



Quick Summarizing Strategies to Use in the Classroom

| Written Summaries | Brief Description of the Strategy |
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| 3-2-1 | List: 3 main points (or 3 “somethings”), 2 controversial ideas (or two things I disagree with), and 1 question related to the key concept or learning |
| Ticket Out The Door/Exit Ticket | This can be the answer to any question about the day’s work that you pose. One “clever” way to pose the question is to ask them to answer “So What?” Other generic questions could be “What do I want to remember?,” “What was I supposed to learn from this lesson/reading/topic?,” “How could I communicate what I’ve learned to someone else?,” etc. |
| The Important Thing | Three important ideas/things from the lesson today are ---, ---, and ---, but the most important thing I learned today is ---. |
| Questions to the Teacher | List 3 (or any number) of questions you would still like clarified |
| Squares, Triangles, Circles | List 4 things that “square with my thinking”; 3 “angles” I disagree with (or 3 details to support --, or 3 things for which I need more information, 3 “different ways to look at the idea,” etc.); and 1 question “circling” in my head |
| Acrostics | Give students a key word/concept from the lesson. They must then write a detail or descriptor that starts with each of the letters of the key word/concept |
| Carousel Brainstorming | On chart paper around the room (or on paper that is passed around groups), ask small groups of students (3-4) to respond to a question or statement posed at the top of the paper. After a short period of time, student groups move on to another piece of chart paper/topic, and read what has been written about that topic and add to or respond to it. Key reminder: Ahead of time prepare the chart paper and the different topics, insuring that you have enough “stations” so that every group is at one station during each rotation. These charts and responses can be used as a lesson activator or review the next day. |
| \$2 Summaries | With each word worth 10 cents, write a \$2 summary of the learning from the lesson. This can be scaffolded by giving students specific words related to the learning that they must include in their summaries. This can be increased to any amount of money. |
| Gist | Students are given a grid of blanks (any number, depending on the age/level of the student and the level of complexity of the topic). They must fill each blank with a word or phrase helps capture the “gist” of the learning. |
| Headline Summaries | Similar to \$2 summaries, have students write a newspaper headline that gives the main points of the lesson. |
| Journals | If students keep journals for the course, have the summarizing activity be an entry in the journal. You might include a prompt to get them started. |
| RAFT | A writing “situation” where students choose <u>R</u> ole (from whose point of view), <u>A</u> udience (the specific reader to whom the piece is being written), <u>F</u> orm or <u>F</u> ormat (a letter, memo, list, email, etc.), <u>T</u> opic (specific subject of the writing) |
| K-W-L | If you started the lesson with a K-W-L (what I <u>K</u> now, what I <u>W</u> ant to know, what I <u>L</u> earned), then complete the L(earned) section as the summary. |
| Revisit Anticipation Guide | Ask students to go back to the anticipation guide from the beginning of the lesson and revise their answers. You can also ask them to justify the changes. |
| Vanity Tag/Bumper Sticker | Write a vanity tag for a car or a bumper sticker that describes the key ideas from the lesson. |
| Think-Pair-Write | Similar to Think-Pair-Share, students are given a topic/question, they brainstorm it with a partner, but then each student writes his/her own response. |
| Think-Write-Share | Similar to above but the sharing is oral. Students think about a question, write a response, then share with their partners. |
| Word Splash | Students are given a “splash” of the key words from the lesson. They must write a few meaningful sentences (summarize the learning) using these words. |
| Key Points Summary | Students make a list of bulleted key points of the learning from the lesson. |



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| Written Conversations | Each student begins the answer to a question or prompt posed by the teacher. Then after 1 or 2 minutes of writing, they exchange their papers (or pass them around). Then they spend 1-2 minutes responding to the writing/thinking on the paper they receive. Then they pass the paper the paper back (or on) and continue the process. Limit the time, using a timer or other signal, so that students are always left thinking they have more to say. |
| SQ3R | Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. While this is a teaching/reading strategy, the last part of it could constitute a summary at the end of the reading/lesson. See: http://www.studygs.net/texred2.htm |
| Changing Points of View | Ask students to do a quick-write about a topic related to the learning from lesson from a very specific point of view. (i.e., What would X say about --?) |
| Sample Test Questions | Ask students to write one or several possible test questions related to the learning of the lesson. These questions should not be yes/no or one-word answer questions. An easy way to do this is to use index cards or half-pieces of paper, and ask the student to write the question on one side and an acceptable, detailed answer on the other. These questions can be collected and then redistributed the next day and used as a “warm up” or “lesson activator.” |
| One-Sentence Summary | Summarize in one sentence the key point of the lesson (be specific about what to summarize—i.e., the importance of ---) |
| Paragraph Summary | Instead of writing a sentence, students expand. You can ask them to describe at least 3 reasons or support or details |
| Dear Student Letter | Write a letter to an absent student telling him/her --- (the point of the lesson, the steps in a process, the details learned through the lesson, etc.) A variation could be “Dear Teacher” or “Dear Citizen/Voter,” (depending on the purpose of the learning or the topic and the content area) |
| Aha! and Huh? | Write down 1 or 2 “ahas” (something you learned) and 1 or 2 “huhs” (things you still have questions about) |
| 6-Word Memoirs | In 6 words, what did you learn? (This is a variation of the Smith Magazine writing contest) For samples, see: http://sixwordmemoirs.aarpmagazine.org/ or http://www.smithmag.net/sixwords/ |
| Framed Paragraph | Do a paragraph skeleton or frame which students have to complete (for example: XX happened because of 3 important factors. The first is – and it caused ---. The second is – and it caused ---. Etc.) |
| Sentence Starters | Similar to framed paragraphs, start the sentence and have students finish it (for example: One thing I learned about X today is ---, or One important reason why --- is ---) |
| Inference Frame | Similar to a framed paragraph, this frame helps students draw inferences from what they’ve been reading/viewing/discussing by connecting that new information to their background knowledge to make inferences. “The part where . . . may mean that . . . because” |
| Inference Venn Diagram | A variation on the above, one side of the Venn has the TEXT information, the other side BACKGROUND INFORMATION, and the “combined,” middle section of the Venn is INFERENCES or conclusions drawn |
| Sequence or Timeline | List in order of importance or in chronological order (or steps) the concepts discussed in the lesson |
| Learning Logs | If students keep learning logs for the course, let the summarizing activity be an entry in the learning log (similar to journals) |
| Foldables | Have each student create a foldable that captures the key concepts of the lesson. |
| Text Transformation | Students transform a text into a different genre. Say they read a section in a science or social studies text. Then they could transform the information in the text to any of the following: 1) newspaper article, 2) flyer or advertisement, 3) letter from a specific viewpoint (see RAFT), 4) diary entry, 5) comic strip, etc. |



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| Frayer Model | Instead of using this “concept definer” graphic organizer at the beginning of a lesson, use it at the end See: http://toolsfordifferentiation.pbworks.com/Frayer-Model |
| What would X do? | Give students a situation related to the topic of or learning from the lesson. Then ask them to respond to the question, using a specific person (i.e., government official, historical figure, character, scientist, etc.). This is similar to “changing points of view” above. |
| Graphic Organizers | After a lesson, activity, discussion, etc., give students a graphic organizer and ask them to fill it out. |
| Plus/Minus/Intriguing | List things you agree with (plus), things you disagree with or question (minus), and something you have found intriguing. |
| Alphabet Game | Divide the alphabet among the class (or groups). Each student must think of one descriptor about the topic, lesson, etc. that begins with the letter she/she is assigned. |
| Concept of definition/word map | A great way to teach and reinforce a complicated topic. Focuses on 1) what the term is (definition), 2) what it’s like (properties, qualities), 3) examples See: http://www.readingquest.org/strat/cdmap.html |
| 5-3-1 (alone, pair, group) | Pose a question/topic. Students brainstorm 5 answers. Then they work in a pair to come up with the 3 best. Then the pair joins with another pair to come up with the 1 most important. |
| Sticky Notes | Give students sticky notes and a question or topic with which to respond. They post their notes on the board, door, wall, a chart (that can have divisions/pros/cons, etc.). |
| Give One-Get One | Pose a question/topic, etc. Students number paper to 5. They write 3 ideas/answers. Then they must talk to at least 2 more students to get 2 additional answers and to give 2 of theirs “away.” |
| Quick Writes | Pose a question or specific topic. Students are to “quick write” (write whatever comes to mind about the topic, without regards to written conventions—a brainstorming on paper) for a limited amount of time. Begin with short time periods 1-2 minutes, because students must write the entire time. |
| Cloze Activity | This can be a highly scaffolded writing, where students are given key terms/words from the lesson and a paragraph about the topic with blanks which they must fill in from the given list of terms. |
| Cause-Effect timeline or chart/ WHAT and WHY | Students make (or are given) a timeline, where above the line either has listed (or they must list) WHAT Happened. Underneath the events, they must describe WHY it happened. |
| Paragraph essay outline | Have student create just the outline of a essay. They must write the introduction and the topic sentences of the supporting paragraphs only. |
| 5 W’s Summary | Students list information that answers <u>Who</u> , <u>What</u> , <u>When</u> , <u>Where</u> , <u>Why</u> related to the learning from the lesson. |
| Analogies | Take a key idea from the lesson and turn it into an analogy: something is to something else as – is to -- |
| Alphabet Sequential Round Table | Give students a grid with each letter of the alphabet in a square. In a small group, students are given a defined time to begin filling in the grid with a word or phrase that starts with the letter in the grid and which relates to the key learning of the lesson. At the signal, the student passes the grid on (and receives another). With each successive pass, students must read the concepts/ideas on the grid they receive, and then continue the grid, adding (not repeating) new information to each grid. |
| Text Messages | Similar to a sentence summary, ask students to write a summary of the key learning in txt msg form. LOL. BTW |



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| Snowball Fights | Put a problem on the board or post a question. Ask students to answer it, but <u>not</u> to put their names on their papers. Then they wad up the paper and toss the “snowball” (either in a box or a to designated center spot). Then each student in the class gets one of the tossed snowballs. The teacher explains the problem/answers the question, etc., and asks students to look at the snowball they received. If their paper has a correct response, they should sit down. Then, while the teacher doesn’t know “who” doesn’t get it, he/she does know quickly “how many” don’t. |
| Error Analysis | Post a problem or a process on the board—with an error in the computation/writing/process, etc. Then with a partner or alone, students try to find out where the error or mistake is. If done individually, then students can pair up to compare their findings. |
| “How Do You . . .” | With any skill that is a process, as a review ask students individually or in pairs to write down the steps or process. |

| Non-written Summaries | Brief Description of the Strategy |
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| Read and Say Something | Have students read a portion of text and then “say something” to their partners in response to their reading. |
| Turn and Talk | In response to a summary prompt or question, direct students to “turn and talk” to a shoulder partner (very similar to Read and Say Something). |
| Think-Pair-Share | Pose a question to the group. Allow time for students to individually process their thinking in response to the question. Then ask them to discuss with their collaborative partners (pairs) and then share with the group or with another pair. |
| Numbered Heads Together | Have Collaborative Pairs “square” to form groups of 4. In each group, tell them to number themselves 1, 2, 3, and 4. Meanwhile, you assign the groups letters (A, B, C, etc.). Tell them to pull their group’s chairs close so they can “put their heads together.” Pose the 1 st question out loud. Then give them 2-3 minutes to quietly discuss the answer. When you signal time is up, everyone should be silent. Then randomly call a group letter and one number (e.g., A3 or C2 or D1, etc.) Whoever happens to be that number in the particular group – Person 3 in Group A, for example – must answer the question. If the question can be answered in more than one way, then you can call another letter and number to get additional responses. |
| Quick Talk | Establish a specified time frame (1-2 min., perhaps using a timer to signal when time is up). Then, tell students to engage in “quick talk” to summarize their thinking/learning at various intervals in the lesson. (Could also use the A talk for time, B talks for time.) |
| Expert Groups/Jigsaw | Form expert groups for each “chunk” of a segment of reading/learning. Allow time for each expert group to discuss and summarize its “chunk.” Then jigsaw the groups so that each new group has one member of each expert group. Direct each expert in the newly formed groups to summarize their “chunk” for their new group members. This is similar to Numbered Heads Together above. |
| Charades/ Improvisation/Role Play | Have students engage in dramatic creations that summarize the learning. |
| Freeze Frame | Similar to an improvisation, a small group of students create a tableau related to the reading/discussion/topic. Then the rest of the class must guess the topic/situation of the freeze frame or tableau. |



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| Bloom's Taxonomy Summary Cubes | Provide for students "cubes" with one of Bloom's levels of learning on each side. Ask each Collaborative Pair to roll the cube; one student in the pair then asks a question based on the level of learning rolled (analyze, evaluate, synthesize, etc.) of his/her partner about the learning. The other student gives a response. |
| Stand the Line (1 step in, 1 step back) | Put a piece of masking tape down the center of the classroom. Have students stand on either side of the tape, about two steps away. Pose a series of prompts for which students must take a stand. Direct students to take one step in/toward the line if they agree, or one step back from the line if they disagree. Randomly ask given students to share their thinking verbally. |
| Red Light, Green Light | In an open area of the classroom or hallway, engage students in the childhood game of Red Light, Green Light. When you turn as they freeze, ask one of the participants to respond to a summary question/prompt. If they are unable to do so, they must return to the starting line. The first student to reach you must summarize the overall specified learning or forfeit his "win" and start all over. |
| 25,000 Pyramid | In Collaborative Pairs, have students try to get their partners to guess key words and concepts on a pyramid projected the screen or distributed on handouts (Rounds I and II). Members of each pair sit back-to-back or side-to-side, with one facing the screen and the other's back to the screen. |
| Meet and Greet (or "going to a 'Math'—or other content-- party" or "Speed Dating") | As a review of important content vocabulary, each student is given a different vocabulary word (if there aren't enough to go around, there can be duplicates). Have students do a Frayer or Concept of Definition Map for their words. The teacher reviews how a person would introduce him or herself to a stranger in professional, polite conversation. The introductions in this "meet and greet" are actually the vocabulary terms being introduced and discussed. As in interpersonal conversation, the parties ask each other questions about themselves, etc. Then the students are to "go" to a Math party, or Computer party, or Econ party (whatever the content area/course is). At the party, they must "Meet and Greet" (which should be modeled ahead of time) others in the class, introducing themselves as their individual concepts/terms, and talking about themselves and asking each other questions. |
| Kinesthetic Tic Tac Toe | Draw or outline with masking tape a large tic tac toe grid on the floor (you will need to have each square about 3 X 3 or 4 X 4). Create a paper version of the grid with different summary prompts for the given content in each square. Distribute the paper Tic Tac Toe grids to students and tell them that when you give the signal (clapping hands, flicking lights, etc.), they are to step into a square with 1-2 other people and converse with each other in response to the prompt in that square on their paper. Each time they hear/see the signal, they should move to different blocks, with different people and respond to the prompts for those blocks. Repeat the process until students have had multiple opportunities to summarize their thinking/learning about the different aspects of the content. (Note: Be sure to establish where the top of the grid on the floor is in relation to the top of the paper version.) |
| Illustration/Drawing/Cartoon/Tattoo | Have students create an illustration, drawing, or cartoon to summarize their reading/learning. |
| Story Board | Give students a blank "story board" and ask them to create a non-linguistic summary of their learning, filling the blocks of the story board with stick figures, drawings, etc. in an appropriate sequence. |



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| Graffiti Wall/Gallery Walk | Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4, and give each group a sheet of poster paper and markers. Assign each group a different chunk of the learning to summarize in graffiti from (pictures, symbols, graphics). When groups have finished, display all the posters side by side along a wall of the classroom. Then have the groups do a “gallery walk” to view and discuss what they see on the “graffiti wall.” |
| Smiley Faces, Sad Faces or Red or Green Cards | As a really quick assessment of understanding, have the students make index cards with smiley faces on one side and sad faces on the other, or one side red and one side green. The teacher then can pose a question and have students quickly indicate by holding up or flashing the appropriate side of the card their understanding or their questions. |
| Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down | Similar to the objective of the Smiley Faces above, student just give a thumbs up or down sign, close to their chests, to indicate understanding or questions. |
| Following Directions | Have students guide their partners through specific steps or processes by giving detailed directions that the partner must follow explicitly. This might be modeled in a fun way using the old “making a peanut butter sandwich” game, where one person gives directions for making a peanut butter sandwich and the partner has to just the steps dictated. |
| Think Alouds | Utilizing a well-established, research-based instructional practice, model for students a think aloud yourself. Then, with a given problem, question, or passage, have students do think alouds in pairs, taking turns thinking aloud while the silent partner listens. |
| Key Concept Clothesline | Give each student of Collaborative Pair a piece of construction paper. Ask them to choose a key concept from their reading/learning and represent that visually with drawings, symbols, etc. Hang all of them with clothespins on a line in an area of the classroom. Encourage them use the “clothesline” as an interactive concept/word wall whenever they are asked to summarize. |

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