

Making Jot Notes While Researching

A crucial step in researching is being able to make jot notes to record important information.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- a sample non-fiction text
- large sticky notes, index cards, or individual **Inquiry Notebooks**

Note: Retain the jot notes created in this lesson for use in the mini-lessons **Using Several Sources for Research** and **Organizing Jot Notes into an Outline**.

Grouping: whole class

Procedure:

1. Tell students that when researchers are gathering information from books, the Internet, and other sources, they write notes to keep track of the information they find.

2. Using a non-fiction text, model how to look for the big ideas in the text by looking at the headings and skimming through the text.

I'm trying to make sure that this text has the information that I'm looking for to answer my inquiry question, "How can we conserve natural resources for future generations?" There seem to be lots of good facts so I think we'll find some helpful information to answer our question.

3. Explain to students that you are going to make jot notes about the information you find.

I'm going to make jot notes as I read and later I'll organize the notes into an outline.

4. Skim the text and explain your thinking.

Skimming the text, I see that the subheadings provide big ideas. I'm going to write each of these down on a separate note and then add a few details about each one.

5. Model how to take notes, using bullets for big ideas and dashes for details. Remind students that each new note needs to begin on a new line. Notes should be in the students' own words and not copied from the text.

6. Read on and model how you would continue making notes. After you have finished, remind students to write the title of the text and the author (if applicable), and/or the Website URL so that you can properly credit the source later on.

Teaching Tip: Support students as needed as they make jot notes during their research. Ensure they understand the difference between a big idea and the supporting details. Repeat the activity several times watching for students who copy too much of the original text. See **Organizing Jot Notes into an Outline** for suggestions to help students organize their jot notes.