

## Sample After-Reading Activities

Learning to identify main ideas helps students comprehend narrative and expository texts.

One way to help young readers learn how to identify the main ideas of what they hear read aloud or what they read themselves is to ask:

- **Who (or what) is the story (paragraph, book) about?**
- **What is the most important thing about the who (or what)?**

So students will focus on the most important ideas rather than details, help them limit the number of words in the main idea.

For example, have students tell the main idea in 10 words or less. Students can count the words on their fingers.

You can introduce summarizing by showing students how to link the main ideas together to make a summary.

On a chart, write the main ideas of the text. Then, with your students, combine these ideas into a summary of that text.

**Main Idea + Main Idea + Main Idea = Summary**

Adapted from Klingner, J. K., & Vaughn, S. (1998). Using collaborative strategic reading. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 30(6), 32-37; Mathes, P. G., Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1995). Accommodating diversity through Peabody Classwide Peer Tutoring. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 31(1), 46-50.

## Literacy Lesson

### What's in a Story?

**Objective:** Students retell familiar stories.

**Materials:** Storybooks, chart paper

**Directions:**

- Reread a story.
- Ask questions about story elements such as setting, characters, and plot.
- Model how to ask questions about the story, including questions that need thoughtful answers, such as "Why...?", "What if...?", and "How...?"
- Provide explanations and clarifications and help students relate the story to personal experiences.
- Help students correctly sequence events and retell the story.

**Scaffolding Strategies:**

Begin with strategies that offer less support (e.g., ★) and increase support (e.g., ★★★★★) as needed to help each student successfully complete the task/activity.



Ask: "Can you tell me what the story is about?"

Have students predict what may happen next: "How will the boys build a tree-house?"

Ask students to explain: "Why did she call the police?"

Help students make connections to their own personal experiences: "Have you been to the lake?"

Encourage additional comments: "Who can tell us more about how tortillas are made?"



Ask for clarification when necessary: "Did the mouse build a nest outside or inside the house?"

Recast or restate comments to clarify what students mean: "You mean he was so happy that he hugged everyone, including his dog."

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Review story elements to help students retell the story in the correct sequence: "Jason and Tim are the characters. What happened after they won the contest?"

Help students sequence: "What happened in the first part of the story? How does the story end?"

Encourage students to use the illustrations to help them retell the story.

Explain one story element each day.

Review previously taught elements.

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Summarize the events to help students correctly sequence the story: "The bear was hunting for a place to spend the winter so he..."

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Use graphic organizers to help students learn story elements and retell stories.

Provide more than one possible response to help students remember what happened: "Did Mrs. Jones laugh or cry?"

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Ask specific questions about story elements: "What happens in the beginning of the story? Where does it happen? Who is the story about?"

Prompt students to ask questions when they don't know the answer: "Ask Larry what happened first."

State the answer to a question and ask students to echo the answer: "Taylor called the principal. Who did Taylor call?"

Adapted from O'Connor, R. E., Notari-Syverson, A., & Vadasy, P. F. (1998). *Ladders to literacy: A kindergarten activity book*. Baltimore: Brookes.