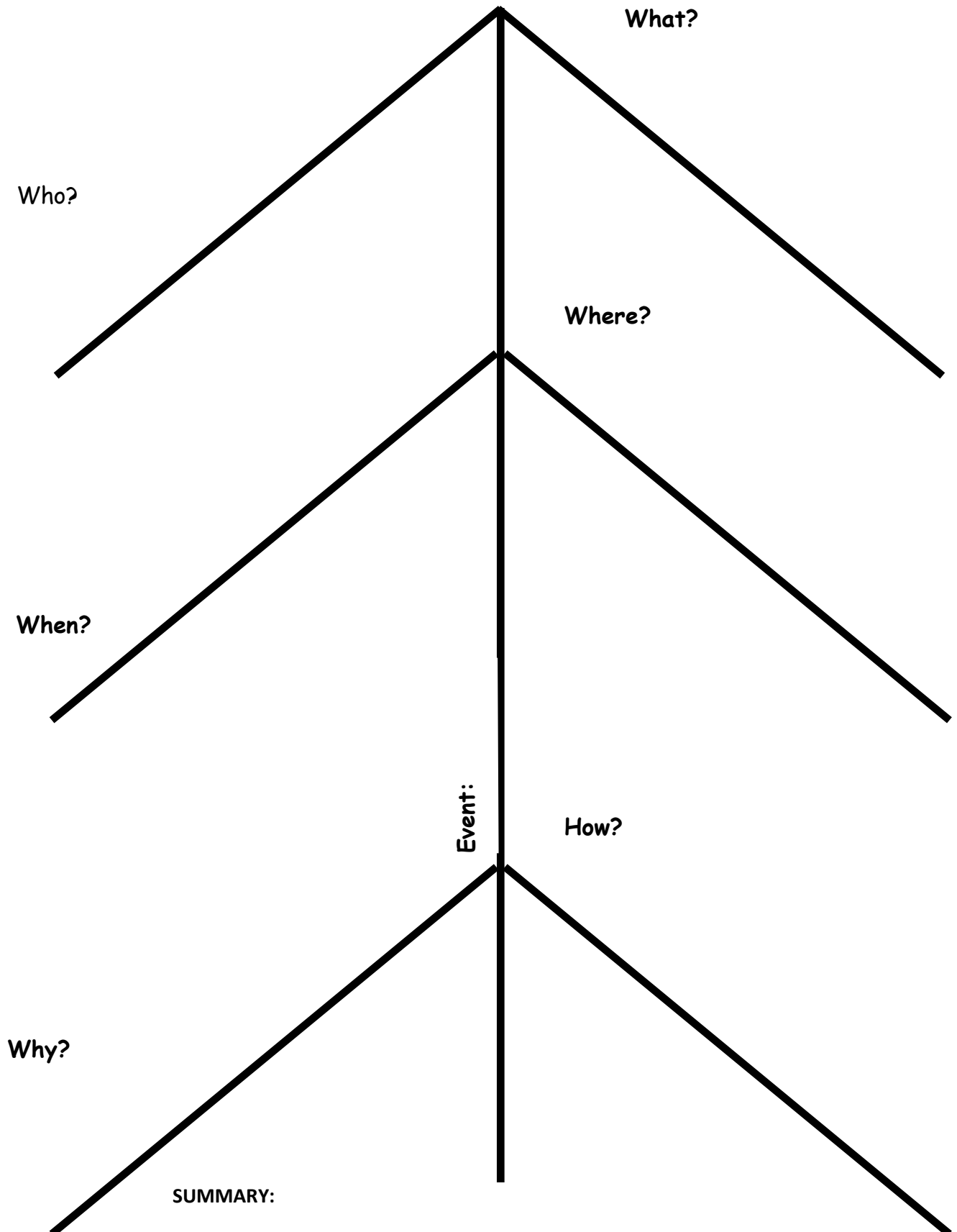

Markers, rulers, copy of the text for each student.   Once students have done the process once, they can create their own arrows using the first one as a template as a model.

Process:

1. To begin, choose a relatively short non-fiction piece (two or three paragraphs is fine)

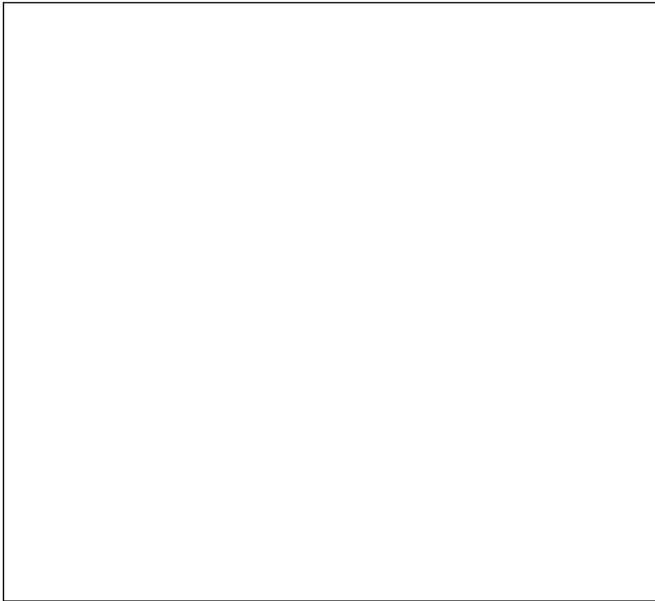Name_____Date_____Per.__Subject_____

Vertical Arrow Graphic Organizer

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Event:

How?

Why?

SUMMARY:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Labels help the reader identify a picture or a photograph and its parts.

My example of labeling:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

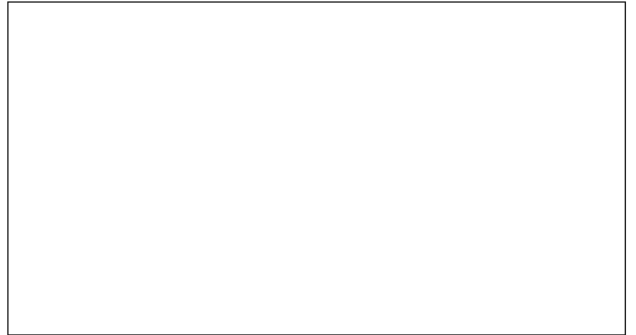**Photographs** help the reader understand exactly what something looks like.

My example of a photograph was found on page _____

in the book titled, _____

It was a photograph of a _____ .

It helped me learn _____

_____

Here is another example of a photograph:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Captions help the reader better understand a picture or photograph.

My example of a caption is:
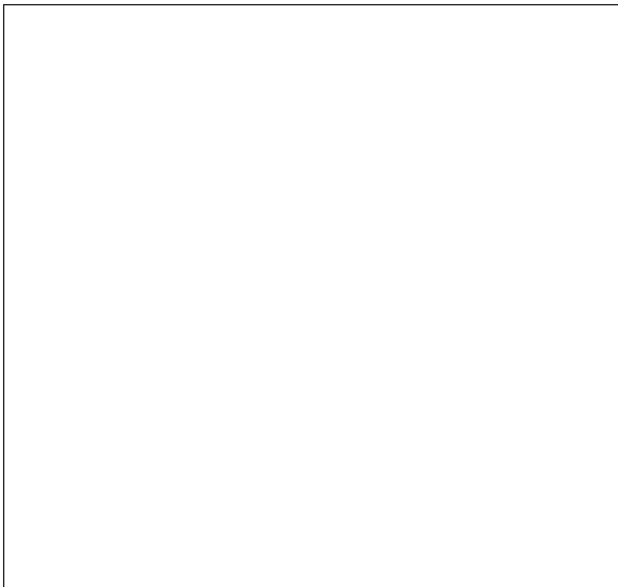
Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Comparisons help the reader understand the size of one thing by comparing it to the size of something familiar.
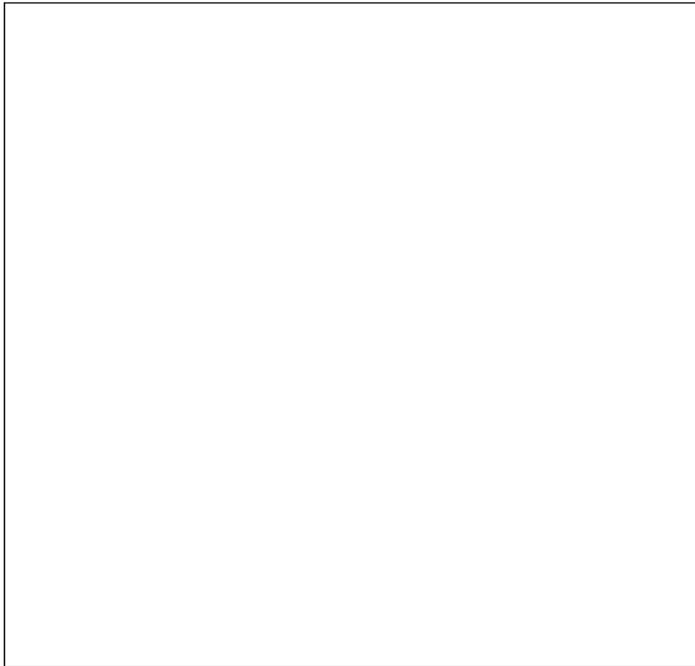
Here is my example of comparisons:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Cutaways help the reader understand something by looking at it from the inside.

Here is an example of a cutaway:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

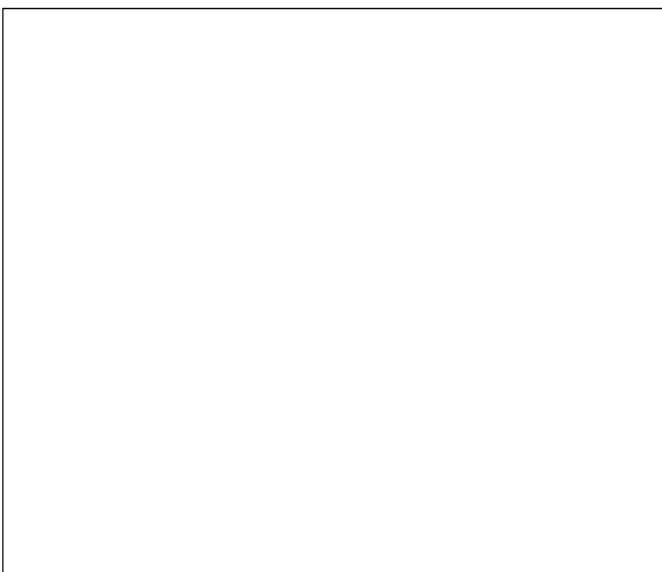**Maps** help the reader understand where things are in the world.

Here is my example of a map:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

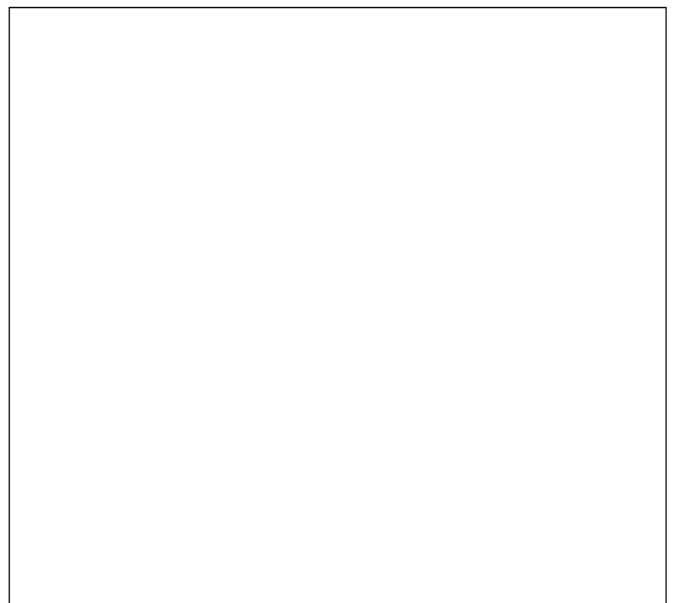**Types of print** help the reader by signaling, "Look at me! I'm important!"

Here is my example of a special type of print:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Close-ups help the reader see details in something small.

Here is my example of a close-up:

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Table of Contents help the reader find key topics in the book in the order that they come.

Here is an example of a table of contents for a book about

_____ .

List at least 4 chapters.

___

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Index is an alphabetical list of almost everything written in the text, with page numbers so you can find the information.

Here is my example of an index in a book about

_____ .

List at least 5 words and include the page numbers.

___

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Glossary helps the reader understand key words that are in the text.

This glossary could be from a book about _____

_____ .

Here is my example of a glossary:
List at least 2 words and include the definition of the words. The two words should be in alphabetical order.

___

Nonfiction Conventions Notebook

Table helps the reader understand important information by listing it in a table or a chart form.

Here is my example of a table:

8 Events

Directions: Draw pictures to represent 8 main events. Make sure they are in chronological order.

Strategies That Work, pages 134-137

Sifting the Topic from the Details

Topic and details form is effective in allowing for the students to list essential information but lacked a place for their responses. The third column for response allows kids to interact with text personally and ensures that they have a place to record their thoughts, feelings, and questions.

Three Column Notes

Topic	Detail	Personal Response

FQR Chart
Facts-Question-Response Chart

The strategy emphasis supports students to ask questions, determine importance in the text, and respond, voicing their own opinions and thoughts. Eventually the children will be able to use this response method independently to read for information in text they have chosen at their own reading level. The children record factual information, ask questions, and respond to merge their thinking with the content.

When students have the opportunity to share and explain their own thinking about text, they learn and remember important information.

Example: "The Comeback of Humpbacks" National Geographic for Kids (Sept 2000)

Facts	Question	Response
Leaping out of the water is called breaching	Is all jumping called breaching?	
30x more than in 1965		WOW! That is a lot. That was a good comeback.
Humpbacks were almost gone until a law was created to protect humpbacks		I don't like the hunters using only one part of the whale. Reminds me of the white men wasting the buffalo.

Facts	Questions	Responses

Name: Date:

Topic: _____
Taking Notes: Main Idea and Supporting Details

Important Idea/Picture   **Details**

Determining Importance – Evidence of Understanding

Oral responses
- "This is really important..."

Graphic organizers
- Story map

Text codes
- IM, important
- L, learned something new
- *, interesting or important information or fact
- Aha!, big idea surfaces
- S, surprising
- S!!!, shocking
- !!!, exciting

Written responses
Two-column note forms
- Topic/Details
- Words from the Text/Important Information
- What's Interesting/What's Important
- Opinion/Proof from the Text
- Theme/Evidence for Theme
- Important Event/Evidence from the Text
- Characters' Motivation/Evidence from the Text

Three-column note forms
- Topic/Details/Craft
- Topic/Details/Cue Words
- Facts/Questions/Response
- Topic/Evidence/Response
- Evidence For/Evidence Against/Personal Opinion

Determining Importance – Assessment Rubric

Beginning	Developing	Secure	Independnent
Identifies main character and some story elements in narrative; identifies general topic in informational text	Attempts to identifies problem and solution in narrative; identifies specific topic in informational text; begins to distinguish between important information and interesting information	Identifies problem and solution and themes in narrative; identifies main ideas in informational text; frequently distinguishes between important information and interesting information; begins to explain how strategy use aids in comprehension	Identifies problem/solution and multiple themes in narrative; identifies main ideas in informational text; distinguishes between important and interesting information; makes connections to background knowledge; confidently explains strategy use

Summarising and Synthesising

How can *summarising* be taught so that it will support reading comprehension?

Research shows that explicit teaching techniques are effective in teaching comprehension strategies including summarizing. Explicit instruction involves the following steps:

Direct explanation: The teacher explains why the strategy is important, how it will help comprehension, and when to apply it.

Modelling: The teacher models or demonstrates how to apply the strategy. An effective method for modelling is to use the think-aloud strategy while reading a text to the students. (*Guided practice:* The teacher guides and assists students as they learn how and when to apply the strategy. The teacher may give explanations, introduce organizational strategies, or pose questions to provoke student thinking and to assess understanding. The teacher provides additional opportunities for review and practice.

- *Application:* The teacher helps students practice the strategy until they can apply it independently. The teacher monitors the students' performance by observing the students' unassisted work (Adler, 2001).

BEFORE READING

Using a Movie or TV Show

One way to introduce summarizing to students is to select a familiar movie or television show and give a one- to two-sentence summary. For example, using the movie *Cinderella*, you might say, "This movie was about a girl named Cinderella who lived with her wicked stepmother and two stepsisters. They made her do all the cooking and cleaning, but in the end, she is found by the Prince and lives happily ever after." Say to the students, "Did I tell everything about the movie? No, I told the most important information in my own words." Then have the students think about one of their favourite movies or television shows, and ask them to share the main points in one or two sentences (Cooper, Chard, & Kiger, 2006).

BEFORE READING

Recalling a Trip or an Event

Another way to introduce summarizing is to have students reflect on a recent trip they have taken or an event (such as a birthday party or family reunion) in their lives. Ask them to share the most important part of this trip or event by sharing the following:

- When did this trip or event occur?
- Where did you go, or what was the event?
- What was the best part of this trip or event?

DURING READING | AFTER READING

Using Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers such as story maps—which ask students to provide specific details such as setting and characters—are valuable aids for students when preparing to construct summaries. They help students identify the important elements *as* they read rather than waiting until after reading. Once the students have read the text and completed the graphic organizers, the students can use this information to assist them in writing a summary.
To demonstrate how to use the graphic organizer to create a summary, model the process while reading aloud to students:

1. Begin by showing the organizer to the students and explaining the different parts.
2. Using a read-aloud or a selection from the core reading program that students have already read, work with students to record information on the graphic organizer and create a summary. This step may have to be

repeated several times using different text samples before students are able to use the strategy in their own reading.

3. Provide opportunities for guided practice in small cooperative groups, pairs, and/or independently.

AFTER READING

"Somebody Wanted But So"

Somebody Wanted But So is an instructional strategy that offers students an alternative to traditional story maps and provides another framework for creating summaries (Beers, 2003). It uses familiar vocabulary and guides students to summarize by completing the phrase Somebody (who) Wanted (this refers to *what* the "somebody" wanted) But (someone else does something) So (the result). Summaries can be written based on several points of view depending on who's listed in the "Somebody" column. This allows students to compare and contrast different summaries in order to come up with the one that best summarizes the entire story. The column heads are taken directly from Kylene Beers's book *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*, but you can certainly modify them to fit your needs, for example, by changing "Somebody" to "Character" or "Person" or "Who?" or even more targeted, "Cinderella."

Again, you'll want to model the use of the graphic organizer for students to demonstrate how to use it:

1. Show the students a chart or transparency of the organizer, and briefly explain the different parts. (The real understanding will come when you begin to fill in the organizer.)
2. Using the transparency or chart, ask students to name the main character(s) of the story, and list them in the "Somebody" column. When first using the strategy, it is helpful to use it with a story with only one main character. As students become familiar with the strategy, more complex stories will allow them to evaluate summaries from different points of view (multiple main characters).
3. Work with students to determine what the character (*Somebody*) *wanted* in the story, what got in the way (*But*), and how the character resolved the problem (*So*). Encourage students to elaborate on one another's responses so that the important details are included.
4. Work with students to write one or two sentences using the information on the chart to summarize the story. Review with students how this strategy helped them to summarize the story.
5. After students appear to have a good understanding of how to apply this strategy, have them try it in pairs or small groups. Circulate, and provide assistance to students as needed.

The following is an example of how this strategy might be applied using *The Wolf's Chicken Stew* by Keiko Kasza:

Character

Wanted

But

So

The wolf
To fatten up the chicken in order to make her into chicken stew
The chicken and her chicks thanked the wolf for all the wonderful food he had been leaving on their doorstep
The wolf had dinner made by the chicken instead of having her for dinner

Summary: The wolf wanted to fatten up the chicken so he could make her into chicken stew. The chicken and her chicks thanked the wolf for all the food he left on their doorstep and made him dinner.

AFTER READING

Comic Strips

In this lesson, students use a six-panelled comic strip to create a story map, summarizing a book or story that they've read either as a class or independently. The story strips also provide a way to assess student's understanding of important events and elements in a novel. Any book students have explored recently that demonstrates the elements of character, setting, problem, events, and solutions will work.

Very Important Points

The V.I.P., or very important points, instructional strategy (Hoyt, 1999) can be used to assist students in locating the most important ideas in a selection. Students are given a sticky note with slim strips cut down to the sticky edge. As the students read, they tear off a piece and mark the important parts of the selection. The students are limited in the number of strips they have (teacher discretion based on the length of the text), and so when they have used all their strips and come to another point they want to mark, they must go back to their previously marked points and reevaluate which are most important. Students then must justify why they felt these were the most important points. As students become more adept in using this instructional strategy to identify the important points, the teacher can have them record this information and use it to create summaries of the text.

DURING AFTER
READING READING

Read, Cover, Remember, Retell

Read, cover, remember, retell (Hoyt, 1999) is an instructional strategy that is used to help students stop after reading small portions of the text and retell what the section was mostly about. Many learners will continue reading a selection even if they don't understand what they have just read. This process supports both understanding of text and summarizing by stopping readers frequently to think about the meaning before moving on to the next section of the text. After students become adept at using this strategy to orally retell portions of the text, you can encourage them to write a summary sentence of each section and then use these sentences to write an overall summary of the selection.

DURING AFTER
READING READING

Writing Summaries

This instructional strategy assists students in writing summaries by using a short passage and guiding them to highlight important information and cross out redundant, highly detailed, or unimportant information (adapted from Johns & Lenski, 2005). The steps are as follows:

1. Provide students with a short passage written at their instructional reading level. The following is a sample selection adapted from http://www.kidsfarm.com/lions.htm:

   Mountain lions are amazing animals. They are the largest member of the cat family living in North America. Full-grown mountain lions can weigh as little as 90 pounds to as much as about 200 pounds. Most weigh about 110 pounds. From its nose to the tip of its tail, a mountain lion is about 6 feet long. Mountain lions are carnivorous. That means they are meat-eaters. They kill small animals such as rabbits and skunks for food. They also eat larger animals such as deer and elk. They even eat cattle, sheep, and horses. Because mountain lions are very secretive, they are hard to find. They often live in brushy and rocky places. They are very territorial. That means they live and hunt in a certain area or territory. They are beautiful animals, but they are very strong and can be very fierce and dangerous. We all need to be very careful if we go into their territory!

2. Guide students to underline the main idea of the passage and cross out redundant, highly detailed, or unimportant information.

   Mountain lions are amazing animals. They are the largest member of the cat family living in North America. Mountain lions are carnivorous. Because mountain lions are very secretive, they are hard to find. They are very territorial. They are beautiful animals, but they are very strong and can be very fierce and dangerous.

3. Help students create a graphic organizer with the remaining information.
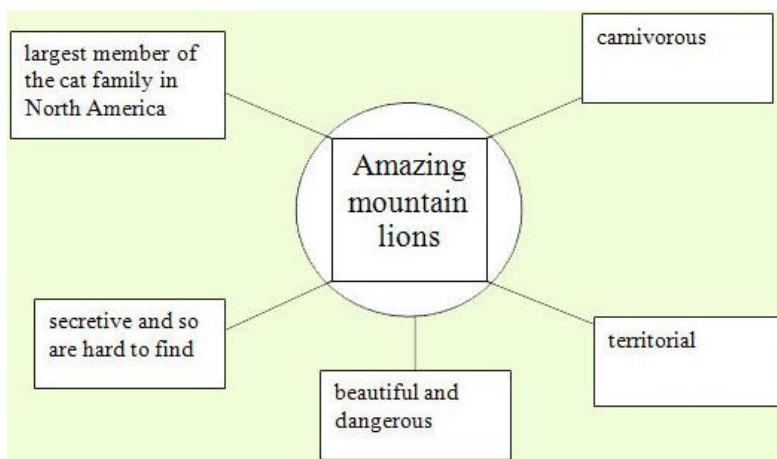
4. Write a short paragraph from the information recorded on the graphic organizer.

   Mountain lions are the largest member of the cat family in North America. They are carnivorous and dangerous. They are also territorial and secretive and can be hard to find.

5. Continue to provide guided practice for students with appropriate selections, offering support and guidance as needed.

AFTER READING

"Guided Comprehension: Summarizing Using the QuIP Strategy"introduces students to the strategy of summarizing, providing guidance and practice in organizing information graphically and synthesizing it in writing.

Strategic reading allows students to monitor their own thinking and make connections between the texts and their own experiences. Based on the Guided Comprehension Model developed by Maureen McLaughlin and Mary Beth Allen, this lesson introduces students to the comprehension strategy of summarizing. Students learn how to summarize information using the QuIP (questions into paragraphs) strategy, a technique that involves graphically organizing information and synthesizing it in writing. This lesson begins with teacher-directed instruction and provides a scaffolded model to support students as they implement the strategy on their own.

 How can *summarizing* be used to teach vocabulary?

Encourage students to use any key vocabulary, introduced before, during, or after reading, in their oral or written summaries.

How can *summarizing* be practiced in a literacy centre?

Graphic organizers which have been introduced and practiced in whole-group or small-group settings can easily be used in a literacy centre in order to provide additional independent or paired practice. Selections used should be either familiar or at the students' easy reading level.

A wide variety of literacy centre activities can be accessed at the Florida Centre for Reading Research website. Student centre activities are arranged by grade bands K–1, 2–3, and 4–5 and then by component. The following is a list of centre activities addressing summarizing at each grade band under the heading "Comprehension":
K–1
C.026: Get the Gist (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/GK-1/Archive/C_Final.pdf)
C.031: Summarizing (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/GK-1/Archive/C_Final.pdf)
2–3
C.030: Simple Summary (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/2-3Comp_4.pdf)
C.031: Sum Summary! (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/2-3Comp_4.pdf)
C.032: Strategic Strategies (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/2-3Comp_4.pdf)
4–5
C.013: Summary Step-Up (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G4-5/45CPartOne.pdf)

C.020: Super Summary (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G4-5/45CPartTwo.pdf)
C.040: Sum-thing Special (http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G4-5/45CPartFour.pdf)

How can instruction for *summarising* be differentiated?

Modelling and initial instruction can easily be introduced in whole-group instruction. Small-group instruction may be necessary in order to meet the needs of students who are still struggling with summarizing. Instructional levels of texts used in lessons can also be varied to meet the individual reading levels of all students.

How can assessment be integrated into teaching the strategy of *summarizing*?

Students' written summaries provide an excellent source for assessing students' understandings of summarizing.

References

Adler, C. R. (Ed). 2001. *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

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Cooper, J. David, Chard, David J., & Kiger, Nancy D. (2006). *The struggling reader: Interventions that work.* New York: Scholastic.

Harvey, Stephanie, & Goudvis, Anne. (2007). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension for understanding and engagement* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

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Summarizing: Determining Importance and Order of Ideas

Summarizing is a whopper of a strategy that is often very difficult for our students. In fifth grade I assigned each table a strategy job for the social studies chapter. When I pointed to the back table and told them they'd be in charge of summarizing, they rolled their eyes and groaned. The table sighed in relief when I explained they could draw the three main events and come up with five keywords from the chapter. It is no wonder these students grimaced at the thought of summarizing; the skill includes a host of challenging tasks, including recalling important events or details, ordering points, and using synonyms or selecting vocabulary.

Teaching students to summarize is a way to improve their overall comprehension of text (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Students encounter all kinds of problems when attempting to summarize. They often include too many details-or not enough. Primary-grade children often offer a long, drawn-out retelling rather than a summary. Older students often experience difficulty selecting important events or details and ordering them in a logical sequence. They also do not know how to use their own words or to paraphrase as they create summaries. Students also need to understand text structure and use those structures in their summaries. If you are reading a compare-and-contrast article in science that compares alligators and crocodiles, for instance, then the students need to use the compare-contrast structure to organize their summary. You might also encourage students to use nonfiction headings as they summarize material that is organized around main ideas and details. When summarizing fiction, they need to decide whether the text is organized by events, such as those in a memoir, or whether it is a problem-and-solution text.

http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3751183

Students of all ages really love this memorable lesson where they work in pairs or teams to identify a limited number of key words or points from the reading and then create hand motions to accompany their words. The students perform their hand motion summaries for the class. Try assigning certain pages or chunks of text to each group for their summaries. The tricky part is selecting the "key" points or words for each page. The activity provides you with insight and multiple opportunities to help your students learn to determine what is important and how to summarize in a logical order.

1. INTRODUCE THE STRATEGY

Tell students, Good readers summarize not just after reading but throughout the process. Today I will model for you, and you will practice making hand motion summaries to go with the reading.

Ask students what they already know about creating a summary. Partners turn and talk about what a summary is and tell some of the steps necessary, such as rereading, selecting only important points, telling in order, and using text vocabulary in the summary.

Define/explain the strategy. Explain to the students that, Good readers summarize constantly as they read. They select key words and ideas to remember and then put those in order into a summary using vocabulary from the reading. The tricky part is finding the most important details and ideas to use in the summary. Summarizing helps us remember what we read.

Options: Think aloud using your own reading and tell how you use summarizing to enhance your comprehension. Alternately, you could give a quick example of a hand motion summary using a book the class is very familiar with before demonstrating from the text you've selected for today's lesson. Select five key phrases or words from the familiar text and make up hand motions for each. For example, to demonstrate a hand motion summary for the short story "La Bamba" by Gary Soto, you might select the following words and hand motions to string together in a summary that you verbalize while showing the hand motions. You might say, Manuel lip syncs [pantomime singing] the song "La Bamba" in the school talent show [clap and cheer] and the record gets stuck [hand motion of a record going around]. He is embarrassed [facial expression; put hands to face] in front of the entire school but they think he is a funny [pantomime laughing] comedian.

Engage students. As you demonstrate hand signals, tell students why you selected a particular motion to go with a word or phrase. Encourage students to follow along and try the same hand signals.

2. MODEL THE STRATEGY THROUGH INTERACTIVE THINK-ALOUD

Read aloud from the text, pausing several times to model how to summarize a small portion of text. Show how you'd select just five key phrases or words. Write the words and phrases. Say something like, I think I will pick these words . . . because . . . . Read on and if you change your mind and want to use other words, say, I think these words are more important since I read on and learned more. Erase and cross out words that you ultimately do not select. Make up hand motions to go with each of your key phrases and give a hand motion summary in order.

Engage students. Ask students to join you in performing the hand motions from your summary. Ask them to take turns performing your summary with a partner.

3. SUPPORT INTERACTIVE GUIDED PRACTICE

Turn to a page of text and work together as a whole class to determine which ideas from the text should make the key words and phrases list. Students talk to partners and write on slates as they participate and offer their suggestions for key words. Direct students to work in pairs or at table groups to practice finding a limited number of key words or phrases on assigned pages of the text. Provide students with overhead transparencies or a large sheet of paper on which to write their words. Circulate among groups and assist them in determining the important words in their text. Students may add drawings to go with their summaries. Invite groups to perform their hand motion summaries for the class.

4. PROVIDE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Students read on their own and continue to collect key vocabulary to perform as hand motions. Share with partners and the whole class.

5. WRAP UP THE LESSON

Ask students to discuss the following:

How can you figure out what the most important parts are in a text?

How does creating a hand motion summary help you better understand the reading?
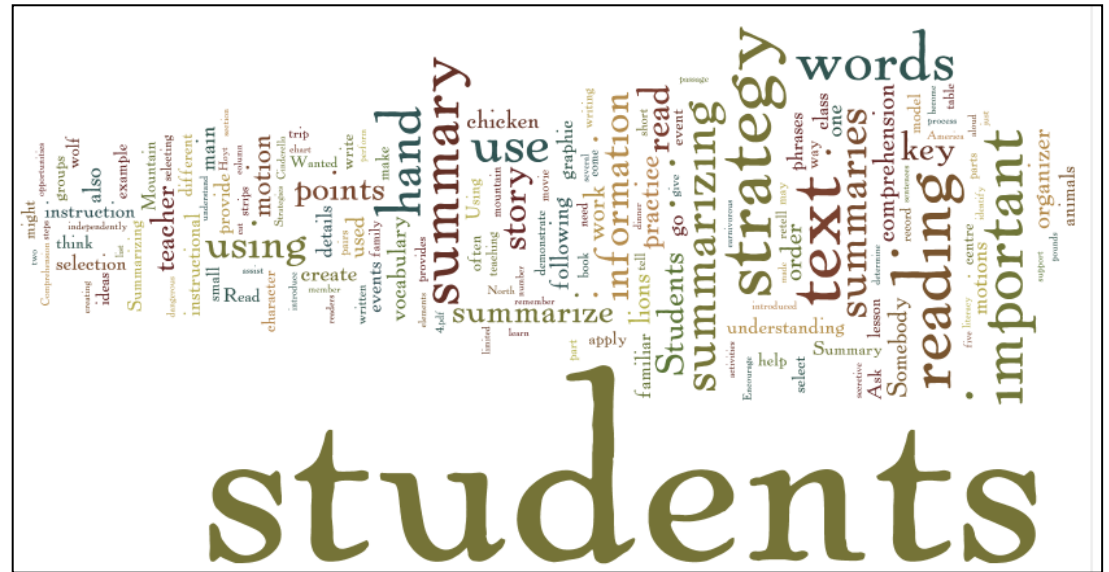
Websites that summarise blocks of text, URL's etc

- Using Graphic Organizers Graphic organizers such as story maps-which ask students to provide specific details such as setting and characters-are valuable aids for students when preparing to construct summaries. Once the students have read the text and completed the graphic organizers, the students can use this information to assist them in writing a summary. Using a read-aloud or a selection from the core reading program that students have already read, work with students to record information on the graphic organizer and create a summary. Very Important Points The V.I.P., or very important points, instructional strategy (Hoyt, 1999) can be used to assist students in locating the most important ideas in a selection. As students become more adept in using this instructional strategy to identify the important points, the teacher can have them record this information and use it to create summaries of the text.

- After students become adept at using this strategy to orally retell portions of the text, you can encourage them to write a summary sentence of each section and then use these sentences to write an overall summary of the selection. Writing Summaries This instructional strategy assists students in writing summaries by using a short passage and guiding them to highlight important information and cross out redundant, highly detailed, or unimportant information (adapted from Johns & Lenski, 2005). Guided Comprehension: Summarizing Using the QuIP Strategy" introduces students to the strategy of summarizing, providing guidance and practice in organizing information graphically and synthesizing it in writing. Students' written summaries provide an excellent source for assessing students' understandings of summarizing. For example, to demonstrate a hand motion summary for the short story "La Bamba" by Gary Soto, you might select the following words and hand motions to string together in a summary that you verbalize while showing the hand motions.

~ Summarizing Instruction Tips ~

★ Locate summary examples with your class:

brochures, PTA newsletters, advertisements, game instructions, book jackets, video synopsis, contest rules, catalogue item descriptions, etc.

★ Photos or Magazine Pictures:

Devise **one**-sentence summaries (captions) that tell a "story" about the picture.

★ Implement real life oral summaries into classroom life, about weekend events, movies, PE class, family events. etc. Emphasize the 5 W's.

★ Practice summarizing DURING reading, every few paragraphs.

Use some of the author's words, and some of the reader's own words.

★ Use "I" in place of the main character's name, when summarizing fiction.

★ Write a summary after implementing a KWL. Students use the information in the "L" column and confirmed ideas in the "K" column to generate a summary of the reading selection or topic.

★ Using a textbook with end-of-chapter summaries, read one chapter. Write a summary together as a class, then compare it with the textbook's.

★ Practice highlighting or removing words, sometimes as a speed contest:

- ◆ Highlight all of the verbs, and create a summary using synonyms for the strongest ones.

- ◆ Highlight headings, subheadings, and topic sentences.

- ◆ Highlight time order and text structure words and phrases.

- ◆ Cross out single words (and, at) & trivial or repetitive detail words

★ Teach the FOUR RULES for producing summaries, using language that makes sense to your students:

- ◆ Identify main idea words

- ◆ Delete trivial and redundant words or information

- ◆ List or outline the main idea and details

- ◆ Relate main idea and supporting ideas verbally or in writing

★ Create Rubrics or lists of attributes of excellent summaries, such as:

- ◆ The author's main idea is paraphrased clearly and completely.

- ◆ The important details are included for each main idea

- ◆ Unimportant and redundant information is not included

- ◆ The summary is organized in a logical and sequential manner.

Synthesising means creating something new by bringing together many different pieces of information, for example, five book reviews of the same popular book using thinking skills (e.g., analysis, reasoning, summarizing) to understand that information identifying patterns within the information and relationships between the sets of information inferring something about those patterns and relationships gathering one's thoughts together as a new, coherent piece of communication.

Synthesising, now called "creating" on Bloom's Taxonomy, is considered to be one of the highest order thinking skill because it involves all the other thinking kills and the creation of something entirely new.

Lots of people wonder what the difference is between summarising and synthesising. Summarising means reducing information to its key points without hanging its meaning. Synthesizing means bringing together many different pieces of information and going through the process outlined here to create a new product.

Summarising and Synthesizing: What's the Difference?

by Jessica Fries-Gaither

Summarising and synthesizing are two important reading comprehension strategies. They're also skills that students struggle with and often confuse despite the differences. In this article, we review the two skills, discuss the differences between them, and highlight activities that can be used to support students as they develop proficiency with them.

SUMMARISING

What does summarizing mean? Into the Book, a reading strategies web site for teachers and students, explains that when readers summarize, they "identify key elements and condense important information into their own words during and after reading to solidify meaning." The site offers a simpler definition for students: "Tell what's important."

Why is summarising difficult for students? For starters, it requires students to apply the skill of determining importance in text and then express the important ideas in their own words. Many times, as students learn to summarise, their first attempts are a collection of details, rather than the main ideas of the passage. Other student-produced summaries are too vague and do not include enough detail. Teachers need to devote time to explicit instruction and modeling on both determining importance and summarising to help students become proficient with both strategies.

The following resources can be helpful for teaching students to summarise:

Summarizing
http://www.ohiorc.org/Literacy_K5/strategy/strategy_each.aspx?id=000002 This article provides an overview of summarising as a reading comprehension strategy, and how it can be taught and assessed in an elementary classroom.

Into the Book: Summarising
http://reading.ecb.org/teacher/summarizing/index.html This section of the Into the Book web site provides definitions of summarising for teachers and students, learning objectives with videos, lessons, and a wealth of additional resources. The student area (which requires a key to access) has interactive activities for each of the featured comprehension strategies.

Guided Comprehension: Summarising Using the QuIP Strategy
http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/guided-comprehension-summarizing-using-231.html This lesson plan, for grades 3-6 from ReadWriteThink, teaches students to summarise information by graphically organizing information in response to questions, then reorganising their answers into paragraph form.

Lesson 8: Summarizing Information

http://www.ellsworthamerican.com/nie/teachers_guide_lesson8_mh.pdf In this lesson, students practice summarising by extracting the Five Ws (who, what, when, where, why) and the H (how) from feature stories in local newspapers. The lesson could be adapted for use with other texts as well.

SYNTHESISING

Synthesising takes the process of summarizing one step further. Instead of just restating the important points from text, synthesising involves combining ideas and allowing an evolving understanding of text. Into the Book defines synthesising as "[creating] original insights, perspectives, and understandings by reflecting on text(s) and merging elements from text and existing schema." For students, the site provides the simpler "Put pieces together to see them in a new way."

As with summarising, this higher-order thinking skill needs explicit instruction and modeling. In her book *Comprehension Connections: Bridges to Strategic Reading*, Tanny McGregor provides examples of instructional sequences for synthesising using common objects (nesting dolls), prompts or sentence starters, and a spiral-shaped graphic organizer inspired by the notes written and passed by her students. These activities provide the scaffolding needed to support students as they become familiar and then proficient with the skill and can be used with all types of text.

The following resources can be helpful for teaching students to synthesise:

Synthesising
http://www.ohiorc.org/adlit/strategy/strategy_each.aspx?id=000002 This article provides an overview of synthesising as a reading comprehension strategy and describes approaches for teaching and supporting students as they develop proficiency.

Into the Book: Synthesising
http://reading.ecb.org/teacher/synthesizing/index.html This section of the Into the Book web site provides definitions of synthesising for teachers and students, learning objectives with videos, lessons, and a wealth of additional resources. The student area (which requires a key to access) has interactive activities for each of the featured comprehension strategies.

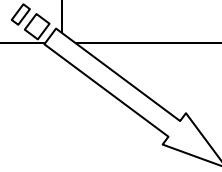***Classroom Connections: Bridges to Strategic Reading***
http://www.heinemann.com/products/E00887.aspx Tanny McGregor's book includes chapters devoted to six reading comprehension strategies: schema, inferring, questioning, determining importance, visualising, and synthesising. Heinemann's page also includes links to web seminars about various strategies (click on Companion Resources).

Sum It Up!

1. Create an A+B+C topic sentence by combining the information from the three boxes below.

A	B	C
Title & Author	*Strong Verb*	*Big Idea*

2. Write down 4-5 main ideas from what you read that

support the big idea in your topic sentence.

Fact Outline (important information)	*Verb Bank*
• • • • •	acknowledges identifies advises illustrates captures presents clarifies proposes defends recommends demonstrates shows

3. Write your summary paragraph below. Start by copying your A+B+C topic sentence. Then turn each fact from the box above into a sentence. Use transition words to help improve sentence fluency. If helpful, add on *explain* sentences. No closing sentence is necessary.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Read Around the Text

1. Look at the pictures. What ideas are being presented?

2. Look at the captions and read them. What do you know so far?

3. Look at the maps, charts, and graphs. Discuss what information they present.

4. Look at the titles, headings and bold-faced words. What's the big idea?

5. Read the first and last paragraphs of the selection.

6. Ask questions. Give yourself a reason to read.

Response Sheet

Date:	**Vocabulary**
Title:	
Chapters or Pages:	
Summary and Opinion:	
Prediction:	**Question I Have:**

Save the Last Word for ME

Developed by Patricia Averette.

Purpose
To clarify and deepen our thinking about articles we read.

Roles
Timekeeper/facilitator, who both participates and keeps the process moving.
The process is designed to build on each other's thinking, and not to enter into a dialogue.
Participants may decide to have an open dialogue about the text at the end of the 30 minutes.
Timing is important; each round should last approximately 7 minutes.

Total Time
approximately 30 minutes.

The Protocol
1. Create a group of 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.

2. Each participant silently identifies what s/he considers to be (for him or her) the most significant idea addressed in the article, and highlights that passage.

3. When the group is ready, a volunteer member identifies the part of the article that s/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. This person (the *presenter*) says nothing about why s/he chose that particular passage.

4. The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.

5. The other 3 participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage — saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.

6. The first participant then has 3 minutes to state why s/he chose that part of the article and to respond to — or build on — what s/he heard from his/her colleagues.

7. The same pattern is followed until all four members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have "the last word."

8. Optional open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised during the first part of the protocol.

9. Debrief the experience. How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to explore your own thinking?

Literacy Strategies
SQ3R

The **SQ3R** strategy (which stands for **S**urvey, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **R**ecite, **R**eview) was developed by Robinson (1961) to provide a structured approach for students to use when studying content material. This strategy has proven to be effective and versatile and can easily be integrated into many content areas and across grade levels. Students develop effective study habits by engaging in the pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading steps of this strategy.

The **SQ3R** literacy strategy helps enhance comprehension and retention of information. It is metacognitive in nature in that it is a self-monitoring process.

Five Steps to the SQ3R Literacy Strategy

1. Survey
By surveying the chapter titles, introductory paragraphs, bold face, italicized headings, and summary paragraphs, the reader gets an overview of the material. Surveying also gives enough information to generate individual purposes for reading the text.

2. Question
Purpose questions are often provided at the beginning of the chapter. It not, the reader can turn section headings into questions. The main objective is to have questions for which answers are expected to be found in the passage.

3. Read
The student is to read to answer the purpose questions formulated in Step 2, Question.

4. Recite
Student should try to answer questions without referring to the text or notes. This step helps in transferring information from short-term to long-term memory.

5. Review
Students review the material by rereading parts of the text or notes. Students verify answers given during Step 4, Recite. This helps retain information better and gives immediate feedback.

The SQ3R is a very versatile literacy strategy that involves the student in processing information before, during, and after reading:

1. Prior to reading — preview text and establish purpose.

2. While reading — monitor one's own comprehension.

3. After reading — summarize and review content.

Many students don't know how to study, and this strategy is a perfect way to help them. It works well in many content areas with a variety of types of text.

It is recommended that the teacher show the students how to go through the steps. In the fifth grade science lesson found later in this chapter, this strategy provides the framework needed to develop a concept map.

SQ3R

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ Survey

chapter titles, introductory paragraphs, bold face, italicized headings and summary paragraphs

★ Question

turn section headings into questions; have questions for which answers are expected to be found in the passage

★ Read

to answer purpose questions

★ Recite

try to answer questions without referring to the text or notes

★ Review

review the material by rereading parts of the text or notes to verify answers

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

S u m   I t   U p

NAME	DATE

TITLE of READING SELECTION

1. Read the selection and underline the key words and main ideas. Write these in the blank area below where it says "Main Idea Words."
2. At the bottom of this sheet, write a one-sentence summary of the article, using as many main idea words as you can. Imagine you only have $2.00, and each word you use will cost you 10 cents. See if you can "sum it up" in twenty words!

Main Idea Words:

"Sum It Up" for **$2.00**

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Adapted from Pat Widdowson
Surry County (NC) Schools

ReadingQuest
http://www.readingquest.org

WRITING EFFECTIVE SUMMARIES

A. Identify!

You can identify what you are summarizing in a variety of ways. The following are okay, better, and best ways to identify what it is you are summarizing.

OK: The book
           The film
           The article

BETTER: *Painless Public Speaking*
         Forrest Gump
         "Going Under the Light"

BEST: *Painless Public Speaking* by
             Sharon Bower
         The movie, *Forrest Gump*
         "Going Under the Light" from
             Newsweek, October 2, 1995

B. Select a Verb!

acknowledges	evaluates
adds	explains*
advises	explores
answers	expresses
asks	features
asserts	furnishes
assures	gives
blames	identifies
captures	illustrates
clarifies	invites
classifies	judges
compares*	lists*
confirms	misjudges
confronts	names
confuses	offends
contrasts	praises
considers	predicts
critiques	presents*
demonstrates	proposes
defends	provides
defines*	recommends
denounces	shows*
depicts	simplifies
describes*	solves
discourages	suggests
encourages	supports
endorses	teaches
entertains	tells*
entices	traces

*Verbs commonly chosen.

C. Finish Your Thought!

The final part of the topic sentence is easy if you just ask yourself:

•*What is the big idea?*
•*What is the big concept?*
•*What is the main idea of the item that I am summarizing?*

Keep in mind that this is just your topic sentence and that you will be adding all of the facts in the body of your summary paragraph.

A + B + C = TOPIC SENTENCE   *Painless Public Speaking* by Sharon Bower provides a number of practical hints for people who are afraid of speaking in front of a group.

BODY: Create a fact outline. Then add those facts to your paragraph in sentence form.

HELPFUL HINTS: Use transitions only if they help. Summaries do not need a formal conclusion. If you force a conclusion, it might sound awkward. Also formal conclusions include opinions - you do not want an opinion in a summary.

Summarize

1. Think about the characters.

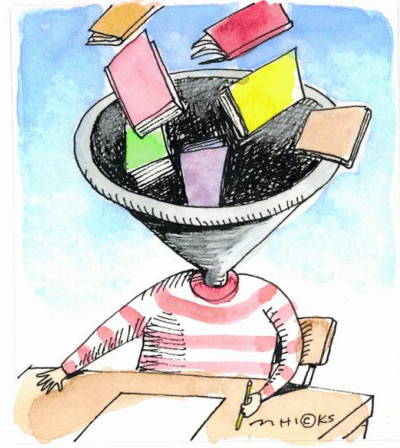2. Think about where the story takes place.

3. Think about the problem in the story and how the characters solve it.

4. Think about what happens in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Determining Importance

Grasping essential ideas and important information

What is my purpose for reading this?

What is the author's purpose for writing this text?

What are the main headings and sub-headings?

What text features help me determine the important ideas in this text?

How does the visual information help? What information does it provide?

What are the essential ideas?

How can I sort and prioritise the key ideas in this text?

What are the big concepts and how can I link the detail to the concept?

What graphic organiser could be helpful to sort the information?

What are the non-fiction features that signal importance?

- *Fonts and effects (titles, headings, bold/ italic / coloured fonts, bullets, captions, labels)*

- *Signal words and phrases*

- *Illustrations and photographs*

- *Graphics (diagrams, cutaways, cross sections, graphs, maps, charts)*

- *Text organisers (index, preface, glossary, appendix)*

- *Text structures (cause & effect, problem & solution, question & answer, compare & contrast, description, sequence)*

Summarising & Synthesising

Using our own words to summarise key ideas
Adding to our store of knowledge

What is important?
Can I retell the story accurately?
Can I paraphrase the information presented?
Has my thinking changed as I read more?
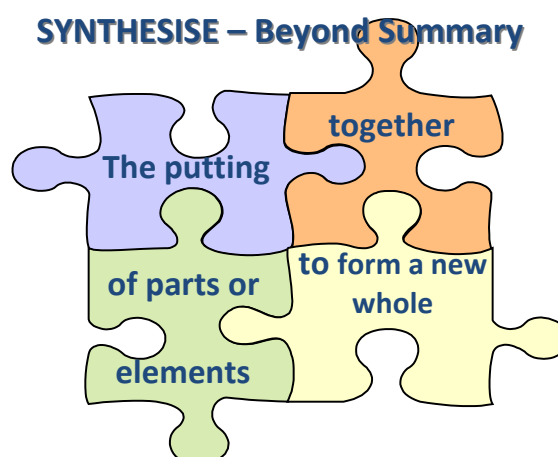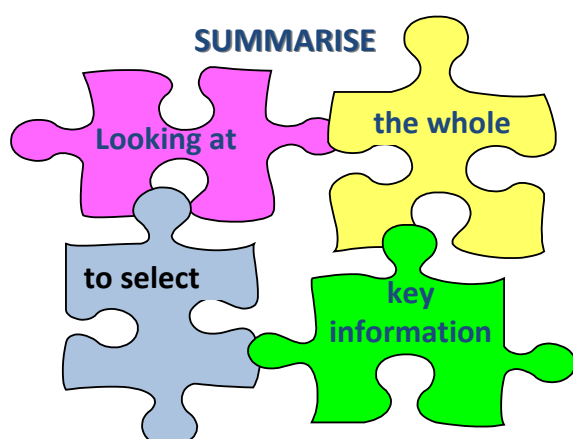*How are different texts / information similar and different?*
What is the gist of this text?
What is my opinion?
What is the text about and what does it make me think about?
How can I use graphic organisers to help me sort my thinking?
What questions do I still have?

SUMMARISE

Looking at | the whole | to select | key information

SYNTHESISE – Beyond Summary

The putting | together | of parts or | elements | to form a new whole

Tools for Determining Importance, Summarising & Synthesising

Grasping essential ideas and important information
Text Structure, Features, Signal Words & Graphic Organisers

Text Structure	Explanation	Signal words		Tools
Cause and Effect	Ideas, events or facts are presented as causes in conjunction with the resulting outcomes or effects	accordingly consequently may be due to so thus because for this reason	nevertheless therefore as a result if...then since this led to effect	
Compare and Contrast	Similarities and differences are presented between two or more topics or concepts	although but either...or in common similar to as opposed to comparatively	compared with even though likewise yes as well as different from	
Description	Provides information and detail about a topic e.g. attributes such as measurements	a number of characteristics in addition is like to illustrate appears to be	for example looks like as in for instance such as features	
Problem and Solution	Problems is presented followed by one or more solutions, sometimes with the steps involved	a problem because in order to one reason for steps involved a solution for this reason leads to	since accordingly if...then may be due to so that thus dilemma challenge	
Question and Answer	Question is posed followed by answers	how conclude when why how may	what who estimate where could be that	
Sequence	Events are described in numerical or chronological order.	after before first initially next soon	today afterwards finally meanwhile secondly following	

Adapted from 2006 The Florida Center for Reading Research (Revised July, 2007)