



Focused Lesson Plan

Summarize

Preparation



Learning Objective

Students will improve their understanding of a news article by learning to summarize it (strategy).

Brief Definition

Summarizing requires readers to determine what is important in a text, and then condense this information and put it in their own words. A summary includes the important information from a text and omits unimportant information.

Summarizing takes place after an entire text or section of text has been read.

Why use this lesson plan?

This lesson plan suggests an instructional sequence that *focuses* on summarizing. Although you and your students employ other strategies as you read, the purpose of this lesson plan is to intensify your students' awareness and understanding of this single strategy so they are prepared to use it in combination with other strategies when they read independently.

Summarizing helps students organize information, evaluate the importance of what they've read, and improves their memory of what they've read. It requires students to read and reread text and enables them to become independent readers. Summaries can be used as study guides, reading notes, plans for outlines, and conclusions. Students who are taught to summarize have improved comprehension.

Do Before Teaching

1. Read through the lesson plan.
2. Select a news article. Most articles will work well with this lesson plan; however, articles that strictly follow chronological sequence may be less effective than others.
3. Print a copy of the news article for each of your students.
4. Write the *Steps for Summarizing* on the board. (See below.)

Teaching Routine

Before Reading

Introduce Lesson

- Explain that in this lesson, students will summarize a news article and that summarizing will help them understand the article.
- Pass out printed copies of the news article.

Teacher Direct Instruction

- Explain what a summary is and why summarizing improves understanding.
- Point out the *Steps for Summarizing* on the board. Explain that you will use these steps to summarize the article after you have read it.
- With the class, preview the article by reading titles, headings, graphics, captions, and the first paragraph. Point out the highlighted vocabulary words and their definitions at the end of the article. This will activate students' prior knowledge and allow them to begin looking for the important ideas in the text.

Teacher Modeling

Show students that at this point, you are already beginning to identify important ideas in the text. Point out an important idea and write it on the board

Student Practice

Ask students to point out other important ideas that they can identify at this point. Write them on the board.

During Reading

Teacher Direct Instruction/Modeling

- Tell students that it is time to read the whole article. Remind them that you need to read the whole article before you can summarize it.
- Explain that when you read the article, you will
 - monitor your understanding of the important ideas
 - mark places in the article where you find important ideas
- Prompt them to do the same when they read and give them time to read the article.

Student Practice

Walk among students and observe their reading.

- Give positive reinforcement when students make notes while they read.
- Encourage students who are not making notes or who seem inattentive to find the important ideas in the text and to mark them.

After Reading

Teacher Direct Instruction/Modeling

- After students have read the entire article, identify one or two additional important ideas. Write these on the board.
- Point out that after reading the entire article, you might have changed your mind about some of the earlier suggestions.

Student Practice

- Ask students to suggest important ideas and write them on the board.
- Continue until students have identified all the important ideas in the text.

Teacher Direct Instruction

- Remind students that a summary is a brief restatement of the important ideas in a text using your own words.
- Tell students that you are going to write a summary of the news article using the *Steps for Summarizing*. Explain that the list they just completed is part of the first step, understanding important ideas.

Teacher Modeling

Look back at the article to find information to include in the summary.

- Find appropriate examples to use with one or more of the techniques.
- Remember that you may not be able to use all the suggested techniques with every text.
- As you use these techniques, begin writing the summary on the board.



Steps for Summarizing

1. Understand the important ideas in the news article.
2. Look back.
 - a. Collapse lists.
 - b. Use topic sentences.
 - c. Get rid of unnecessary detail.
 - d. Collapse paragraphs.
3. Rethink.
4. Double check.



Examples: Look Back

- Collapse lists: *“The article describes an ancient stone with pictures of ears of corn, fish, and insect. I will collapse this list into one word like ‘pictures’ or ‘symbols’ when I summarize the article.”*
- Get rid of unnecessary detail: *“In this article about summertime activities, the author mentions some fun winter activities. Because the article is not about the winter, I will leave these details out of the summary.”*

Student Practice

- Ask students to apply the techniques to add or remove information from the summary.
- Continue until you have written the first draft of a summary.

Teacher Modeling

Show students how you *rethink* the summary.

- Read through the summary
- Ask yourself questions about the level and amount of detail, the necessity of the detail, and whether all the important details are included.
- Make changes to the summary as you rethink it.



Examples: Rethink

- Level of detail: *“I describe all the features of the first MP3 player, but I only mention the color of the second MP3 player. Since both MP3 players are important in the summary, I should use the same amount of detail to describe both.”*
- Necessity of detail: *“Does this detail about current fashion help me understand the main idea? The main idea of the article is that junk food is causing health problems for children, so I think that I won’t use the fashion idea in my summary.”*

Student Practice

Ask students to continue rethinking the summary.

Teacher Modeling

Finally, show students how you *double check* the summary by scanning the article for missed ideas.

Student Practice

Ask students to continue double checking the summary. As students make suggestions, revise the summary.

Discuss Students' Application of Strategy

Ask students how summarizing helped them understand the text.

Apply Strategy to Future Reading

Ask students to bring a text to class that they can summarize. Plan time for students to independently apply the strategy to the texts that they have selected.