Summarizing and Note Taking

Two recommended instructional practices from Writing to Read research are summarizing and note taking. This resource has been created to assist educators with the recommendation stating “Have Students Write about the Texts They Read”.

Summarizing and note taking are skills that help students promote greater comprehension. By asking the students to look at a given subject, then to analyze it and finally, put it in their own words allows for a better grasp of the material. Research shows to do this, students are required to substitute, delete, and keep some things while being aware of the basic structure of the information that is presented.

(Marzano, Classroom Instruction That Works)

Summaries
- Benefit the reader because they offer a concise, general version of the original information.
- Prove that students have understood the general point of a text.
- Enables students to better comprehend the material.

Note Taking
- Provides a written record for review
- Forces students to pay attention (as long as it is not copying notes)
- Requires organization which involves active effort from the student
- Requires condensing and rephrasing which aid understanding

“Writing to Read” research identifies summarizing and note taking as instructional practices that increase reading comprehension.
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Have Students Write Summaries of a Text

Transforming a mental summary of text into writing requires additional thought about the essence of the material, and the permanence of writing creates an external record of this synopsis that can be readily critiqued and reworked. As a result, summary writing seems likely to improve comprehension of the material being summarized.

A summary is a restatement of someone else's words in your own words. There are many different kinds of summaries, and they vary according to the degree to which you interpret or analyze the source. Some are pages long, while others are just one or two sentences. However, for all types of summary, the writer is responsible for generally stating, in his or her own words, the main information or argument of another writer. Students whom are capable of effectively summarizing what was learned are able to learn to synthesize information, a higher-order thinking skill which includes analyzing information, identifying key concepts, and defining extraneous information.

Retelling

Retelling involves having students orally reconstruct a story that they have read. Retelling requires students to activate their knowledge of how stories work and apply it to the new reading. As part of retelling, students engage in ordering and summarizing information and in making inferences. The teacher can use retelling as a way to assess how well students comprehend a story, then use this information to help students develop a deeper understanding of what they have read. The teacher uses explicit instruction, explaining why retelling is useful, modeling the procedure, giving students opportunities to practice, and providing feedback. As students become better readers, the retellings should become more detailed.

Types of Retelling

Simple retelling
The student can:
- identify and retell the beginning, middle, and end of a story in order.
- describe the setting.
- identify the problem and the resolution of a problem.

More complete retelling
The student can:
- identify and retell events and facts in a sequence.
- make inferences to fill in missing information.
- identify and retell causes of actions or events and their effects.

Most complete retelling
The student can:
- identify and retell a sequence of actions or events.
- make inferences to account for events or actions.
- offer an evaluation of the story.

Retelling Yardstick
Using a yardstick, teachers can note the beginning and the end of a story at each end of the yardstick. Place Velcro along the yardstick so students can take cut outs of the story and “stick them” in the correct order in which the event occurred in the story onto the yardstick. These cut outs should reflect the main events of the story. The students can retell a story by placing the cut outs along the yardstick, or the teacher can provide the yardstick with cut outs already placed on it so students who need that support can have it.

Retelling Drawing
Give students a piece of paper that has been divided into four squares. Instruct students to draw a picture that tells what happened in the beginning of the story in the first box, a picture that tells what happened in the end in the last box, and then fill in the middle boxes with events from the middle of the story. Students can then use their illustrations to verbally retell the story to the teacher, a group of students, or an individual student. Grouping: small group, partner, or individual
Low-Battery Retell

After reading a story, list details/events from the story in sequential order. Tell students to pretend that they are talking to someone on their cell phone who needs to know about the story, but the battery is about to die any second. If they had to pick just a few things, from all the details/events listed in the story to hurry up and say before the phone died—what would be the most important things for them to let the other person on the phone know? Go through different options and discuss why some pieces of information would be more helpful than others for the other person to have as much of an understanding of the story possible.

Storytelling Glove

Using white garden gloves or food handler’s gloves, write storytelling elements on each finger of the glove: characters, setting, problem, events or plot, and solution. In the palm of the glove, place a heart titled the author’s message or lesson. Students wear the glove when retelling the story they have read. (Hoyt, 1999) Retell Checklist. Allow students to use the checklist to retell the events of a story to a partner, a volunteer, a parent, book buddy or other individual and use the checklist to personally reflect on their work. (Hoyt, 1999)


Prop Retellings

Visual prompts help children organize their thoughts when retelling a story. Props such as finger puppets and felt boards provide a concrete structure to frame the story. Make simple puppets by photocopying or drawing the main characters from a story and gluing them to craft sticks. You can also use these with a felt board—a small board covered in felt—using adhesive or Velcro. (Owocki, 1999)
**Paper Bag Reports**

Purpose: To show understanding of characters, setting, conflict and resolution by choosing symbols that represent significant events or characters in the book.

1. On the front of a lunch bag, students draw a scene from a book that they have read.
2. Include the title of the book, the author’s name and the student’s name.
3. On the back of the lunch bag, students write the names of the main characters and summarize the conflict and resolution.
4. Inside the lunch bag, students place objects that represent significant events in the book. They could also put in objects that represent aspects of the character’s personality.
5. Students share their Paper Bag Reports with classmates.

![Paper Bag Reports](image)

**Story Wheel**

Purpose: To help students practice sequencing skills, summarizing a story, visualizing story elements and recognizing story structure.

1. This activity can be completed when students have finished a reading assignment.
2. Ask students to list the important events in the story. Emphasize that the events should be from the beginning, middle, and end of the selection.
3. Next have the students narrow the list of events to the seven most important.
4. Provide students with blank story wheel.
5. Students write story title and author’s name in a wedge of the story wheel.
6. Students should then illustrate a story event in each of the story wheel wedges; so that when the story wheel is completed they have a summary of the story. Students could also include the written event in each of the story wheel wedges.
7. Have students share their story wheels with their classmates.

![Story Wheel](image)

Wisconsin: Into the Book Story Wheel Graphic Organizer

Summary Purpose

To artistically and orally summarize a piece of literature.

1. Read a piece of text, and have students portray their text summaries through art projects such as creating a collage, timeline, mobile, poster, or cartoon strip.
   Suggested teacher prompts:
   • What words from the story jump out at you to help make an artistic representation?
   • What was the focus of the reading selection?
   • Think of all the parts in the story and put them together as if you were going to tell another person about the story.
   • What details are most and least significant?
   • How can you use key ideas to condense the information in this story?
   • Which words helped you get the gist of the story?
   • What is important and essential to the text?
   • Tell me about some of the important ideas that struck you.

2. Have students present their artistic interpretations, along with an oral presentation, to the class.
   (Ellery, 2005)

Story Frames

Story frames are visual representations that focus students’ attention on the structure of a story and on how the content of the story fits its structure.

Students use story frames as a way to activate their background knowledge of the elements of story structure and thus to organize and learn new information from a story. Simple story frames require students to provide basic information about the sequence of events in a story:

The problem in the story is ______.
This is a problem because ______.
The problem is solved when ______.
In the end ______.

More complex frames might involve having students supply more detailed information by summarizing sequences of actions or events, or providing factual information to explain problems or motivations.

The procedure is introduced through explicit instruction, with the teacher first explaining why story frames are useful, then modeling when and where to use them, guiding students through practice opportunities, and providing corrective feedback along the way.

Information retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/article/strategies-promote-comprehension
Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal Teaching is the name for a teaching procedure that is best described as a dialogue between the teacher and students. “Reciprocal” means simply that each person involved in the dialogue acts in response to the others. The dialogue focuses on a segment of a text the group is reading and is structured by the use of four comprehension strategies:

- asking questions,
- clarifying difficult words and ideas,
- summarizing what has been read, and
- predicting what might come next.

The teacher first models and explains how to apply a comprehension strategy, then gradually turns over the activity to the students. As the students become more competent, the teacher requires their participation at increasingly more challenging levels.

Reciprocal Teaching provides students with opportunities to observe the value of applying strategies in their "real" reading. In addition, it allows the teacher to identify problems individual students might have in using strategies and to provide instruction that is geared to individual needs.  

(Fisher and Frey, 2004)

Additional Information:
http://www.adlit.org/strategies/19765/

Reciprocal Teaching for the Primary Grades
Video: ILA Video: The Fab Four by Lori Oczkus: Reciprocal Teaching https://vimeo.com/13516178
http://www.adlit.org/article/40008/
http://www.readingrockets.org/article/strategies-promote-comprehension

5-Step Summaries

1. Read only the subheadings of a chapter.
2. List the subheadings on paper.
3. Read the material.
4. Convert each subheading into a main-idea sentence.
5. For each main-idea sentence, add one to three sentences containing supporting details.

GRASP (Guided Reading and Summarizing Procedure)

This is a group summarizing strategy with five steps.

1. After the students have read a section of text, ask them to turn their books/text face down and to recall whatever they can from the material. Record their input in a list on the board/chart/screen.
2. Allow students to return to the text to find more information and make corrections.
   With student participation, rearrange the information into categories.
3. Help students write a topic sentence for each category and detail sentences that support it.
4. Engage students in revising the summary to make it more coherent.  
   (Wormeli, 2005)

Summary Writing of Shorter Text

Students are directly taught rules for how to write a summary of material read. This can involve teaching them how to write a summary of a paragraph using the following operations:

1. identify or select the main information
2. delete trivial information
3. delete redundant information
4. write a short synopsis of the main and supporting information for each paragraph

(Rinehart, Stahl and Erickson, 1986)
The GIST
(Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text)

1. Students read a brief text
2. Students write a single-sentence summary of the information (20 words or less)
3. When students are proficient, the teacher provides more extensive texts that have been marked with stopping points where students stop and write the GIST summaries they have been practicing
4. When the article is complete, the students combine the brief summaries and craft them into an overall summary

Get the Gist: Nonfiction
Read the article or section of the text.
Fill in the 5 Ws and H.

Who:
What:
When:
Where:
Why:
How:

Write a 20-word GIST summary based on the above information.

___________ _______________ _______________ _______________ _______________
___________ _______________ _______________ _______________ _______________
___________ _______________ _______________ _______________ _______________
___________ _______________ _______________ _______________ _______________

(Schuder, Clewell, & Jackson, 1989)

Summarizing a Longer Text
1. Create a skeleton outline starting with a thesis statement.
2. Generate main idea subheadings for each section of the text.
3. Add 2 or 3 important details for each main idea.
4. Convert outline into a written summary.

(Taylor and Beach, 1984)

Rule-Based Strategy
The strategy focuses on the concept of requiring students to follow a set of rules or steps that leads them to produce an organized summary. Before assigning the students to work on the strategy independently, take the time to make the strategy “come alive” for the students.
Demonstrate the steps with a model passage.
Steps:
1. Select a content-related passage. Read with students or assign to students.
2. Require students to go through the passage and delete trivial or unnecessary material.
3. Tell students to delete redundant material.
4. Remind students to substitute superordinate terms for lists (for example, substitute flowers for daisies, tulips, and roses).
5. Ask students to select or create a topic sentence.

(Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2005)
**Don’t Look Back**

One way to help students pick out important details, is to ask them to record only the information they remember. Suggest to students that they put away their notes and simply write down what they recall without looking back. Frequently, the most important information—especially the information that seemed most interesting to the students—is what they are able to recall and record. *Don’t Look Back* helps convince students that this process works and gives them the confidence to rely on their memory and their comprehension of material studied.

**Steps:**
1. Provide students with a reading selection.
2. Ask students to take notes of important details as they read. They can make notations on the text, with sticky flags, or in their notebooks.
3. When students have finished, direct them to turn over the paper or put aside the material and write what they remember...without looking back.
4. After they have listed the details they recall, ask students to create a paragraph using just the information they remember.
5. Provide time for students to share and compare their paragraphs. This process of sharing helps students review content while identifying additional important information that they may have missed in their summaries.

*(Jones, 2006)*

**One-Sentence Paraphrase (1 SP)**

This strategy encourages students to focus on learning rather than on specific details. 1 SP requires students to synthesize information and identify important learning.

**Steps:**
1. Model the process prior to assigning students work on individual 1 SP lessons.
2. Select a section of text that includes several paragraphs. Consider placing the sections on an overhead transparency or PowerPoint presentation so the class can work as a group on their first efforts.
3. Read the first paragraph with the class. Cover the paragraph. Ask students to write one sentence— and only one sentence—that reflects their understanding of the paragraph.
4. Share several sentences, looking for similarities and differences.
5. Read the next paragraph and continue the process.
6. After students feel comfortable with the process, have them work independently.

*(Lawwill, 1999)*

**One-Word Summaries**

One-Word Summaries get students in the habit of picking out important concepts and main ideas. After reading a lesson, students suggest one word that most clearly summarizes the lesson’s topic. Word choice is not what leads to learning in one-word summaries. Rather, student rationale for choosing certain words reinforces and even expands their learning.

**Steps:**
1. Following a day’s lesson (or reading), ask students to write one word that best summarizes the topic.
2. After identifying the word, each student should write a brief explanation (a sentence or two) that explains the word choice.
3. Students share their word choices and explanations.
4. Encourage students to support or refute the word choices.

*(Wormeli, 2005)*
Refine and Reduce

Another way to get students to extract essential information is to decrease the amount of space you allow students to use in order to convey the information. Refine and Reduce allows students to begin by condensing material into several paragraphs but requires them to pare down the information as they rewrite. As a result, students must analyze and synthesize content.

Steps:
1. After reading the material or completing a day’s lesson or even a unit, ask students to write a half-page summary explaining what they’ve learned or what they consider to be the most important information covered in the material.
2. Give students a set amount of time to write the summary or assign it as homework.
3. Ask student to review their half-page summary. As they review, students should Refine and Reduce. Direct students to write two paragraphs. Make sure the students understand that the two paragraphs still need to contain the most important information or the heart of the material covered.
4. Again, direct students to Refine and Reduce. Suggest that they write only one paragraph.
5. Direct students to write one concise sentence that clearly conveys the material studied.
6. At any point, stop to allow students to share material. Especially at the end of the process, give students time to discuss their one sentence summaries (Jones, 2006)

Magnet Summaries

Magnet Summaries help students expand on key terms or concepts from a reading. These “magnet” words help students organize information that becomes the basis for student created summaries.

1. The students read a passage and the teacher identifies magnet words from the passage.
2. The students write each magnet word in the center of an index card.
3. Details (words/phrases) for each magnet word are written around the index card.
4. Words/phrases are combined into a summary.

(Sejnost & Thiese. 2006)

Magnet Summary Example Paragraph

A strong summary reduces information from a piece of text to get at the crucial details. Good summary writers are able to strip away the extra verbiage and go straight to the heart of the matter. These writers retain the main ideas and the key words and phrases. As a result, they record the gist of an article in a brief and concise manner.
Jigsaw Summary
Jigsaw groups (adapted from Aronson, 1978) provide students a way to build summarizing habits while also pushing them to communicate meaningful information with other students. Students in one group become experts on a portion of the text and the experts then teach text to students that did not read the text.
1. Divide the chosen text into three to five sections. Plan to have the same number of students in each group as there are text sections.
2. Prepare an Expert Sheet or study guide that will help students become experts as they summarize a section of text. The sheet may have questions (open-ended), a task, and/or a graphic to fill in, and so on.
3. Use a random number or other method to create home groups. Then assign each student a letter that corresponds to his or her expert group and the text that the group will study.
4. Have students with the same letters get together in expert groups and read silently their assigned section. Agree upon the major points to share back with your home group.

Paragraph Shrinking
The Paragraph Shrinking strategy allows each student to take turns reading, while pausing and connecting the main points of each paragraph to the rest of the text as a whole. Students provide each other with feedback as a way to monitor comprehension.
1. Each member of the teacher-assigned pair takes turns being "Coach" and "Player." These pairs are changed regularly. All students have the opportunity to be "coaches" and "players."
   Note: It is important for teachers to monitor and support students as they work together.
2. Each student reads aloud until the predetermined stopping point set by the teacher. After each paragraph in the text, students stop to summarize the main points of the reading and note how the particular passage fits into the overall structure of the text.
3. If a "Player" gives a wrong answer, the "Coach" asks the "Player" to skim the paragraph again and try again a second time. Students could be asked to state the main idea as well as noting how the passage connects to the passage before it.

Additional Information: http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/paragraph_shrinking (Adapted from Fuchs & Fuchs, 2000)

Shrinking Notes
1. Have students fill a 3- x 5-inch sticky note or index card with important facts from the text/presentation/chart/graph, etc..
2. Narrow down those notes to the important notes that fit on a medium-size (approximately 3- x 3-inch) sticky note or card.
3. Narrow down those notes to the most important notes that will fit on a small (approximately 1- x 2-inch) sticky note or card.

Adapted from http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/03/lp322-02.shtml
Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then Strategy

The strategy “Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then” is used to help students understand plot elements such as conflicts and resolutions. It can be used as a “during reading” or “after reading” strategy. Students can complete a chart or graphic organizer that identifies the character, the goal of the character, what problems or conflicts that are being faced, and what the resolution of the conflict is.

1. Teacher selects a piece of text that has previously been read with the class or one with which the class is most familiar.
2. Teacher models the SWBST strategy on a chart of an overhead and uses the information to write a summary of the text.
3. Students analyze what makes it a summary and discuss as a whole group. Teacher begins a criteria chart that is posted for all to use.
4. Teacher then selects a piece of text to be read in a shared reading format.
5. Work together as a class to create a group summary, selecting and deleting details. Compare the work to the criteria chart to check for correctness.
6. Leave the work posted so that students have a model to refer to for future work.

Examples of Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somebody</th>
<th>Wanted</th>
<th>But</th>
<th>So</th>
<th>Then</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Big Bad Wolf</td>
<td>Pigs for dinner</td>
<td>They hid in the brick house.</td>
<td>He went hungry.</td>
<td>The pigs celebrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Frank</td>
<td>To hide from the Nazis</td>
<td>Someone turned her in</td>
<td>She died in a concentration camp.</td>
<td>Her story was shared with the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolf Hitler</td>
<td>To control all of Europe</td>
<td>The Allies fought against him</td>
<td>He killed himself when Germany was defeated.</td>
<td>The Allies won the war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Columbus</td>
<td>To sail to India to buy spices</td>
<td>He ran into the Caribbean Islands</td>
<td>He claimed the area for Spain</td>
<td>Europeans began to settle the “New World”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Edison</td>
<td>To invent the incandescent light bulb</td>
<td>His light bulb blackened (the Edison effect)</td>
<td>It later led to the electron tube</td>
<td>The electronics industry was born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Hawking</td>
<td>To be a mathematician</td>
<td>His father wanted him to be a chemist</td>
<td>He combined science and math to study black holes in the universe.</td>
<td>He became one of the most respected physicists in the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Macon, Bewell, and Vogt, 1991; Beer, 2003)

Story Arc Strategy

The Story Arc strategy focuses on summaries that maintain logical progression, and can also be used to emphasize how characters respond to situations and change over time. The Story Arc begins with a graphic organizer that students fill out inserting relevant details from the story. Then the students use that graphic organizer to actually create a summary of the story.

1. After reading aloud a short, narrative passage of text, the teacher models the Story Arc strategy using the arc graphic organizer. The teacher fills in the graphic organizer, and then works with the students to transfer the information from the graphic into a good summary.

2. The next day, after reading aloud a short, narrative passage of text, the teacher divides the students into small groups. The students work with chart paper to create a Story Arc graphic, and then to transfer the information from the graphic into a good summary. The students then present their summary to the class.

3. The next day, students are given simple leveled readers to read. Then they transfer the information from the short, narrative text into the graphic organizer, and finally into a summary.

Example of Story Arc Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters &amp; Setting</th>
<th>How does the story begin?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three little pigs and the Big Bad Wolf at the pig’s houses.</td>
<td>The three little pigs decide to build their houses out of straw, sticks, and bricks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s the Problem?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The wolf is hungry and he wants to eat the pigs. He blows down the house of straw, and he blows down the house of sticks. Those pigs run and hide in the house of bricks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What’s the Resolution?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The wolf can’t blow down the house of bricks. It’s too strong. The pigs are safe in the house of bricks, and they are very happy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:
Three little pigs decided to build houses. The first pig built his house of straw, the second built his house of sticks, and the third little pig built his house of bricks. A big, bad wolf came along, and he was hungry. He wanted to eat the little pigs. First he blew down the house of straw, and that pig ran to the house of sticks. Then the wolf blew down the house of sticks, and the two pigs ran to the house of bricks. The wolf tried to blow down the house of bricks, but it was too strong. The three little pigs were safe in the house of bricks. They danced around singing, “Who’s afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?”
B, M, E Strategy (Beginning, Middle, End)

The B, M, E strategy can help students generate a summary of a passage of text. In this case, teachers can modify the B, M, E to include the elements of the story like the Story Arc or Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then.

What was the setting?  
Who were the characters?  
What are they doing?

Beginning:

What was the problem?

Middle:

How was the problem solved?  
What lessons were learned?

End:

Beginning, Middle and End Elementary Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-E9V1D2OLkw

Nonfiction Summary Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who/What</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>How</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is most important?</td>
<td>Is most important about them?</td>
<td>Did this occur?</td>
<td>Did this occur?</td>
<td>Is the subject important?</td>
<td>Did this occur?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:


Sticky Note Summarizing

Independent Instructions – What to do:

- Everyone will need 3 of the Sticky Notes found on your desk/tables. You will use these to identify the three most important points made in the article/section/paragraph.
- Read the article on the next two pages in your handouts.
- As you read, identify the 3 most important points made in the article/section/paragraph. Place one Sticky Note beside each of the 3 main ideas.
- After reading, summarize each of the main ideas and write your summary on the corresponding Post-It Note. You will have only one important point per Sticky Note.

Cooperative Instructions – What to do:

With a Partner:

- Work with one other person at your table to compare and discuss the most important points each of you identified.
- Next, condense the 6 main ideas to the 3 you agree together are the most important points in the article. Set aside the extra Sticky Notes.

With a Group:

- Choose another team of partners to work with, becoming a group of 4.
- Compare and discuss the main ideas each team identified and the reasons for those choices.
- Once again, work together to condense the 6 main ideas into the 3 you agree together are the most important points in the article.

Extension Activities:

- Continue to re-group teams as many times as you feel is necessary to effectively summarize the information presented.
- Have groups share their main ideas with the class, and create a class list of most important points.
- Use the main ideas identified on the Sticky Notes to create a written summary of the article/section/paragraph. This could be done individually, in groups, or as a class.

Three Minute Pause

Explain to students that if they do not pause every few minutes to think about what they are hearing, viewing, or reading, then they are not retaining the information. New information may be stored in memory banks for a limited period, but much of it will be heard, seen, or experienced and then forgotten. Material can be saved to your memory if you pause every 10 or 15 minutes to think through or process the material.

1. Have students choose partners. Each pair decides who is Partner A and Partner B.
2. Students hear, view or read for about 10 minutes (or less if just beginning this practice).
3. Tell students to pause after 3 minutes.
4. During the pause, Partner A summarizes key points and Partner B comments on both familiar and confusing material. At the next pause, reverse these roles.

Variation: 10 minutes (reading)-3 minutes (pause to summarize)-1 minute (writing)
The teacher can add additional components such as one minute of writing about what the partner said.

Stop and Jot

1. **Stop**: Ask students to draw a rectangle on the page where they are taking notes for the day. This will serve as their “stop box.”
2. **Jot**: At least once during a lesson, stop and ask an important question for students to respond to in their “stop box.”
3. **Share**: Reconvene and ask volunteers to share one or two responses with the whole class, or model your own response. These boxes also help students later by serving as a study tool, highlighting important information about the topic.

**When to Use**

Use Stop and Jot at any point in the lesson to provide processing time and note-taking assistance for students:
- Before introducing new material to activate prior knowledge
- Before a new lesson to help assess what students already know
- Before a lesson to assist with planning instruction
- During the middle of a lesson to provide opportunity for students to make sense of the material
- During a lesson as a check for understanding
- During a lesson to provide time for students to create a written summary statement of auditory material
- After the lesson to provide closure, check understanding, and clarify any misunderstandings
- After a lesson to clarify key ideas or critical pieces of information
- After the lesson to allow students to make connections to previously learned material
- After a lesson to allow students to find personal relevance

**Variations**

**Jot-Pair-Share**
Similar to Think-Pair-Share, a student jots down his or her own thoughts, pairs with a partner to exchange ideas, and then partners share their ideas with the rest of the class.

**Quick Jot**
Students are given between 60 to 90 seconds to respond to a given question or statement posed by the teacher.

**Stop and Fill**
If it is important that key points or important words are noted as students listen to auditory materials or read written material as they work independently, a Stop and Jot sheet with blanks to be filled in will be the best way to capture key information.

**Group Jot**
After completing the original Stop and Jot activity, ask students to compare their jots with a small group of students. Students discuss their Jots and add information to their notes based on this discussion. Students may also be asked to present a summary of their thoughts to the class.

**Jot Survey**
Instead of drawing a Stop Box on their note taking paper, students write their Jots on sticky notes. Students then take their sticky note Jots and post them on posters around the room. Posters may be made for individual questions or topics based on the content being covered. The teacher then sends the students around the room in small groups to survey the jots written by their classmates making comments or additions to their notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bang, Molly. <em>Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A beautifully painted and thoughtful environmental message about the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural resources we all share and our urgent need to preserve them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blake, Robert J. <em>Togo</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although he is small, Leonhard Seppala's sled dog <strong>Togo</strong> displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courage and leadership to save the residents of Nome, Alaska.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooper, Elisha. <em>Ice Cream</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lively, detailed exploration of how ice cream is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fleming, Candace. <em>Boxes for Katje</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After World War II there is little left in Katje's town of Olst in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland. Her family, like most Dutch families, must patch their old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worn clothing and go without everyday things like soap and milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postman Kleinhoonte pedals his bicycle down Katje's street to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliver a mysterious box—a box from America!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fleming, Denise. <em>Buster</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buster's owner brought home a big box. The adorable pointy-nosed red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog hoped there would be juicy steaks or fancy cheeses in the box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But inside was something Buster did not want. And that something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was a cat named Betty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Davie, H., Goldin, A. <em>Ducks Don't Get Wet</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why don't ducks get wet? Ducks dip and dive, but they stay dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because they spread oil over their feathers to make them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waterproof. Learn more inside the book and get to know different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kinds of ducks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haas, Jessie. <em>Runaway Radish</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radish is a feisty pony—and the best teacher Judy has ever had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He teaches her how to ride, and how to go fast and far, and even</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to fall off. But most of all, he teaches her to be patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And when Judy outgrows him, he teaches Nina all the same things,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and most of all, how to be brave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harjo, Joy. <em>The Good Luck Cat</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some cats are good luck. You pet them and good things happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woogie is one of those cats. But as Woogie gets into one mishap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after another, everyone starts to worry. Can a good luck cat's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good luck run out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Markle, Sandra. <em>Creepy, Crawly Baby Bugs</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This book compares how different insects begin life, grow into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adulthood, and go off on their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muth, Jon J. <em>The Three Questions</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikolai knows that he wants to be the best person he can be, but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often he is unsure if he is doing the right thing. So he goes to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask Leo, the wise turtle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willey, Margaret. <em>Clever Beatrice</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What happens when a very little girl makes a bet with a very LARGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giant? What happens when a very little girl makes a bet with a very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LARGE giant?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have Students Write Notes About a Text

The act of taking written notes about text material should enhance comprehension. This writing practice involves sifting through a text to determine what is most relevant and transforming and reducing the substance of these ideas into written phrases or key words. Intentionally or unintentionally, note takers organize the abstracted material in some way, connecting one idea to another, while blending new information with their own knowledge, resulting in new understandings of texts.

Without proper instruction in note taking the students may just write down words or phrases word for word, without having student’s analysis or a good effect. Successful note takers summarize the meaning, which they are much more likely to retain this information later on. The students also have an advantage from using their notes as a credential of what they are learning. It is also a great way to study for an exam or test. Teachers should provide time for their students to review and refine their notes especially when it comes time to prepare for and exam, write a research paper, or the other summative assessments of learning.

(Marzano Pickering, 2005)
Note Taking

Note taking can be done as a whole group, small group, or individual activity. Students need to have note taking skills modeled and opportunities for practice with the skill in a whole group or small groups. After multiple practicing opportunities, most students will be able to take notes independently.

Poster/Sticky Note Large/Small Group Note Taking

- Before reading text aloud, teacher provides a purpose for listening.
  - Fiction: Characters, plot, etc...
  - Nonfiction: Penguins: what they eat, where they live, etc...
- Teacher reads aloud text.
- Teacher gives note card to write a note or draw a picture and place in appropriate area on poster.

Note Taking Comic Strips

- Fold or divide paper into sections.
- Have students draw a picture and write a brief caption in each section.
- Helps them learn to visualize and write in their own words.

Pocket Notes

- Write topic/title on a file folder.
- Attach library card pockets.
- Label each card with a sub-topic. Include a pocket that is labeled “Other Interesting Facts”.
- Take notes on index cards and place in pocket.

Note Taking Mentor Texts

Read one of the following books aloud. Each features notes as a part of the plot:

- *Bunny Cakes* by Rosemary Wells
  In this warmly engaging read aloud, Max (an emergent writer) and his sister, Ruby, write grocery lists. In the hilarious escapade, Max learns how to communicate on paper and then learns the key lesson that notes must be readable to the recipient!

- *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes
  Lily is unable to contain her excitement about her new purple plastic purse. Wise Mr. Slinger resolves the issue with a timely, well-worded note.

- *Maggie and the Pirate* by Ezra Jack Keats
  This simple, poignant story engages listeners with the tale of the disappearance of Maggie's pet. As the suspenseful attention.

1. Introduce and share the book as you would any read aloud. Encourage student predictions, questions and response to the story.
2. The next day, reread the book, or at least the section about writing notes. Discuss why the character wrote the notes and what effect the notes had.
3. Have the students help you copy the featured note onto chart paper and leave it prominently posted to be reread together and individually.
4. Repeat the process with the other books, if desired.
Note Taking in the Primary Classroom

Note taking begins in the primary grades. Young students can be taught note taking as a way to remember something they have heard, observed, or learned. For example, while watching a video on butterflies, pause the film to order to model writing down information you want to remember. Model invented spelling and use pictures for some ideas. In Kindergarten and first grade students, teachers should model note taking, but in grades two and three, students can do this activity on their own (as long as ample modeling has taken place). Notes can be taken during a video, interviewing a guest speaker, going on a field trip. The most important aspect of note taking is that students see the value of recording and remembering information for specific purposes. Those purposes may vary from classroom to classroom but should focus on helping students understand information. (Bright, 2002)

Note Taking from a Read Aloud

It is a challenge to teach students how to use the text as a reference and to cite without teaching them how to copy word for word. The following are two ideas.

1. Begin by teaching students to highlight only one or two words and then insert them into their own sentence. For example, if you’re reading a story about Storms, they could highlight the words, "Boom! Crash!" and then write a sentence using those words such as, "The boy was scared when the storm went "Boom! Crash!"

2. While reading a text, stop and write down a word on chart paper and illustrate the word. Do this several times throughout the reading of the text. Then have students reference the poster at their writing table to choose a word or words when they write their own sentences. They are not required to copy a sentence or even finish a sentence frame only use any word from the poster to write about what they learned.

Post Its: Little Notes for Big Discussions

1. Tell students that this strategy is beneficial because sometimes when we are reading, we have a thought and then move on and forget the thought.

2. This strategy helps students to record their thinking so that when it is time to discuss the text, they have evidence or are able to remember what it was that they were thinking when they read.

3. Explain to students that a Post-It is a way of holding on to that thinking that can be placed right in the book.

4. This strategy helps students feel prepared for the discussion and gives them a record of something that they might be able to share with the whole group.

Idea retrieved from Teaching Channel Video: 1:41
https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/enhance-student-note-taking

Concept Mapping

Important concepts from the text are placed in a circle and then students show how the concepts link together using words and lines. One way of teaching concept mapping is to first present a model of an expert concept map for a particular reading. After discussing this map, students then practice completing other expert maps that are incomplete, moving from more to less complete maps, until they can create their own map for material read. (Chang, Chen, and Sung, 2002)
Split Screen Notes

This strategy gives students an organizer to record what they have learned visually as well as with words. Listening to or reading text twice will show students that rereading is important in order to comprehend the text fully.

Procedure:

a. The teacher will read aloud or assign students to read an informational text silently.
b. Students will record notes and draw visual representations of the text.
c. The teacher will read aloud or assign students to read the informational text again.
d. Students will continue to add drawings or notes to their organizer.
e. Have the students meet in groups to discuss their drawings and notes.
f. Students can use the organizer to write a summary or report about the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiders</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Machines</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source/Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lever</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Brownlie, 1990)

Read-Cover-Remember-Write

When students are conducting research, being able to take notes is a necessary skill. Teaching students to take notes and not just copy down words is vital to getting students to write their own research in their own words. Remind students that we need to be able to remember what we have read to become experts on a topic. One way to do this is to pause and think before jotting down ideas.

Procedure:

1. Choose a short segment of text.
2. Read aloud the segment, cover it up with your hand and pause to think aloud what you learned. Tell students to not read more than their hand will cover at one time.
3. Jot down (chart paper, overhead, etc...) what you learned letting all students see your notes. Emphasize to students that you can’t remember everything so...
4. Reread the segment to see what information may have been forgotten.
5. Remind students that notes do not require complete sentences, correct spelling, etc. as the point is to quickly get their thinking down.
6. Follow steps #1 and #2 again.

Caution: Students may sometimes begin to ramble on and list every detail. Remind them to avoid writing complete sentences and smaller words/articles such as a, and or the. Some students may need the teacher to limit a note to a specific number of words. This strategy helps students avoid plagiarism.

(Hoyt, 2009)
Cornell Notes
Cornell Notes are an excellent tool to take focused notes, use inquiry to highlight the main ideas, and to summarize knowledge learned. The idea is to emphasize not just taking notes, but also the importance of refining and using the notes as a study aid. They were developed at Cornell University in the 1950s by a frustrated professor who wanted to help his students learn to retain information better.

- Start by training students one piece of the process at a time (learning to take good notes is a marathon, not a sprint)
- Practice the format
- Move onto what is written down
- Teach students common abbreviations for your content area or academic abbreviations (expl, comp/cont, etc)
- Discuss with your grade level/department ways to scaffold expectations appropriately for your students.

Scaffolding Ideas:
- When creating student notes or handouts, format them as Cornell Notes
- Have students generate the questions and write a summary over the notes provided
- Model parts of the process repeatedly that prove to be difficult for students
- Write questions and summaries as a class first after providing examples and explaining the process

Additional Ideas for Cornell Notes:
- Turn chapter questions into Cornell Notes, put dates in the left-hand column, or elements such as plot, setting, conflict for students to keep track of during note-taking
- Draw Thinking Maps on the right and generate critical thinking questions on the left. Summarize the learning at the bottom.
- Connect what is in the notes to what was on the test as a reflection over the efficiency of students’ notes.
- Encourage review of notes, questions, and summaries.

(Pauk, and Owens 2010) [1962]

Resources:
A variety of Resources for Note Taking and Summarizing
https://studyskillsforuniquelearners.wikispaces.com/Note+Taking+%26+Summarizing+Strategies

Video students can watch on writing Cornell Notes.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtW9lyE04OQ
Three Column Notes

An important element of reading comprehension is the ability to organize text. Organizing requires readers to focus on the major elements of a text and not only to decide what is important, but also what needs to be investigated further. Three-Column notes are an adaptation of the Cornell system. Information is grouped according to its type, and then arranged in columns. This reading strategy is designed to help students distinguish between details and evidence that support their claims and those that do not.

- In the first column, write the main subjects or topics from the text.
- In the second column, write significant details you learned from reading the text, from research or discussion.
- In the third column, jot down opinions, observations, thoughts, etc.

For additional information [http://www.readingquest.org/strat/column.html](http://www.readingquest.org/strat/column.html)

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. Modeling how to read a nonfiction article using a two-column note-taking technique can help students see this structure and determine the important ideas.

1. In modeling 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."
2. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic (or title of article or chapter): Ancient Rome</th>
<th>Main Idea</th>
<th>Notes (Important Details)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building and Technology</td>
<td>Excellent builders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roads—some Roman roads still around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridges and aqueducts to carry water—some still around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plumbing—underground sewers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mills to grind grain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markets and Sellers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Direct quote and page number**

From *The Kite Runner*, p. 49

"I loved wintertime in Kabul. I loved it for the soft pattering of snow against my window at night, for the way fresh snow crunched under my black rubber boots, for the warmth of the cast-iron stove as the wind screeched through the yards, the streets."

**I visualize (or: The image I see in my mind)—this is a good time to point out the similarity between the words *image* and *imagination*:**

I visualize a little boy looking out of his window as the snow is coming down. He is sitting there not saying anything but thinking about the way the snow would feel if he were out walking in it. I can feel the warmth of the cast-iron stove as I think about how it feels to come in out of the cold into a warm house. I can also think about the sound of the wind blowing outside.
Quick Writes

A quick write is a powerful instructional strategy. It is a short, first draft piece of writing that helps students get words onto paper. Quick writes can take 3 minutes initially and increase to no more than 5-7 minutes, several times a week. This strategy can help students build stamina for longer, more complex writing.

Procedure:
1. Choose a topic that is based on a text that has been read and share the topic with the students. Using a projector, whiteboard, or smart board, model the quick write for students.
2. Explain to the students that once the timer is set, the writer can’t stop writing during the quick write.
3. Set a timer for 3 minutes.
4. Begin writing but do not tell students what you are writing. They will stay engaged if they read as you write.
5. At least once, write “I can’t think of anything else to write, I can’t think of anything else...” then continue with your quick write. This will help students understand that writing is to continue even if they have difficulty thinking of something to write.
6. When the timer goes off, tell your students that you are allowed to finish the sentence you are writing. Finish the sentence.
7. Read aloud to students, crossing out and omitting “I can’t think of anything else to write”.
8. When it is time for the students to do this, give them 1 minute of think time before starting. Turn the timer away from the students so they are not watching the clock.
9. Ask volunteers to share their quick writes.

(Tompkins, 2002)

Freewrite/Freedraw (Variation of Quick Write)

Freewrite/Freedraw is a strategy to give students processing time to inspire new ideas. Students often need time to process information they are learning about or reading about, and this strategy provides that time. In addition, talking about what has been learned can also inspire additional ideas.

Procedure:
1. Give students a blank piece of paper.
2. Ask students to write/draw everything they can about the topic. Give students one to three minutes to do this.
3. When time is up, students are to turn to a partner and describe their drawing or read their writing.
4. Ask students to discuss with a partner one new thing to write or draw about the topic.
5. Provide time for students an opportunity to then add additional information to their original work.
6. This strategy is particularly helpful for students who benefit from talking about what they have learned in order to produce additional information.

(Adapted from Owocki, 2013)
Log Notes
Keeping a reading log allows students to easily track what they have read, how much they read, and any information they would like to remember. When students incorporate additional components, the record becomes a journal where they respond in a variety of ways to their reading.

Procedure:
1. The teacher ensures that students have a place to keep their log or journal entries, such as a notebook, binder, or notepad.
2. Students are encouraged to write or draw thoughts, personal reflections, questions, and descriptions about what they read or heard.
3. Teachers may provide a prompt to give students a purpose for writing/drawing their entries.

Adapted from and additional ideas: http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/top_teaching/2009/11/readers-notebook
**Sketch-to-Stretch**

Sketch-to-Stretch is an instructional strategy where students draw quick sketches to stretch their thinking and understanding of concepts. This technique can be used in a variety of ways.

**Procedure:**
1. Read or listen to a text or chunk of text.
2. Tell students to think about what they read. Think about questions and ideas they have about the text.
3. Students should sketch those ideas.

**Variations:**
- As a pre-reading activity, Sketch-to-Stretch is a strategy that can help students connect with prior knowledge. Students sketch ideas that show what they know about a topic featured in an upcoming selection.
- Invite students to write captions (words, phrases, or sentences) for sketches.
- When students work in small groups, Sketch-to-Stretch can be used to illustrate a series of events. For example, each person in a group sketches a different phase in the life cycle of a monarch butterfly.
- Put all the sketches in a booklet or on display so that students can examine all of them for new insights.
- If a text has few, none, or very poor illustrations, it may not be necessary to tell the readers to put away their texts before sketching. In fact, leaving the text open in such cases encourages readers to reread as they devise their sketches.
- With content materials, give readers copies of a passage minus the pictures, drawings, graphs. Then ask them to sketch. Readers can then compare their sketches with one another and the author.

(Harste, and Burke, 1988)
**Episodic Notes**

Students can use this strategy as a note-taking method for analyzing how a particular piece of text fits into the overall structure of a text. It asks them to identify distinct scenes or moments in the text and then explain how the scene fits into the overall structure and how it helps to develop the theme, setting or plot.

**Purpose: Identify most important moments**

- Determine the most crucial stages, scenes, or moments in the story or process.
- Students may need a stopping point provided in the text, video, read aloud, where they should draw and right. When students become proficient with this strategy, stopping points may not have to be given by the teacher. Students will sense a natural stopping point.
- Draw in the box what happens and what you “see” in the text. Be as specific as possible.
- Students can “title” the stage they have drawn next to “caption”. Underneath caption, students can describe their drawing.
- Remind students that the drawings are not works of art, but a quick sketch to capture the action and important details of the moment.
- Explain (in the notes section) what is happening and why it is important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You “See” in the Text</th>
<th>Caption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

Adapted from Jim Burke’s Episodic Note from Tools for Thought: [www.englishcompanion.com](http://www.englishcompanion.com)


**Pairs Check**

Students can exchange their notes after they are completed. Each student will then discuss one another’s answers, agreeing, disagreeing, adding to, or changing their answers according to the discussion. Each pair must decide upon one set of answers and evidence to be submitted to the teacher.

(Eggen and Kauchak, 2006)
Structured Note Taking
Structured Note Taking is a strategy that helps students become more effective note takers. Using graphic organizers specific to a particular text (see notes and link below), structured notes assist students in understanding the content of the reading. Teachers can acquaint them with the signal or cue words (see link below) that authors utilize in writing each of the structures. Structured notes are really helpful when students are faced with interpreting complex text structures. The notes give students a reading guide to use as they navigate through difficult text, and act as a model of how students should organize their ideas as they are reading.

Steps for Structured Notetaking
1. Select a section of text and determine the organizational pattern used to convey information in the text. Common organizational patterns are listed below.
2. Next, create a graphic organizer that follows this pattern, complete with focusing questions, and distribute it as a study guide. (Graphic organizer templates are offered below.)
3. Instruct students to read the chapter and take notes by recording the appropriate information in the graphic organizer sections.
   - Cause/Effect
   - Definition/Example
   - Proposition/Support/Listing
   - Comparison/Contrast
   - Problem/Solution
   - Concept/definition


Power Notes
Power Notes is similar to outlining but is much simpler for students because key features are assigned numbers and it is not necessary that two be the same in order to create an entry.

- Power Notes is a strategy that teaches students an efficient form of organizing information from an assigned text. This technique provides students a systematic way to look for relationships within material they are reading.
- Explain to students that Power Notes help visually display the differences between main ideas and supportive information in outline form.
- Clarify that main ideas or categories are assigned a power 1 rating. Details and examples are assigned power 2s, 3s, or 4s.
- Remind students that Power Notes gives students an opportunity to organize ideas and evaluate their writing. Power Notes can be integrated into a number of activities to help students perceive how information is related.

Power Notes are written using the following format:
- Power 1 = Main Idea of the information.
- Power 2 = Detail or supportive information for Power 1 above.
- Power 3 = Detail or supportive information for Power 2 above.
- Power 4 = Detail or supportive information for Power 3 above.

Strategy Guide for Power Notes can be found at: [http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development(strategy-guides/power-notes-30759.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development(strategy-guides/power-notes-30759.html)
Summary Notes
This strategy allows students to take notes during all three phases of reading: Before, During & After.

Before
1. Determine your purpose.
2. Preview the document.
3. Prepare to take notes.

During
4. Take notes to help you answer these questions:
   • Who is involved?
   • What events, ideas, or people does the author emphasize?
   • What are the causes?
   • What are the consequences or implications?
5. Establish criteria to determine what is important enough to include in the summary.
6. Evaluate information as you read to determine if it meets your criteria for importance.

After
7. Write your summary, which should:
   ▪ Identify the title, author, and topic in the first sentence.
   ▪ State the main idea in the second sentence.
   ▪ Be shorter than the original article
   ▪ Begin with a sentence that states the topic (see sample).
   ▪ Include a second sentence that states the author’s main idea.
   ▪ Include 3–5 sentences in which you explain—in your own words—the author’s point of view.
   ▪ Include one or two interesting quotations or details.
   ▪ Maintain the author’s meaning
   ▪ Organize the ideas in the order in which they appear in the article.
   ▪ Use transitions such as “according to” and the author’s name to show that you are summarizing someone else’s ideas.
   ▪ Include enough information so that someone who has not read the article will understand the ideas.

Visualizing Note Taking Strategies

Draw the Text
Using the actual words from the text as your guidelines, translate the text into a drawing to help you see what it looks like, what is happening.

Sensory Notes
Create a page with columns for the different senses (e.g., sounds, smells, etc.).
As you read, write down any sensory details the text includes. When finished reading the selection, use those details to write a description of the scene that will show you understand what you read and help you see what it looks like and thus better visualize what you read.
Students can also use this list of details to analyze the author’s style.
Character Cards

Taking notes about a character of a novel or story can help a student remember the character mentioned as well using a tangible item to add notes about the character as the story/novel/read aloud unfolds. Students can use the created cards to help them recall and keep track of the character while reading (or listening). The front of the card should have a stick figure drawn on it labeled with the character’s name. The student may draw props or clothing on the character to help them recall and identify specific details about the character they have uncovered while reading/listening. The back of the card can be used for students to place notes or key pieces of evidence (with page numbers) found in the text.

Character Card: Can be used with Reading Standard #3

RL.K.3 - With prompting and support, **identify characters**, settings, and major events in a story.
RL.1.3 - **Describe characters**, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
RL.2.3 - **Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges**.
RL.3.3 - **Describe characters in a story** (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
RL.4.3 - **Describe in depth a character**, setting, or event in a story or drama, **drawing on specific details in the text** (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
RL.5.3 - **Compare and contrast two or more characters**, settings, or events in a story or drama, **drawing on specific details in the text** (e.g., how characters interact).
RL.6.3 - Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as **how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution**.
RL.7.3 - Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., **how setting shapes the characters or plot**).
RL.8.3 - **Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama** propel the action, **reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision**.
RL.9-10.3 - **Analyze how complex characters** (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) **develop over the course of a text**, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
RL.11-12.3 - **Analyze how complex characters** (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) **develop over the course of a text**, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Vocabulary Picture Cards

Vocabulary picture cards are note taking devices for students to keep track of the vocabulary used in the text they are reading and/or listening to. Students must create the cards themselves and draw an image that defines the word. Students can use the cards as a reference when they encounter the vocabulary term.

The vocabulary picture cards may be created

- before reading/listening. (Words that must be pre taught as students cannot figure out the word by context.)
- during reading/listening. (These vocabulary picture cards may be completed by the students as they use context clues to determine their meaning. Tell students that they can determine the meaning of the word by reading the words/sentences before and after the unknown word.

Students can also add important words/phrases/images as they are reading. It is important that students create their own description with the image. As students continue reading/listening, they can add page numbers and/or sentences on the back of the card where the word was used again in the text.

Perform the Text

Whether role playing a scene or creating a tableau to represent a moment, students create a physical, visible performance that corresponds with the text. Student can also take notes or draw pictures of the performed text and then write a summary.
Recast the Text

Recasting a written text into a movie script or even a poem can sometimes help you better understand it by thinking about it and working with it in a different, more visual genre.

Sketchnoting or Visual Notetaking

Sketchnoting or visual notetaking is creating a personal visual story as one is listening to a speaker, watching a video or reading a text.

When reading together:

- Stop at predetermined places and briefly discuss how you could visualize that part of the story or passage.
- This provides an opportunity to gauge comprehension. But it’s also an opportunity to incorporate discussion etiquette, build on others’ ideas, and draw conclusions.
- Begin with student directed sketches.
- The teacher draws, but elicits input from students. Talk about the best way to encapsulate an event, a feeling, or other point of focus.
- Let students see the teacher make mistakes or draw imperfectly. This gives students the permission to do the same.

Caution:

This can be difficult for some students as it requires constructing a "big picture". Some students will be ready to sketch independently, so offer opportunities to do so after a group discussion. A one-minute time limit discourages perfection while encouraging an immediate and reflexive response. It’s crucial to let students know that craft matters far less than concept. Emphasize the essence of the sketch over artistic detail and, if you add an oral component, focus on the act of summarizing over perfect grammar.

Scaffolding Option:

Invite those who are struggling to copy your sketches. The act of copying may not be creative but it allows students the benefits of processing time and helps them gain confidence.

Video: Sketcho Frenzy: The Basics of Visual Note-taking
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY9KdRfNN9w

Digital Tools for Sketchnoting or Visual Notetaking
http://showwithmedia.com/visual-notetaking/

Education Week: Visual Notetaking in the Classroom

Adapted from Jim Burke’s Visualizing Strategies: Reading Is Seeing; jburke@englishcompanion.com
Annotation

Annotation is a powerful reading tool. Annotating means writing your ideas, thoughts and questions as you read. Students can annotate a text to leave tracks of their thinking so they can learn, understand and remember what they read. During the reading process, the reader marks the text at appropriate points, using symbols and/or words that serve as visual cues and help keep the reader focused on the text. Students can be encouraged to write questions, comments or to integrate “text codes”. Some codes could include:

- ? = question,
- * = important information,
- ?? = confusion,
- L = new learning,
- R = this reminds me, etc...

Students are encouraged to reread their annotated versions to add additional insights from the 1st read. If students are reading a text from a book, sticky notes could be used to record their thinking. Larger sticky notes can be cut down to tabs for codes as noted above. For a sample lesson plan from Read Write Think for grades 9-12, click here.

(Brown, 2007)

Collaborative Annotation
http://www.greececsd.org/district.cfm?subpage=937

Thinking Notes: Teaching Channel – Grades 9-12
https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-annotated-reading-strategy

Annotation Bookmarks
The Trash and Treasure Note-taking Technique

Relate note-taking to a pirate’s treasure map (show one if necessary). The map itself is like the article or chapter of a book containing information about the topic. The X on the map, which marks the exact location of the buried treasure, is the section of the text containing needed information, or an “answer” for specific questions defined in the task. A pirate must dig for the treasure chest, tossing aside dirt, weeds, and rocks (trash).

A researcher must dig to find words that help answer the questions (treasure words). He or she must “toss aside” unnecessary sentences, phrases, and words (trash words). Of course, these words are not trash to the original source, only to the researcher because they do not answer the questions defined in the task. Demonstrate this concept using an article or section of text. The students should each have a copy of the text so they can follow along and practice the technique.

1. Show a prepared question, including the underlined keywords and list of related words.
2. Scan the text until the appropriate heading is located.
3. Place a slash at the end of the first sentence and read it. Ask “Does this sentence answer the question?”
4. If the answer is no, tell the students that that sentence is “trash” to them. Go on to the next sentence, placing a slash at the end.
5. If the answer is yes, underline the first phrase and ask if that phrase answers the question. If the answer is no, underline the next phrase and repeat the question.
6. If the answer is yes, read that phrase word by word, asking which words are needed to answer the question these are treasure words. Circle those words, then write them in the appropriate place on the organizer the students are using. Those that do not answer the question are trash words. Continue phrase by phrase and word by word until coming to the end of the sentence. Count the words in the sentence and then count the treasure words. Students are very impressed when you say, “The sentence has 17 words and I only needed to write four of them. I don’t know about you, but I would rather write four than 17!”
7. Demonstrate the process again, allowing the students to practice, using copies of the article. Allow students to independently practice a few times before they begin their own research. The teacher should monitor each student’s work, re-teaching as necessary. Once students understand the concept of “trash-n-treasure” words, they begin to write fewer and fewer unnecessary words. Third, fourth, and fifth graders can begin to understand the concept of not copying every word, but mastery should not be required.

www.big6.com

(Eisenberg and Berkowitz. 1990)

Youtube Video: Trash and Treasure Note Taking Strategy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78YIrYqEmnQ
Kinesthetic Note-Taking Toolkit

Where to Begin

- Model, model, model how and why to use the tools in the basket.
- Have the entire class practice each tool in the basket.
- Provide baskets of tools close to students desks/tables so they can have quick access to the tools when needed. Teacher may need to assign certain tools for certain students who need them.
- Tools are not needed for students who comprehend and understand the text, but they should be taught how to use them so when text is tough, they have a possible tool.

Sticky Notes

A sticky note can be used to write or draw a main idea, summary, ask a question, or note what is confusing by each paragraph, section, table, chart, graph, picture, map or even groups of sentences. Sticky notes can also be placed on a piece of notebook paper and turned in like a regular assignment.

Index Cards

Index cards can be used as note taking cards to

- identify key vocabulary words with a visual and student friendly description
- identify characters and keep track of them while reading
- fold into the number of chunks assigned by the teacher to take notes about

Highlighters

Highlighting is a helpful tool that must be taught so students can highlight purposefully.

1. Read through the selection first.
2. Reread and begin to highlight main ideas and their supporting details.
3. Highlight only the facts which are important or the key vocabulary not the entire sentence.
4. After highlighting, look at what they have highlighted and summarize what they read.
5. Take what was highlighted and write a summary paragraph.

Teachers may wish to have students use various colors of highlighters to identify main ideas from details (e.g., use orange to represent main ideas and yellow to represent supporting details).

Adding Machine Tape

When students need to have a place to “keep their thinking” while reading, have them tear a piece of adding machine tape the length of the book they are reading, line it up next to the text and draw a line under each chunk. Students should write a summary, list the main idea or gist of the chunk, draw the main gist of the chunk or ask questions above the line.

Crayon Highlighting

A crayon can be used to underline -- or a highlighting marker to highlight -- information that supports a topic. The highlighted text provides a visual representation of the "notes" students might write. When students complete their highlighting, have them use the most important highlighted information to write in their own words a summary or paragraph on their assigned topic or theme.
Craft Sticks can be used to help students stay focused on the part of the text they are reading. Place the craft stick under the words being read and move along as reading.

Annotation Card/Bookmark

Students will use the cards/bookmarks as a guide for the symbols they can use to annotate a text to leave tracks of their thinking.

A “golden line” is a line of text that is especially meaningful, surprising, helpful or thought provoking. The line can be from a piece of student writing, textbook, novel, short story, play, movie, or primary source document, etc. As students read or write, they seek to find their own “golden line”. Once found, the golden line then provides an anchor for more writing and/or discussion.

- As students read their textbook, have them place a sticky note on their “golden line” explaining why they chose it. Put students into small groups to discuss their lines.
- Have students choose their “golden line”, write it on a piece of paper and then illustrate it.
- Have students post their “golden lines” on an educational, password protected threaded conversation site like Nicenet.org. Then have them respond to each other’s postings.

Chunking the Text for Note Taking

When faced with a full page of text, reading it can quickly become overwhelming for many students. Consider the reading level of the students and determine the appropriate length of chunked text to use with each student. Depending on students’ reading level, the lengths of chunks can vary.

- A struggling reader may work with phrases, rather than sentences
- Determine the appropriate length of chunks for each group of students.
- Model how to chunk text using a simple text.
- Guide students through the practice and evaluate their level of understanding prior to allowing them to chunk text on their own.
- Allow time (3-5 minutes) for students to chunk the text (if it is not already done for them). Students can work alone or with a partner and scaffolding teacher support when necessary.
- Provide students ample time to read their chunks (using the reading/decoding strategies) and paraphrase and rewrite the chunks in their own words.
- A stronger reader can often work with longer chunks. Students can rewrite “chunks” in their own words. Breaking up the text into smaller sections (or chunks) makes the page more manageable for students. Students need to process the new information and can only handle so much content before they begin processing it.

Below are some ways to chunk the text so students can use different strategies to process it.

- Draw a horizontal line between paragraphs to divide the page into smaller sections. Sticky notes or “wiki stix” can be used to divide sections in a textbook.
- At the beginning of the year, group the paragraphs into chunks before you hand out the assignment. In the directions you will say, “Chunk paragraphs, 1-3, 4-5, 6-8.” This can be differentiated by providing a different assignment to a student who needs the chunks to be smaller.
- The teacher must be careful to look over the paragraphs/sections to see where a natural chunk occurs. It is important to understand there is no right or wrong way to chunk a text, as long as you can justify why you grouped certain paragraphs together.
- Gradually throughout the year, teachers should increase the size of the chunk. When slowly increasing the size, students get acclimated to the size and do not realize they are reading a larger size chunk. This helps increase students ability to read longer passages.
References