



**3rd Grade**

# Summarize

- Summarize texts, sequencing information accurately and include main ideas and details as appropriate
- Identify and list the important central ideas and supporting details of informational text
- List questions about essential elements (e.g., why, who, what, where, when and how) from informational text and identify answers
- Retell the plot sequence
- Identify stated and implied themes

## What Students Need to Know:

- text
- summary
- sequence
- main idea or central idea
- detail or supporting detail
- informational text
- essential elements of text
  - why
  - who
  - what
  - where
  - when
  - how
- plot sequence
- theme
  - stated
  - implied

## What Students Need to be Able to Do:

- summarize texts
  - sequence (information)
  - include (main ideas and details)
  - identify (central ideas and supporting details)
- list (questions about essential elements)
- identify (answers to questions)
- retell (plot sequence)

## Important Vocabulary

**main idea**— The gist of a passage; the central thought; the chief topic of a passage expressed or implied in a word or phrase; the topic sentence of a paragraph; a statement in sentence form which gives the stated or implied major topic of a passage and the specific way in which the passage is limited in content or reference

**plot**—The careful sequencing of events in a story generally built around a conflict. Stages of plot include exposition (background), rising action, climax, falling action and denouement (resolution)

**theme**—A topic of discussion or writing; a major idea or proposition broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work or work of art. *Note:* A theme may be stated or implied, but clues to it may be found in the ideas that are given special prominence or tend to recur in a work.

# SUMMARIZING

All of the indicators that have been grouped together into the Summarizing power standard require the reader to determine what's important in their reading. Whether students are asked to summarize the main idea and supporting details, retell the plot sequence in a piece of fiction, identify a theme, ask questions which may be answered by a piece of text, or sequence the events, they must be able to determine the important parts of the text.

The ability to decide what's important is perhaps one of the most important strategies that readers must have. It is also one of the most difficult to teach. In order for students to truly be proficient at these indicators, they will need repeated exposure using a variety of types of texts. Much modeling will be necessary before expecting students to participate in determining what's important.

*Remember that summarizing is an in-the-head strategy. The purpose is to help the reader comprehend the text.*

After introducing the strategy through a read aloud and/or mini-lesson, follow-up with students during guided reading. This will provide students an opportunity to practice finding the important parts of a text while they are reading a selection at their level. In fact, at first, consider using an easier text. If you are expecting students to attend to what's important in the text, they should not have to concentrate on decoding that text.

Readers constantly extract information from a text and accumulate that extracted information in summary form. Summarizing does not mean simply that readers can "sum up" a text afterward, although that is part of the skill. It means that readers are remembering the text in "put together" ways so that they can engage in ongoing interpretation. It is summarizing as you read, putting together what you have read so far as you continue to process the text. (*Guiding Readers and Writers*, p. 319)

# CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

## **DETERMINING WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN TEXT**

### **READERS**

- Identify key ideas or themes as they read
- Distinguish important from unimportant information in relation to key ideas or themes in text. They can distinguish important information at the word, sentence and text level
- Utilize text structure and text features (such as bold or italicized print, figures and photographs) to help them distinguish important from unimportant information
- Use their knowledge of important and relevant parts of text to prioritize in long-term memory and synthesize text for others

### **WRITERS**

- Observe their world and record what they believe is significant
- Make decisions about the most important ideas to include in the pieces they write. They make decisions about the best genre and structure to communicate their ideas.
- Reveal their biases by emphasizing some elements over others
- Provide only essential detail to reveal the meaning and produce the effect desired
- Delete information irrelevant to their larger purpose

## **ASKING QUESTIONS**

### **READERS**

- Spontaneously generate questions before, during and after reading
- Ask questions for different purposes including clarification of meaning, making predictions, determining an author's style, content, or format and to locate a specific answer in text or consider rhetorical questions inspired by the text
- Use questions to focus their attention on important components of the text
- Are aware that other readers' questions may inspire new questions for them

### **WRITERS**

- Compose in a way that causes the reader to form questions as they read
- Monitor their progress by asking questions about their choices as they write
- Ask questions of other writers in order to confirm their choices and make revisions
- Have questions that lead to revision in their own pieces and in the pieces to which they respond for other writers

# CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

## **SYNTHESIZING INFORMATION**

### **READERS**

- Maintain a cognitive synthesis as they read. They monitor the overall meaning, important concepts and themes in the text as they read and are aware of ways the text elements “fit together” to create that overall meaning and theme. They use their knowledge of these elements to make decisions about the overall meaning of a passage, chapter or book.
- Retell or synthesize what they have read. They attend to the most important information and to the clarity or the synthesis itself. Readers synthesize in order to better understand what they have read
- Capitalize on opportunities to share, recommend and criticize books they have read
- May respond to text in a variety of ways either independently or in groups with other readers. These include written, oral, dramatic and artistic responses and interpretations of text
- Using a proficient reader’s synthesis, are likely to extend the literal meaning of a text to the inferential level

### **WRITERS**

- Make global and focal plans for their writing before and during the drafting process
- Study other writers and draw conclusions about what makes good writing. They work to replicate the style of authors they find compelling
- Reveal themes in a way that suggests their importance to readers. Readers can create a coget synthesis from well-written material

# MINI-LESSONS FOR TEACHING SUMMARIZING

Finding the main idea – Theme

- What is the story mostly about? summarizing story usually helps
- What is the author’s message?

Theme

- Theme is something about life that the story teaches.
- Don’t pick a theme that sounds good that isn’t in the story

Deeper questions – schema

- Model how to ask yourself questions while reading
  - What questions do you have while you read?
  - What do you wonder about?
  - Do you listen to the questions in your head?

Sequence – order of events

- Sometimes events are told in the order they happen. Look for words: first, next, then, before, after, finally
- Sometimes events are told out of order. Flashback, starting in the middle or end

Summarizing

- Tell what story or paragraph is about in one or two sentences
- Good to do as reading, especially textbooks – science and social studies
- Just tell important ideas. Teacher can prepare sentence strips with important ideas and some that are details and should not be included in the summary. After reading, children discuss and choose the sentences that would make a good summary.

Sequencing

- List important events on sentence strips. Tape to board out-of-order. Children discuss and place sentences in correct order

Determining Importance

- word level
- sentence level
- text level
- expository text – use subtitles, pictures, charts, captions, titles, boldface words, italicized words, begin or end passage
- narrative text – what was the author wanting to tell me?

Transferring comprehension from listening to reading

- Stating the main idea of a selection is very difficult for most elementary school children. Often they do not understand exactly what is being asked of them. Stating the task in several ways (main idea, most important idea, what you would tell someone if they asked you about it)
- Set the purpose for listening. "There are three sentences on the board. All are about things that happen in the story I am about to read to you. As you listen try to decide which sentence tells the main idea of this story, the most important. Try to choose a sentence you would tell someone if they asked you what this story was all about."
- Read the selection.
- Have the children volunteer choices for main idea; have them explain why that choice seems to tell what the story is mainly about and why the others don't
- Give the children sheets with three sentences and a story. Tell them to read to determine which of these sentences tells the main idea.
- Children read and choose the main idea
- Children share their choice and the explanation for that choice as a whole class or in small groups

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY—SUMMARIZING**

Noble, Trinka Hank. *Meanwhile Back at the Ranch*

Yorinks, Arthur. *Louis, the Fish*

Series:

Dorling Kindersley Readers, DK Publishing, New York

I Can Read About....Troll Associates, New York

First Discovery Books, Scholastic, New York

Eyewitness Books, Knopf, New York

Newspapers:

Local newspapers

Weekly Reader, Box 12033, Stamford, CT 06912

Magazines:

*National Geographic for Kids*, National Geographic Society, 17<sup>th</sup> and M Sts. N.W. Washington, DC 200036

*Time for Kids*, Time, Inc., Time-Life Building, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

*Ranger Rick*, National Wildlife Federation, 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22184

*Zoo Books*, Wildlife Education Ltd. 9820 Willow Creek Rd., San Diego, CA 92131

*Calliope: World History for Young People*, Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove St., Peterborough, NH 03458

*Kids Discover*, 170 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010

*Cobblestone: The History Magazine for Young People*. Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove St., Peterborough, NH 03458

## Test Questions from Past Tests

<p>Number these events from Wilma's life in the order that they happened.</p> <p><u>  1  </u> Wilma wore a brace on her leg.</p> <p><u>      </u> Wilma was a teacher and coach.</p> <p><u>      </u> Wilma won three Olympic gold medals.</p> <p><u>      </u> Wilma was a basketball star.</p>	<p>What is the main idea of this reading selection?</p> <p>a. A girl's father teaches her to build a doghouse.</p> <p>b. A girl learns how to take care of her pet.</p> <p>c. A girl wants a dog for a pet.</p>
<p>Using the reading selection, list four things Sam does with leaves.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p>This paragraph is from the selection.</p> <p><i>"Stars look like they twinkle, too. This is because of the air around Earth, called the atmosphere. As starlight travels through the atmosphere, it makes some stars look like they are twinkling."</i></p> <p>Which question does this paragraph answer?</p> <p>a. Why do astronomers study stars?</p> <p>b. What is starlight?</p> <p>c. Why do stars twinkle?</p>
<p>This paragraph is from the selection.</p> <p><i>"But when a snowflake forms in the lower cumulus clouds, and when the cloud and the air on the earth are cold enough, the flake will stay in the form of snow and fall to the ground. The gravity of the earth pulls the snowflake down, spinning and changing shape along the way."</i></p> <p>Which question does this paragraph answer?</p> <p>a. How does a snowflake fall to the ground?</p> <p>b. How cold does the ground need to be?</p> <p>c. How long will snow stay on the ground?</p>	<p>This paragraph is from the selection.</p> <p><i>"Seahorse families are very unusual compared with other animal families. Instead of the female having the babies, the male carries them in a pouch until it is time for them to be born."</i></p> <p>Which question is answered in this paragraph?</p> <p>a. How do female seahorses care for their young?</p> <p>b. How many babies do seahorses have at one time?</p> <p>c. How are seahorses different from most other animals?</p>
<p>Use the reading selection to list two things that make cirrus clouds different from cumulus clouds.</p> <p>a.</p> <p>b.</p>	<p>Wilma Rudolph is an amazing person. Using the reading selection, write two details to support this central idea.</p> <p>a.</p> <p>b.</p>
<p>What is the theme of the reading selection?</p> <p>a. Sharing hobbies can bring happiness to others.</p> <p>b. Leaves can give us shade in the hot summer.</p> <p>c. Enormous storms can knock down big, strong trees.</p>	<p>What would be another good title for this selection?</p> <p>a. Making a Doghouse</p> <p>b. Taking Care of Sable</p> <p>c. Tate and Pap</p>



What is the central idea in the reading selection?

- If you work hard, you can fulfill your dreams.
- Sports are fun to play with your family and friends.
- People who have had polio can walk again.

An important idea in the reading selection is that seahorses are born in a special way.

What detail from the selection supports this idea?

- The baby seahorses live in warm, shallow water.
- The baby seahorses hold on to each other's tails.
- The baby seahorses are carried in the father's pouch.

These sentences are from the selection.  
*"The natural habitat of seahorses is in the ocean where the water is warm and shallow. Many seahorses live in tropical areas where the water is always warm. Some live in the Pacific Ocean."*

Which title could be used for this part of the selection?

- What Seahorses Look Like
- Where Seahorses Live
- How Seahorses Protect Themselves

This paragraph is from the selection.  
*"Wilma is now known as a famous Olympic runner. She became a teacher and a coach after ending her running career. She wanted to help other children work hard and reach their dreams."*

What is the best heading for the paragraph?

- Wilma's Victories
- Wilma's Childhood
- Wilma's Family

Astronomers use tools to study the stars. Use information in the reading selection to complete the Astronomer's Tools Chart below.

**Astronomer's Tools Chart**

Astronomer's Tool	Why is the Tool Useful

An important idea from the reading selection is that stars are very far away from Earth. Which detail supports this idea?

- The distance between the stars and Earth is measured in light years.
- Stars look bright and twinkle because of Earth's atmosphere.
- The sun is more than a million times larger than Earth.

What is the theme of this reading selection?

- Big kids ride on buses and bring lunches to school.
- Big kids can still love and play with their old toys.
- Big kids should do what their little brothers or sisters tell them.

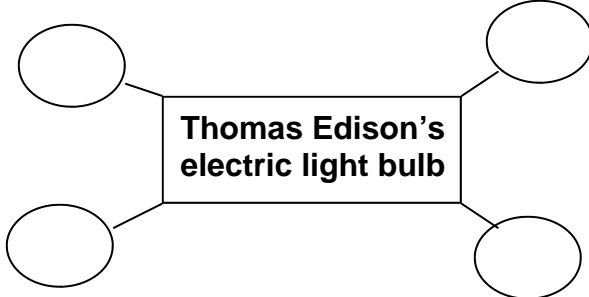
Annie felt different at different times in the reading selection. Tell how Annie felt and what made her feel that way at the beginning and end of the selection.

**Beginning**  
 How Annie felt \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why she felt this way \_\_\_\_\_

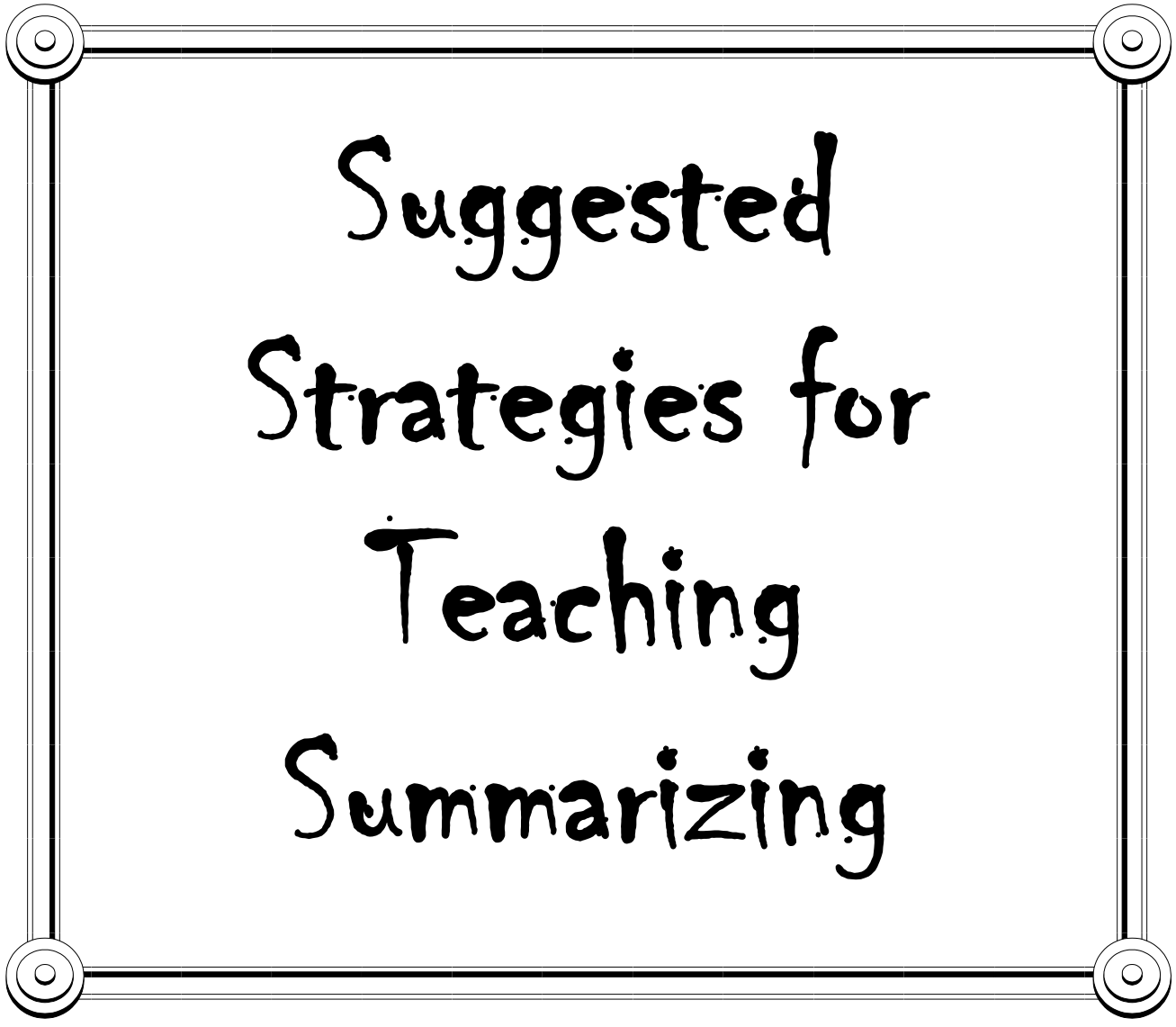
**Middle**  
 How Annie felt worried and very sad  
 Why she felt this way Taffy was missing and she ran out of corn meal

**End**  
 How Annie felt \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why she felt this way \_\_\_\_\_

<p>This paragraph is from the selection.          “A rabbit depends most of all on its excellent hearing. It moves its ears together or one at a time to catch the sounds coming from any direction.”          Which question is answered by this paragraph?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do rabbits use their ears to catch their food?</li> <li>How do rabbits use their ears to hear sounds around them?</li> <li>How do rabbits move their ears to talk to other rabbits?</li> </ol>	<p>This is a paragraph from the selection.          “Some animals are really good at smelling. Dogs can find things just by smelling the scent that is left behind where something or someone has been. This is why dogs are often used to help find missing people.”          Which question does the paragraph answer?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can dogs help the police?</li> <li>How can dogs help blind people?</li> <li>How can dogs pull heavy sleds?</li> </ol>
<p>Rabbits depend on their senses is an important idea from the reading selection. List four details from the selection to support this idea.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> </ol>	<p>This paragraph is from the selection.          “Baby rabbits are called kits or kittens. They are born with their eyes closed and without any fur. To keep them warm the mother covers them with grass and bits of her fur in the nest she has dug in the ground. At about a week old, the kits have opened their eyes and grown a coat of soft fur.”          What is the central idea of this paragraph?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how wild and domestic rabbits are different</li> <li>how young rabbits begin to change</li> <li>why rabbits make good pets</li> </ol>
<p>Sometimes you can tell that something will taste bad before you taste it. Which detail from the reading selection might explain the reason for this?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smells are made of tiny particles that float in the air.</li> <li>Taste and smell work together as special partners.</li> <li>Sometimes you can smell something that you cannot see</li> </ol>	<p>Number the steps of the smelling process in the order that they happen.</p> <p>___ Particles go into the nose.          ___ Messages go to the brain.  <u>1</u> Smell particles float in the air          ___ Particles cling to the sticky mucus.</p>
<p>These sentences are from the selection.          “All monkeys live in groups. Some monkeys live in small family groups. Some monkeys live in large groups called troops.”          Which question do these sentences answer?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do monkeys like living in groups?</li> <li>How do monkeys choose their groups?</li> <li>What kinds of groups do monkeys live in?</li> </ol>	<p>These sentences are from the selection.          “Other important machines Thomas Edison invented were: a movie projector, a movie camera, a cement mixer, and a copy machine. During his lifetime, Thomas Edison received 1,093 patents for his inventions. His inventions changed the world.”          Which question is answered in this paragraph?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many copy machines did Thomas Edison make?</li> <li>What invention was Thomas Edison proudest of?</li> <li>What important machines did Thomas Edison invent?</li> </ol>

<p>An important idea from the reading selection is that monkeys “talk” to each other. What detail from the selection supports this idea?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most monkeys eat almost anything at all.</li> <li>Monkeys can hear and see very well.</li> <li>Monkeys communicate by making sounds.</li> </ol>	<p>These sentences are from the selection. “Thomas experimented for more than a year to find the right material. In 1879, he finally tried a piece of baked cotton thread. When electricity passed through the glass bulb, the thread inside glowed for 13 hours!”</p> <p>What topic heading should be used for this part of the selection?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invention of the Telegraph Machine</li> <li>Invention of the Cement Mixer</li> <li>Invention of the Light Bulb</li> </ol>
<p>Use details from the reading selection to complete the web.</p> 	<p>What is the theme of “The Spelling Bee”?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soon enough we win all the time.</li> <li>Studying hard has great rewards.</li> <li>It is important to listen very carefully.</li> </ol>
<p>Use the reading selection to write four events in the order that they happened.</p>	





Suggested  
Strategies for  
Teaching  
Summarizing

# TEACHING SUMMARIZING

To help students learn to summarize, you can:

- Write a summary yourself of a text that students know or have read and ask students to analyze what makes it a summary
- Begin the process with short texts that do not have too many details and are easier to summarize
- Work together to create a group summary, selecting and deleting details
- Record a retelling of a text on chart paper and turn it into a summary
- Have students work in pairs to create alternative summaries of a text. Share them in the group and point out the summaries that are concise and include only the necessary details
- Have each student write a summary and then share it with a partner
- Ask students to summarize a text in their response journal, then respond to this summary in the letter you write back
- Encourage students to practice summarizing by developing book talks to recommend books to their friends

# HIGHLIGHTING

To effectively highlight text, readers need to read the text, think about it, and make conscious decisions about what they need to remember and learn. They can't possibly remember everything. They need to sort important information from less important details.

- Look carefully at the first and last line of each paragraph. Important information is often contained there
- Highlight only necessary words and phrases, not entire sentences
- Don't get thrown off by interesting details. Although they are fascinating, they often obscure important information
- Make notes in the margin to emphasize a pertinent highlighted word or phrase
- Note cue words. They are almost always followed by important information
- Pay attention to surprising information. It might mean you are learning something new
- When finished, check to see that no more than half the paragraph is highlighted. As readers become more adept, one-third of the paragraph is a good measure for highlighting

# THICK AND THIN QUESTIONS

Students should be encouraged to ask questions of the text while they are reading. There are two types of questions which may be asked – thin questions and thick questions. A higher level of comprehension is necessary to answer the thick questions. Encourage students to create their own questions as they read. Often the type of questions they ask will reflect their level of comprehension. It's difficult to ask a high level question unless you have a high degree of understanding of the text.

## Thin Questions

These are questions that can be answered from specific information in the text and usually have a one or two word response, i.e. "In the story *The Three Little Pigs*, what did the first little pig use to build his house?"

## Thick Questions

These are open-ended questions requiring deeper thought and explanation, i.e., "In *The Stranger*, how did the farmer feel when he realized that the stranger did not sweat as he worked?" A student must take the information from the text and add his/her previous knowledge to provide an answer.

Goals for asking questions are as follows:

- Compel the reader to consider the text and their response to the text
- Focus on a deeper level of thinking
- Guide the reader to consider his or her own questions and the role those questions play in comprehension
- Focus the reader on strategic behaviors that could be applied in other settings
- Encourage a descriptive and not judgmental response
- Provide feedback for the teacher

As students become increasingly interested in their own questions, they begin to see how different questions perform different functions and that some questions are more helpful than others. Create a chart that defines good questions:

- Questions that move readers through the text – "what next?"
- Questions that guide readers to a particular book in the first place – "Why I picked it up/ searched it out . . ."
- Questions for the author
- Questions about related texts and understandings
- Questions about the world
- Questions about the craft of the writing
- Questions I still have after reading

## **KEY WORD STRATEGY**

Key Word is a powerful strategy to help students summarize and a perfect tool for partner think alouds. Here are the four steps.

1. Read a short bit.
2. STOP!
3. Think . . . write one word that seems especially important.
4. Share your word with a partner. Tell why you chose these words.
5. Read another short bit and continue in the same way.

## **GIVE ME FIVE**

Precise listening invites listening for specific information such as the main point a speaker is trying to make or the details associated with it. What is most important is that the listener understands the purpose for listening at the outset. Providing students with some sort of listening guide is one way to establish a purpose for listening and provide concrete evidence that the listener did indeed accomplish the purpose. Use Give Me Five. Tell your students what to listen for and provide a structured guide on which students can make note of their discoveries.

Explain the purpose for listening to the read aloud and how they are to complete the listening guide. Make sure students understand that they are to listen for at least five details and write each in the appropriate space on the guide. Once they have five details, they can write additional details in the space provided. Students can also be invited to listen to the details their classmates share and note likenesses and differences among them.



# GIVE ME FIVE

<b>DETAIL 1</b>	
<b>DETAIL 2</b>	
<b>DETAIL 3</b>	
<b>DETAIL 4</b>	
<b>DETAIL 5</b>	
<b>DETAIL</b>	
<b>DETAIL</b>	
<b>DETAIL</b>	

## **CHOOSE A QUICK ONE**

After having students read a selection, have them get together in small groups to demonstrate their understanding of the text. Teams should be given a copy of the “Choose a Quick One” handout and asked to selection which of the four activities they would like to use to present their understanding of the information.

- Quick Draw
- Quick Write
- Quick Drama
- Quick Combo

Each of these activities requires students to synthesize what they’ve learned while reading the text. Groups should submit a planning sheet after choosing an activity. Allow time for them to practice, then have each group present its evidence of understanding to the whole class.

## **GRASP**

1. Give students a short passage at their instructional level and tell them that they will be writing a summary of the passage.
2. Have students read the passage independently.
3. When all students are finished with the reading, have them turn their papers facedown. Then ask them to tell you what they remembered from the passage. List this information on the board.
4. Have students reread the passage thinking about what has already been listed, what needs to be added, and what should be deleted.
5. Students then suggest changes to the list, and revisions are made.
6. Then ask students to suggest categories for the information. List the categories and have students divide the items on the list into the categories, creating an outline.
7. Use the outline as the basis for a summary.

Lots of modeling and practice will help your students GRASP (Guided Reading and Summarizing Procedure) how to write a summary!

# CHOOSE A QUICK ONE

Title of Selection/ Book

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Author

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Team Members:

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## QUICK DRAW

Get a large piece of paper and work quickly to sketch a collage of scenes, symbols, characters and important words from the reading

- Make it colorful
- Plan how to present the quick draw to the class.

We plan to sketch \_\_\_\_\_

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## QUICK WRITE

Write a quick

- poem
- new ending
- new beginning
- different setting
- song to the tune of a song you know like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "If You're Happy and You Know It," or "This Old Man"

We plan to write \_\_\_\_\_

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## QUICK DRAMA

Choose a scene from the reading and act it out using one of the following formats:

- tableaux, or frozen scene, where nobody moves
- pantomime, with no talking
- act out a scene with talking
- interview a character

We will act out the scene where \_\_\_\_\_

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The type of quick drama we choose is

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## QUICK COMBO

Combine any of the quick responses using a quick draw, drama or write:

We will combine \_\_\_\_\_

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Here is our plan

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## **GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR SUMMARIES**

1. Read the passage.
  2. Record important words or phrases.
  3. Rate each key point.
  4. Pick the top three points.
  5. Use these three important points to write a one sentence summary of the passage.
  6. Underline the key points in your summary.
- (See graphic organizer on next page.)

## **THE MAD MINUTE**

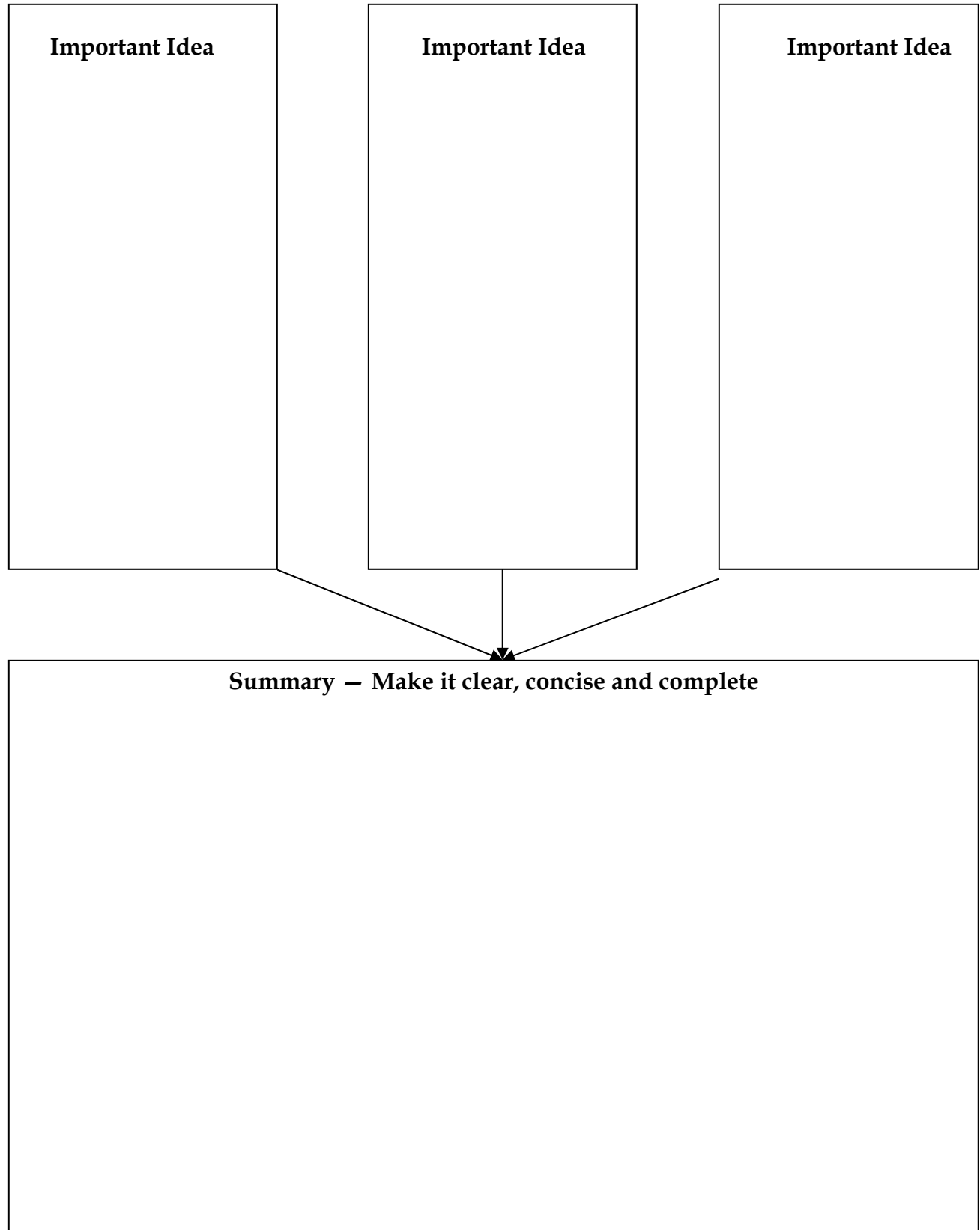
Divide the class into groups of four and ask them to either listen to a passage as the teacher reads or have the students read the passage.

1. Teacher or students read a passage.
2. Close the book or turn the passage over so students cannot refer to it.
3. Students have one minute to write down everything they remember.
4. Students then work in pairs to add information.
5. Two pairs work together, adding information to their summaries after listening to each other's. These four students should then write a retelling of the plot sequence and have an opportunity to share it with the rest of the class.

## **STORYBOARDS**

As students read a story, they write a sentence and draw a picture for each major event. Have students draw a grid with squares to equal the number of events being portrayed. (A sample is attached.)

# CREATING A SUMMARY



# STORYBOARD


# Summary Planning Sheet

**Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Complete the Following Steps:

- Skim the reading selection and begin to look for the main idea.**
- Underline the topic sentence for each paragraph in the text selection. (If there is not topic sentence, write one for the paragraph.)**
- Cross out unimportant information in the text selection.**
- Cross out information that is repeated.**
- Write what the text selection is about. Include only important information.**

## Checklist for a Summary

- My summary has a sentence that identifies what the text selection is about.
- My summary states the main ideas of the text selection.
- My summary does not include information that is not important.
- My summary has an ending.
- I try to spell words correctly without using any help.
- I use interesting words.
- My sentences and proper names begin with a capital letter.
- My sentences end with a period, an exclamation point, or a question mark.
- I have written my summary so the reader can read my print or cursive writing.



## RETELLING THE PLOT SEQUENCE

Students need to be able to tell the major events that take place in a piece of fiction. These events should be retold in sequential order. When helping students keep track of these major events in a plot sequence, one of the graphic organizers on the next pages may be helpful.

**Train Track** – list major events starting at the top and filling in each of the sections

**Film Frames** – list one major event in each section starting at the beginning and going in order to the end

**Circle Sequence** – this organizer works best for stories that start and end with the same situation (*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*). Start at the top and list events in order around the circle until getting back to the top.

**Story Maps** – fill in the title, setting, characters, problem, events and solution

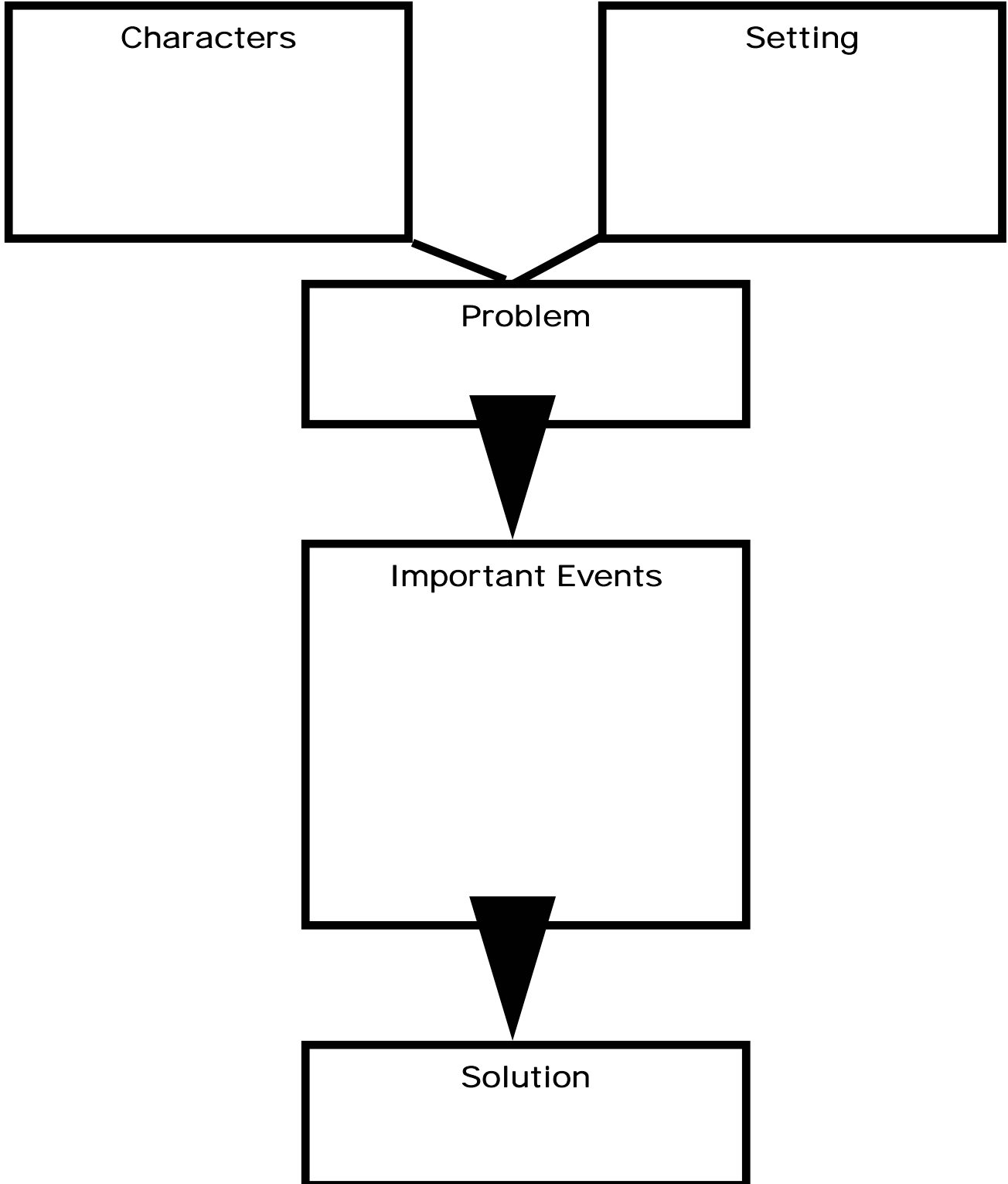
**Sequence Chain** – list major events in order from beginning to end

**Time Line** – use to track events for which specific times are given

## HERE'S THE QUESTION. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

Create a list of questions that can be answered by reading a nonfiction text. Have students race to find the answers. This will require that they skim and scan to quickly find the answers.

# STORY MAP



# Story Map Using Story

The form is a vertical sequence of six rectangular boxes, each with a label on the left side. The boxes are connected by downward-pointing arrows in the center. Two large, thick black arrows on the left and right sides point downwards, framing the central sequence. The labels are: Title, Setting, Characters, Problem, Events, and Solution.

**Title**

**Setting**

**Characters**

**Problem**

**Events**

**Solution**

# Event Map

**Setting/**

**Prob-**

**Event 1**

**Event 2**

**Event 3**

**Event 4**

**Solution/**

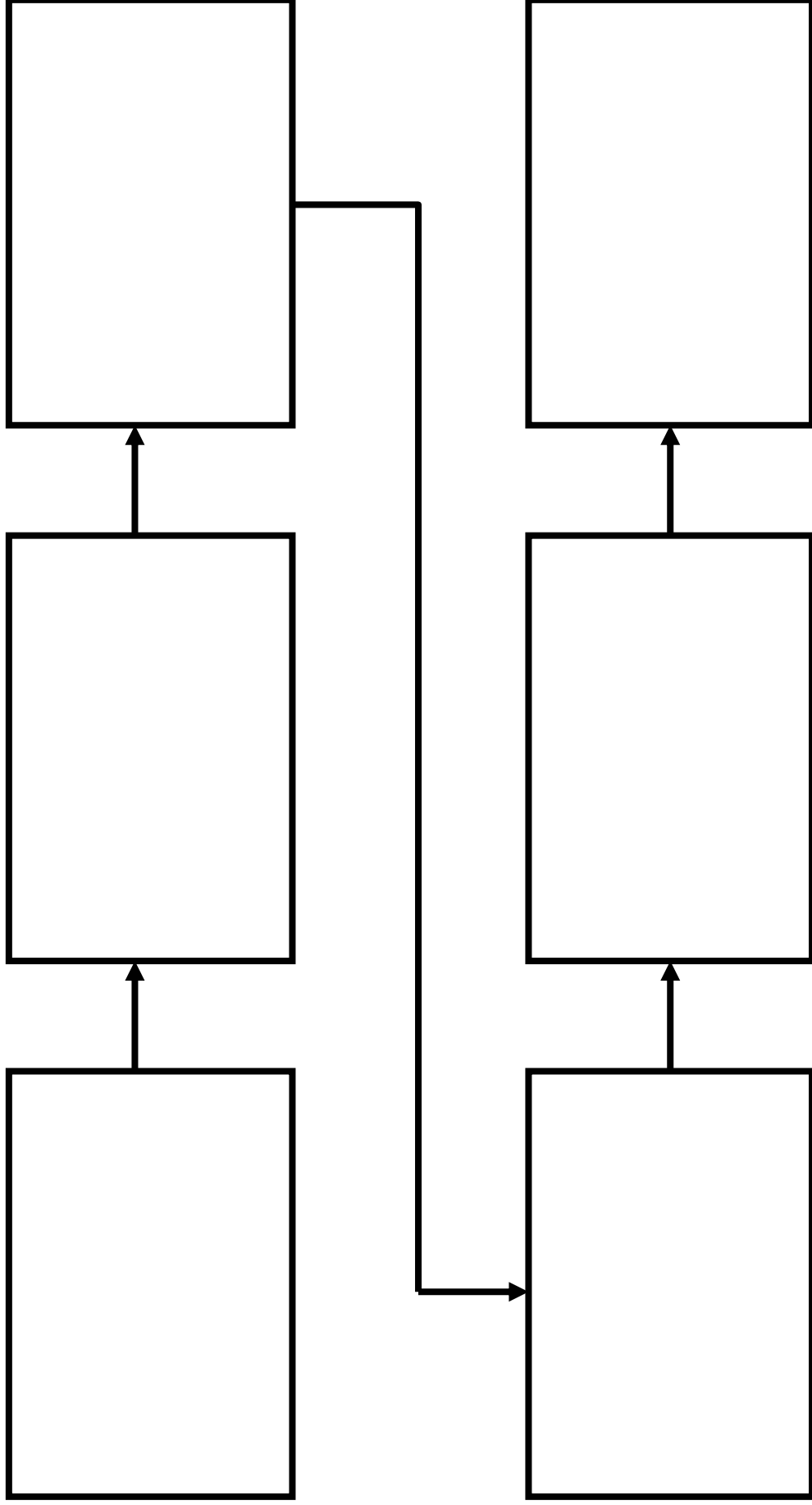
**Somebody**

**Wanted**

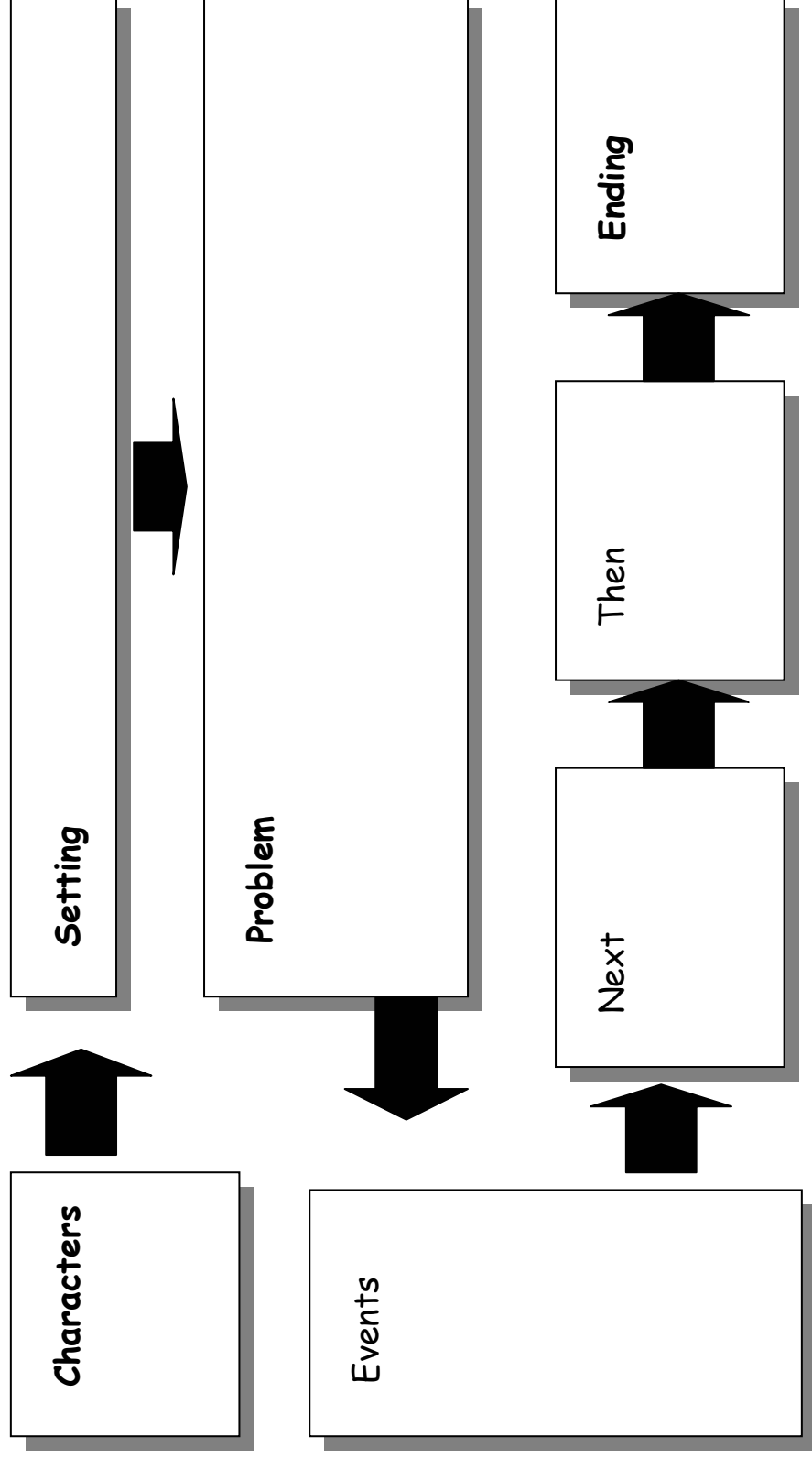
**But**

**So**

# Sequence Chain for \_\_\_\_\_



# Story Map



## **FINDING THE MAIN (OR CENTRAL) IDEA**

The essence of main idea is to be able to distinguish between general and specific. In order for students to make these distinctions, they must have a certain amount of general knowledge about the concept. It's important for students to have some minimal understanding of a topic they are reading about before asking them to determine the main idea and supporting details.

When introducing the concept of main idea, start by showing students some familiar objects such as knife, fork and spoon. Ask the students to name the category all of these items fit into. Move then to groups of objects representing two or more categories. Go back and forth between giving them the name of the category and having them sort the objects and showing them the sorted objects and asking them to determine the category.

When students are comfortable with this sorting, change from using the actual objects to pictures of the objects, going through the same activities outlined above. When presenting students with groups of objects and asking them to name the category, try using a multiple choice format, giving them an opportunity to practice selecting the best answer from a list of three possibilities. Another activity may be to give students the name of a category and ask them to draw several pictures that illustrate the category.

The next step is to move from the actual objects and pictures to words representing these objects. Start with nouns and move to more abstract concepts like size (small, medium, large) and speed (slow, fast, speedy). Eventually start using short phrases that are related to each other instead of single words (in the woods, in a tent, near a river). The words, phrases and category names can be written on cards, and the students can manipulate the cards to sort them.

## **COLOR CODED INFORMATION**

To help students find important information in a multi-paragraph text, give them a set of questions, each of which is color coded. Then in the text, put the same colored dot next to the paragraph where the answer can be found.

NOTE: This is not an activity to use for long periods of time with all students, because they will become dependent on the color clues and not learn to find the information on their own.



## **ONE MINUTE MAIN IDEA**

After reading a nonfiction selection, have students jot down what they think are the main ideas contained in the text. Then form groups of 2-3. Each group member has 1 minute to share his/her main idea(s), justifying his/her thinking with information from the text. After all of the group members have shared their main idea, each student independently writes a sentence or two stating the main idea. This can be altered from his/her initial idea if the group's discussion has caused the student to change his/her mind.

## **MAIN IDEA GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**

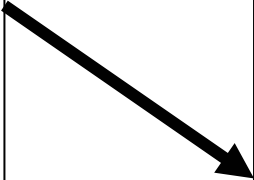
A variety of graphic organizers have been developed to help students identify the main idea and supporting details of a text. Samples are attached.

## **TEXT CODING**

Another way of helping students find the important points of what they are reading is to have them do text coding. The selection must be something that students may write on, or they can do the coding on post-it notes that can be removed. As they are reading, they are to look for important points and code them with one or more of the following:

- **I**            Important
- **L**            Learned something new
- **\***            Interesting
- **Aha**        Big idea surfaces

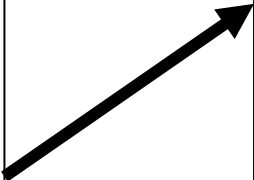
**Important Idea**



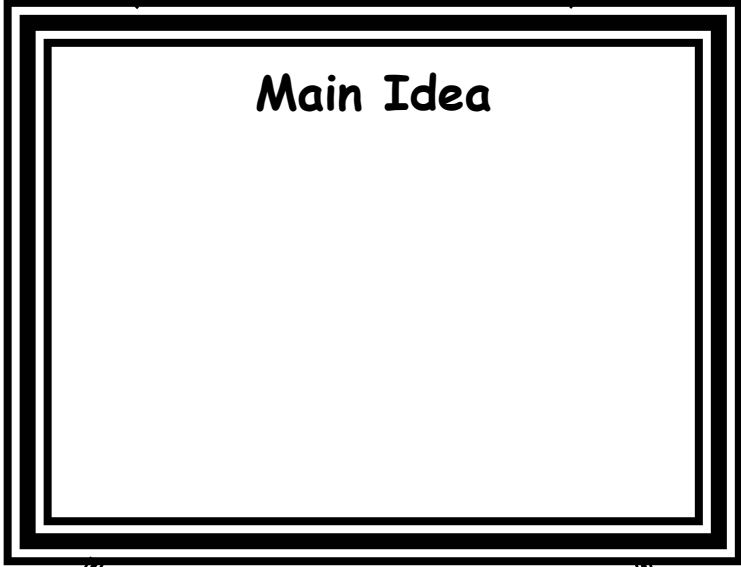
**Important Idea**



**Important Idea**



**Summary - Make it clear, concise and complete**

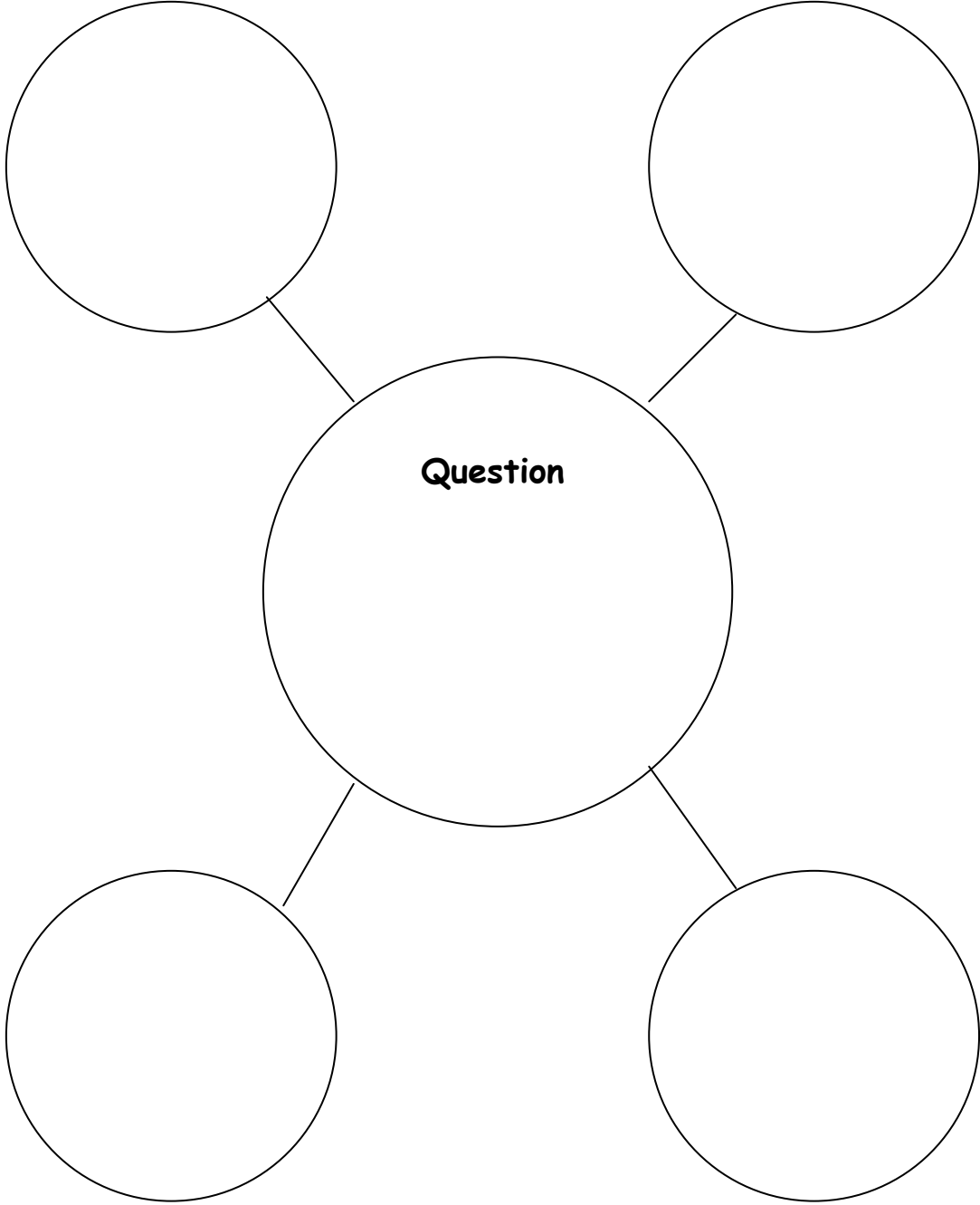


**Main Idea:**

**Detail:**

**Detail:**

**Detail:**

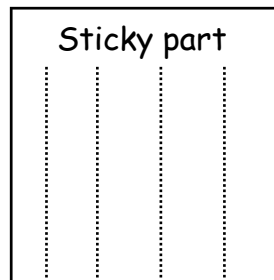


## V.I.P. VERY IMPORTANT POINTS

While students are reading a nonfiction text, have them look for very important points or main ideas. Before beginning to read, give each student a 3 x 3 post-it note. Instruct students to tear the note into 5 strips, leaving them all attached at the sticky part.

As students read the selection, they are to find 5 important points. When they decide something is important, they finish tearing the strip and stick it to that part of the selection.

Students may use all of their strips before getting to the end. If they find another important point, they will need to return to what they have marked and make some decisions about what is more important. They are free to move the strips around until they have exactly 5 VIPs.

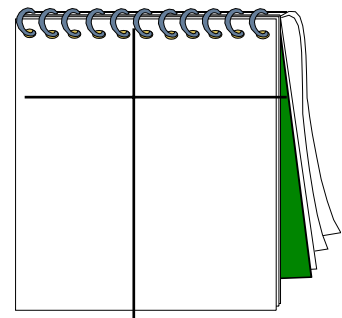


## TWO-COLUMN NOTES

Two-column notetaking can be a useful strategy to help students with many different skills. They simply divide a sheet of paper into two columns and put a heading at the top of each. As they are reading, they record information from the text into the appropriate column.

Column headings to reinforce students' work with main ideas and supporting details include the following:

- Topic/Details



# SPREADS

Have students take the sheet of paper and fold it in half 3 times. Students should then have a paper with 8 squares.

1. Label the first box **Scan** - for this box students will scan the pictures from the story and list 5 pictures or scenes from the story
2. Label the box next door **Predict** - in this box, from looking at the pictures that they scanned, students will predict what they think the story will be about
3. Label the next box **Read** - in this box, during reading, students will write any thoughts they had while reading the story
4. Label the next box **Evaluate** - in this box students will formulate 3 questions about the story
5. Label the next box **Authorize** - in this box students will write whether or not the story was written to entertain, inform, persuade, or compare and contrast.
6. Label the next box **Details** - in this box the students will write the major events that took place in the story
7. Label the next box **Summary** - in this box the students will write and answer Who? What? When? Where? Why?
8. Label the next box **Summary Statement**. Students will take the information written in box 7 and produce a summary statement about the story that was read

Thus you have the acronym **S.P.R.E.A.D.S.**

You may want to have this posted on a large poster to remind the students what goes where.