

Lesson 8: Summarizing Information

Newspaper Focus: News and Feature Stories

Background – Summarizing is one of the most difficult comprehension skills for students to develop. Student summaries are either too vague or a collection of many poorly organized details. The newspaper provides many excellent examples of summaries because news stories often are written in an “inverted pyramid” format. The headline provides the main idea and the lead paragraph answers most of the Five Ws: *who*, *what*, *where* and *when*; the *why* and/or *how* often appear further down in the story or must be inferred. Therefore, it is not appropriate to have students summarize news stories – the reporter has already done it in the lead. However, feature stories do not follow the inverted pyramid format and can be used to develop summaries.

Feature stories are stories about timely topics, but they are not necessarily late-breaking or hard news. The language of feature stories is less formal than that of news stories; it is more conversational. While feature stories contain the newspaper Five Ws, they often focus on one of the Ws. You will find feature stories about remarkable people (*who*); unusual collections, hobbies or special events (*what*); or fascinating places to visit (*where*).

Pre-K-2

A. PROCESS OF READING

2. Demonstrate an understanding that reading is a way to gain information about the world.
5. Figure out unknown words using a variety of strategies including rereading, context clues, and knowledge of word structures and letter-sound relationships.
7. Ask questions and give other responses after listening to presentations by the teacher or classmates.

B. LITERATURE AND CULTURE

1. Understand the basic plot of simple stories.

D. INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

1. Understand the main idea of simple expository information.

E. PROCESSES OF WRITING AND SPEAKING

2. Respond to stories orally and in writing.

H. RESEARCH-RELATED WRITING AND SPEAKING

3. Record and share information gathered.

3-4

B. LITERATURE AND CULTURE

3. Respond to speakers in a variety of ways (e.g., listening attentively, responding politely).
9. Recognize basic elements of plot and recount events, ideas, and important details from material read, heard, or viewed.

D. INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

1. Use information contained in chapter and section headings, topic sentences, and summary sentences to construct the main ideas.
3. Read for a variety of purposes (e.g., to answer specific questions, to form an opinion, to skim for information).
4. Summarize informational texts (e.g., identify the main idea or concept and the supporting detail).

E. PROCESSES OF WRITING AND SPEAKING

4. Report orally and summarize personal discoveries they have made as a result of reading and viewing.
6. Summarize central concepts from oral presentations.

H. RESEARCH-RELATED WRITING AND SPEAKING

1. Ask and seek answers to questions.