Title: Summarizing

The Basics

What? A strategy for determining the main ideas of a text

When? During and after students read a text

Why? Encourages students to focus on essential words and phrases of a text to develop understanding

Student Outcomes

This strategy helps students refine their understanding of texts to meet reading expectations and prepare for writing about texts.

How to Implement

1. Initially after reading a text, ask students to summarize the content of the text using various summarization strategies. Note: These strategies will vary according to the grade level of students.
2. Use the summary to determine whether students understand the main ideas of a text or whether they are missing the point of the text.
3. Follow the summary with additional readings of the text focused on deepening student understanding of the text.

Resources for Additional Information

- Handouts for summarizing: Cornell Notes, Somebody-Wanted-But-So, Informational Text Summary
- Outline of this strategy from ReadingRockets.org that includes downloadable templates
- Article from ReadQuest.org that includes a list information for the Sum It Up strategy
- Lesson plan using the GIST strategy
- Overview and downloadable template for Cornell Notes
- Examples of how to use in lessons: Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12