

Inquiry Mini-Lessons

Summarizing Key Information

It is essential, as young readers begin to tackle longer texts for research, that they can differentiate between important information and information that is not so vital to include when summarizing ideas.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- familiar Read Aloud text from *Inside a Story*, *Animals in Our Lives*, or *Water Works!*
- chart paper strips
- chart paper and markers

Grouping: whole class and small groups

Procedure:

Teaching Tip: Students will need extensive modelling and guided practice on this skill before they should be expected to do it on their own.

1. Prior to the lesson, write out five important and five less-important details from a familiar text.

2. Create a two-column chart with the words “Yes” and “No” on it.

3. Explain to students that they will be learning to summarize the key information in a text because, as they research, they will need to know what information is important to remember and what details can be left out.

When we gather information during our inquiry, we'll need to make notes about the information that is important to remember. We'll need to summarize the information and leave out details that are not necessary. We're researching the question "What makes a great story?" so let's look at some of important details in the story My Rows and Piles of Coins.

4. Show students one of the strips of paper with an important detail on it. Place it in the “Yes” column of the chart. Show two more strips of paper with important details on them. Place them in the “Yes” column.

I think in My Rows and Piles of Coins, these details are important in understanding the story. The boy decides to buy a red and blue bicycle. He's also been saving ten-cent coins that his mother has given him for helping out at the market.

5. Now show students one of the strips of paper with a less-important detail on it. Place it in the “No” column.

I don't think that school closing for the summer is that important to the story, so I can leave that detail out

6. Repeat this same activity with two more strips of less-important details, placing them in the “No” column.

7. Give students a few minutes to discuss with a partner why they think you put certain information in each column.
8. Show students another four strips (two containing important details and two containing less-important details) and have them predict in which column they each should go. Encourage students to provide a rationale for why a particular strip was placed in a particular column.
9. Once all of the strips have been placed in a column, discuss the sorting rule that was used for each column.
10. Look at each of the strips in the “Yes” column and highlight or underline the key or important information found on each strip.
11. On a subsequent day, you might consider taking a passage of text from another familiar text and work with students to highlight or underline the key information in each sentence.

Turn to a partner and talk about why we put certain information in the “Yes” column and some in the “No” column. Think about why the information in the “Yes” column is important.

Teaching Tip: If students are researching in small groups, pairs, or individually, ask them to go over their notes from the materials they used in their research and summarize the key information.