

**Middle School**



**High Five!**

# Read Around the Text!

Use this strategy to preview reading material before students read. It helps students set a purpose for their reading, make connections with their prior knowledge, and ask questions about what they are about to read. All of this leads to deeper comprehension.

- Melvina Prichett Phillips, National Association of Secondary School Principals -

## 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	judget
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

### 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.

*Step Up to Writing* by Maureen Auman  
<http://www.sopriswest.com>

**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.

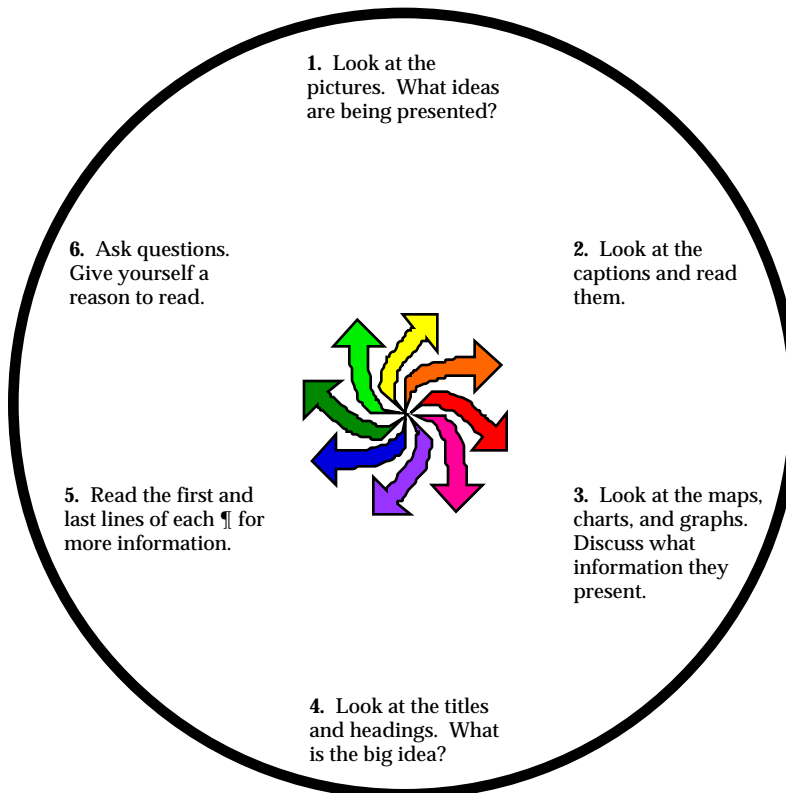
**HELPFUL HINTS:** Use transitions only if they help. Summaries do not need a formal conclusion. If you force a conclusion, it might sound awkward. Also formal conclusions include opinions - you do not want an opinion in a summary.

## VIP's - Very Important Points

To help students determine the main ideas to use in a written summary, use the VIP strategy. Give each student a large-sized sticky note. Ask them to fringe it to a predetermined number of pieces. (Students need a goal in order to feel less overwhelmed when being asked to pick out main ideas.) Consider starting with 6. Tell students to read a certain chunk of the text using the sticky note fringe as they go. They should place a piece of fringe next to the 6 most important ideas they read. The nice thing about sticky notes is they are easy to move around, so readers are actually encouraged to change their mind. Students find this so much easier than highlighting text, which feels so permanent.

Then give students a chance to compare main ideas with a partner or a small group. After discussing who chose what and why, tell the students they need to re-evaluate and narrow down their choices to 3. This really demands that students evaluate text for important information. (Hoyt, Linda. *Make It Real*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.)

**Now that students have found the main points from what they have read, teach them how to start an effective summary using the A+B+C strategy below. This strategy keeps students from writing a weak topic sentence like this: *This article was about...***



## Math...

<b>K.</b> (K = Key Vocabulary Word)	<b>I.</b> (I = Information/Definition)	<b>M.</b> (M = Memory Cue/Picture)
Your Sentence:		

## Social Studies...

<b>K.</b> (K = Key Vocabulary Word)	<b>I.</b> (I = Information/Definition)	<b>M.</b> (M = Memory Cue/Picture)
Your Sentence:		

## Science...

<b>K.</b> (K = Key Vocabulary Word)	<b>I.</b> (I = Information/Definition)	<b>M.</b> (M = Memory Cue/Picture)
Your Sentence:		

## Language Arts...

<b>K.</b> (K = Key Vocabulary Word)	<b>I.</b> (I = Information/Definition)	<b>M.</b> (M = Memory Cue/Picture)
Your Sentence:		


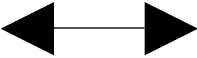

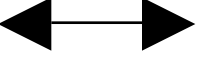

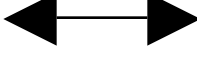

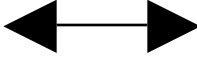
**Reciprocal Teaching** is a strategy that relies on the four comprehension skills: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. Students must become adept with these skills because they, in turn, teach the information to a partner.

1. **Modeling the four skills...** Instruct students in the four skills that they will use: summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting. One effective way of doing this is clearing four sequential days in order to teach a skill a day.

2. **Reciprocal teaching at work...** Now students should be ready to apply the four skills simultaneously in smaller teaching groups. One recommended approach is to divide students into small, heterogeneous reading groups of four. Prepare a set of 32 color-coded role cards from above (8 of each). Distribute the cards randomly. Students form groups of four ensuring they have four different role cards represented. Divide up the reading material into manageable chunks and tell students to read the first section of their text silently using the roles they have been assigned. When all group members are done reading silently, students have a discussion using their assigned roles.

One logical way to begin is with the summarizer who explains what he/she believes the first section is mostly about. The questioner poses "I wonders" to the group with everyone chiming in responses. The clarifier points out parts that he/she found confusing or asks others about their confusions with certain words and/or concepts. The group members all try to help sort through the confusion. Finally, the predictor makes reasonable predictions based on what was read to motivate the others to continue reading on and to help set a purpose for the next chunk. Continue using reciprocal teaching until the entire selection has been read and discussed. Tell students to shift their role cards to the right each time so they all get exposure to all of the skills.

3. **Assessment and reflection...** As students become more skilled with the strategy, they will begin to depend less and less on the role cards. Groups of four can be reduced to triads or partners with each student being responsible for the four skills simultaneously. The ultimate goal is for the skills of summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting to become automatic so students can read and discuss with ease. Ask students periodically to reflect on the strategy and how they are applying it in different classroom settings and with their own independent reading.

<p><b>summarizer</b></p> 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the assigned section carefully.</li> <li>2. Think about the main ideas being presented.</li> <li>3. Jot down those main ideas on paper. Look for 3 or 4.</li> <li>4. Use bold-faced print and headings to help you.</li> <li>5. Tell your partner/group what the section was about.</li> <li>6. Avoid retelling all the little details.</li> </ol>
<p><b>questioner</b></p> 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the assigned section carefully.</li> <li>2. Think about the main ideas being presented.</li> <li>3. Jot down 3 - 4 "I wonder" statements about the content.</li> <li>4. Read one question to your partner/group and ask for possible answers. Share your thoughts, too.</li> <li>5. Continue discussing the rest of your questions.</li> </ol>
<p><b>clarifier</b></p> 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the assigned section carefully.</li> <li>2. Think about the main ideas being presented.</li> <li>3. Jot down any words you find confusing.</li> <li>4. Jot down any ideas you find confusing.</li> <li>5. Tell your partner/group about your confusions. See if anyone in the group can clear things up.</li> <li>6. Ask your group if they had any confusions. Try to clear up any of their concerns.</li> </ol>
<p><b>predictor</b></p> 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the assigned section carefully.</li> <li>2. Think about the main ideas being presented.</li> <li>3. Based on what you have just read, predict what you think you will read next.</li> <li>4. Jot down 3 - 4 predictions.</li> <li>5. Tell your partner/group about your predictions. See what they think might happen next.</li> </ol>

## **K.I.M.**

*(Key Word + Important Information + Memory Device)*

This vocabulary strategy helps students learn several words at a time. Students record the key word, write down the important information about it (a student-friendly definition), and create a mnemonic to help them remember it (a visual).

## Science

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sedimentary rock</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- wind/water erosion</li><li>- sediments (bits of earth) washed downstream</li><li>- land at bottom of rivers, lakes, &amp; oceans</li><li>- pressed layers turn into rock after many years</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• igneous rock</li></ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- fire rock</li><li>- formed underground by magma cooling</li><li>- formed above ground when magma erupts from volcano (lava)</li></ul>   |

## Math

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• equilateral triangle</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 3 congruent sides</li><li>- 3 congruent angles</li><li>- equal</li></ul>          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• right triangle</li></ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- has a 90<sup>0</sup> angle</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• isosceles triangle</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 2 congruent sides</li><li>- 2 congruent angles</li><li>- "I saw Celes!"</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• scalene triangle</li></ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- no sides congruent</li><li>- no angles congruent</li></ul>                        |

### TWO COLUMN NOTES

This strategy helps students pull the main ideas out of what they read and organize the information effectively. In away , it is very much like outlining without all of the strict rules of formatting. The left-hand column is usually used for the main ideas, which are often the subtopics presented in the selection. The right-hand side is used for elaboration, details about the main ideas. The information in two column notes can also be rated on importance, which creates "power notes." Students label the main ideas as #1's. In the right-hand column, they label the details based on their importance with #2's, then #3's, etc. Students can easily use the notes for studying by folding one side over. By looking only at the main ideas, they can quiz themselves on the details and vice versa.

## Language Arts

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1 simple sentence   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 subject/predicate</li><li>2 complete thought</li><li>3 The dog ran quickly.</li></ul>   |
| 1 compound sentence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 two complete sentences joined w/ conj. + comma</li><li>2 use coordinating conjun.</li><li>2 BOY FANS (but, or, yet, for, and, nor, so)</li><li>3 The dog ran quickly, and then it stopped suddenly.</li></ul> |
| 1 complex sentence  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 depend. clause attached to independ. clause</li><li>2 uses subordinate conj.</li><li>3 After running away,</li></ul>  |

## Social Studies

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 1 Legislative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 makes laws</li><li>3 Congress</li><li>3 Senate</li><li>3 House of Rep.</li></ul>                    |
| 1 Executive   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 enforces laws/makes policy</li><li>3 President</li><li>3 Vice-President</li><li>3 Cabinet</li></ul> |
| 1 Judicial    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 interprets laws</li><li>3 Supreme Court</li><li>3 Circuit Court</li><li>3 District</li></ul>        |