

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS

INSTITUTE



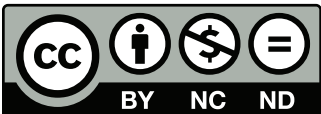
Model Lesson

Teaching Students to Summarize



Middle School Matters Institute

An initiative of the George W. Bush Institute in partnership with
The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk



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Note

This work is based on recommendations in the following:

Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., & Vachon, V. (2005). *REWARDS Plus: Reading strategies applied to social studies passages*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Denton, C., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Bryan, D., & Reed, D. (2012). *Effective instruction for middle school students with reading difficulties: The reading teacher's sourcebook*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

MODEL LESSON PLAN

Objective:	Students will write a summary that is concise and includes the most important information from an entire passage.
MSM Field Guide Alignment:	Reading and Reading Interventions, Principle 6, Practice 2: Instruct students to summarize text
Why Should Students Summarize?	Summarizing text involves succinctly and coherently relating the main ideas and significant details of a passage. When students are explicitly taught to work collaboratively on summarizing informational text, they read with higher levels of comprehension and retain more content information (Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2015).
Materials:	<p>For teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model lesson plan • Teaching Students to Summarize: Quick Reference Guide <p>For students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expository text or passage (one per student) • How to Write a Summary handout (one per student) • List of main idea (gist) statements from the section of text students will be summarizing (completed in a previous lesson)

NOTE

All lesson materials referenced in this lesson plan can be found in the Summarization for Comprehension Toolkit: <https://greatmiddleschools.org/toolkits/reading/summarization>

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

Students should have already learned to write main idea statements before they are taught to write summaries (see the [Get the Gist toolkit](#)).

Pacing Suggestions

This sample lesson should be part of a series of lessons on writing summaries. It is not intended to be the only instruction students receive on summarizing text.

Please note that this lesson should not be taught in a single class period; it should be taught over several days. As you gradually release scaffolds, monitor student progress and adjust your instruction accordingly.

Here is a *suggested* pacing guide for teaching the summarization strategy:

Timeframe	Lesson Breakdown *
Before teaching summarizing	Ensure that students can proficiently write main idea (Get the Gist) statements independently and have completed this activity for the text being used to teach summarizing.
Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review prior knowledge • State the purpose of the lesson • Introduce summarizing • Model summarizing
Days 2–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to model summarizing • Provide opportunities for guided practice
Days 4+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for independent practice
After teaching summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide multiple opportunities to practice • Reteach the skill as needed

*** Throughout lessons, monitor student learning and adjust your instruction accordingly.**

Review Prior Knowledge

Review the Get the Gist strategy with students.

EXAMPLE TEACHER TALK

“Yesterday we read Chapter 7 and found the main ideas of several paragraphs. How did we find the main idea of each paragraph?”

Accept responses. Students should recall that after reading each paragraph they decided who or what the paragraph was mainly about and what was the most important information about the who or the what. Then, they generated a main idea statement (or gist) in 10 words or less.

Purpose of the Lesson

Tell students that they will learn how to use their main idea statements to write a summary of an entire passage. Explain what summarizing is and why it is important.

EXAMPLE TEACHER TALK

“Today we are going to use our main idea statements to write a summary of an entire passage. A summary is a shortened version of something, and it contains only the most important points. Summarizing will help you in all reading because the overall goal is always to understand the most important parts in a text. Summarizing is a skill you will need throughout your life. You may be asked to give a summary of a lesson to a friend who was absent or a summary of a movie you saw.”

Introduce the Skill

One way to introduce students to summarization is through a movie clip.

1. Show your students a short scene or segment (under 5 minutes) from a popular movie.
2. Explain that you are going to show them several written summaries of the scene and that you would like them to pick the best summary. Remind students that a good summary is a shortened version of the scene and includes only the most important information.
3. Show students several correct and incorrect examples of summaries of the scene. Correct examples should be short summaries that include only the most important points. Incorrect examples can be lengthy and/or include information that is either irrelevant or too general.
4. Discuss each summary with the class and identify whether each example is a good or weak summary of the scene. Elicit discussion to clarify the reasons that one of the sample summaries is better than the others.

Modeling

1. Distribute the How to Write a Summary handout and display it on your document camera.
2. Point to the steps and tell students that it shows a strategy, or step-by-step plan, for writing a strong summary and that they will learn to complete each step of the strategy.
3. Display all of the main idea statements from the previous lesson, in which students wrote main idea (gist) statements for each paragraph of the text they'll be summarizing today.
4. Tell students that you will demonstrate how to write a summary for this section of the text.

EXAMPLE TEACHER TALK

Indicate Step 1 of the Summarizing Strategy.

"Step 1 is to LIST the main ideas for each paragraph in the passage. We completed Step 1 of the Summarizing Strategy yesterday in class. Let's review the statements we wrote. [Student], will you please read the first statement?"

Call on individual students to read each main idea statement.

Indicate Step 2 of the Summarizing Strategy.

"Step 2 tells us to UNDERLINE the main idea statements that include the most important ideas in the passage."

Provide a think-aloud model of the process. Read each main idea statement and talk about your thought processes as you decide which main ideas to keep, which to leave out, and why. As you model these decisions, remind students that only the most important information goes in the summary. Be sure to explain why you think some ideas are more important than others.

Indicate Step 3 of the Summarizing Strategy.

"Now that I have identified only those main idea statements that contain the most important information, Step 3 asks us to COMBINE any ideas that could go into one sentence."

Think aloud as you read the statements and identify some that could be combined into a single sentence. Discuss these decisions with students.

Indicate Step 4 of the Summarizing Strategy.

"Step 4 says we should NUMBER the ideas in a logical order. We need to read the main idea statements and decide how to put them in order so that they make sense."

Think aloud through the process of ordering the remaining main idea statements.

Indicate Step 5 of the Summarizing Strategy.

"Once we have underlined the important statements, combined the ones that go together, and numbered all the remaining ideas in an order that makes sense, we are ready to write out our summary. The summary should be only one paragraph long. Remember, Step 5 is to WRITE your summary in one paragraph."

Continue to think aloud as you write a summary that is several sentences in length, is a shortened version of the passage, and contains the most important information from the passage.

Indicate Step 6 of the Summarizing Strategy.

"The last step is to EDIT the summary. When we edit what we have written, we check for correct capital letters, punctuation, spelling, and most of all, whether what we have written makes sense."

Model checking capitalization, punctuation, and spelling one at a time. Finally, be sure to reread the entire summary aloud to model the process of checking that the summary makes sense. It can be helpful to quickly model actually editing your summary to improve its clarity (e.g., improving word choice or further combining parallel sentences or phrases).

NOTE

This lesson plan includes one modeling session. Many classes, especially those with struggling learners, may need to see the strategy modeled multiple times before they are ready for guided practice.

Guided Practice (In Small Groups or With Partners)

1. Direct students to look at the *next* section of the textbook chapter you used to review the main idea strategy. Display the main idea statements for that textbook section on the board or document camera and distribute copies of the main idea statements to each group or pair of students. Give students 2–3 minutes to read all of the main idea statements with their peers.
2. Give students 1–2 minutes to think about and discuss the section as a whole with their peers. Then, call on individual students to share their thoughts on the big ideas of the section. Next, ask students to discuss, select, and underline the main idea statements that are most closely related to those big ideas. Give them 2–3 minutes, then ask for volunteers to share which statements they excluded and why. Based on their responses and the class discussion, underline the important statements.
3. Give students 2–3 minutes to decide whether any of the statements can be combined into one sentence and to write out the combined sentences. Again, ask students to share, lead the class in discussion of the decisions, and note which statements can be combined.
4. Give students 3–4 minutes to number the statements to put them in logical order. Ask students to share, lead the class in discussion of the decisions, and number the statements on the board or document camera.
5. Give students 5–7 minutes to use the statements to develop and write out their summary of Section 2 of the textbook chapter. Then ask for volunteers to share their summaries. Discuss the quality of each summary by asking, “Is this a shortened version of the section?” and “Does this summary include the most important information from each section?” If needed, discuss ways to modify the summaries.
6. Give students 3–4 minutes to edit their summaries. Remind them first to check capital letters, punctuation, spelling, and to read their summaries to be sure they make sense.

Independent Practice (With Partners)

NOTE

Students are ready for independent practice when they can complete steps 1–6 in pairs or small groups and explain the steps of the strategy in their own words.

1. Pass out individual copies of How to Write a Summary and tell students that they will work in pairs to summarize a section of text. Ask students to read a short passage or chapter one paragraph at a time, taking turns reading paragraphs aloud to each other. Ask them to stop after each paragraph to apply the main idea strategy and write a main idea statement for each paragraph. Remind them to discuss who or what the paragraph is mostly about and the most important information about the *who* or the *what*, then to state the main idea of the paragraph in 10 words or less.
2. Circulate around the room to monitor independent practice and be available for assistance. After students have written main idea statements, review steps 1–6 of the summarizing strategy on the How to Write a Summary handout. Once all pairs have written a summary, ask volunteers to share their summaries. Discuss and evaluate each summary.

NOTE

Even though this is independent practice, it is essential that you circulate around the room while students are working to check for understanding and to provide guidance and additional modeling as needed.

Monitor Student Learning

Check that students have appropriately excluded any main idea statements that are irrelevant or redundant. In addition, check for accurate and concise summaries that are a shortened version of the reading and include the important information from the entire passage or chapter.

Model and reteach the strategy with the entire class, small groups, or individual students as needed.

Provide Multiple Opportunities to Practice

Provide opportunities for students to practice the skills necessary for summarizing. Use the following activities to vary the practice while supporting strategy development.

Choosing a summary (in pairs, small groups, or independently)

1. After reading a passage or chapter, show students several correct examples and incorrect examples of summaries.
2. Ask students to choose the best summary.
3. Ask students to share their responses. Discuss why each option is either a correct example or an incorrect example of a summary.

Completing a summary (in pairs or independently)

1. Write a summary of a passage or chapter but leave out one sentence.
2. Give students three or four choices of how to complete the summary, with only one sentence being correct.
3. Ask students to choose the best sentence to complete the summary and discuss why the other sentences are incorrect.

Chapter summary (in pairs, small groups, or independently)

1. Rather than having students read an entire chapter, assign each student, pair, or group a section of a chapter to read and summarize.
2. Return to whole group and, one section at a time and in consecutive order, have students read their section's summary.
3. Write down the summary for each section.