



## Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Have Students Write Summaries About Texts



***Writing to Read, a report from the Carnegie Foundation, identifies writing summaries as an instructional practice that increases reading comprehension.***



“Transforming a mental summary of text into writing requires additional thought about the essence of the material, and the permanence of writing creates an external record of this synopsis that can be readily critiqued and reworked. As a result, summary writing seems likely to improve comprehension of the material being summarized.”

*Writing to Read*

## Retelling

Retelling involves having students orally reconstruct a story that they heard or read. Retelling requires students to activate their knowledge of how stories work and apply it to the new reading. As part of retelling, students engage in ordering and summarizing information and in making inferences. The teacher can use retelling as a way to assess how well students comprehend a story, then use this information to help students develop a deeper understanding of what they have read.



The teacher uses explicit instruction, explaining why retelling is useful, modeling the procedure, giving students opportunities to practice, and providing feedback. As students become better readers, the retellings should become more detailed

## Types of Retelling

### *Simple retelling*

The student can:

- identify and retell the beginning, middle, and end of a story in order.
- describe the setting.
- identify the problem and the resolution of a problem.

### *More complete retelling*

The student can:

- identify and retell events and facts in a sequence.
- make inferences to fill in missing information.
- identify and retell causes of actions or events and their effects.

### *Most complete retelling*

The student can:

- identify and retell a sequence of actions or events.
- make inferences to account for events or actions.
- offer an evaluation of the story.

## Retelling Rope

Tell students that a retelling rope is a special tool to help them retell stories that they have read or heard. Showing a retelling rope, retell a familiar story that you have read aloud to the class, touching each object, picture or disc as you recall story elements and important details. For example, when you mention the characters, touch the characters on the rope, when naming the events, touch each event picture/disc and include first..., then..., at the end..., or last....



## Retelling Yardstick

Using a yardstick, teachers can note the beginning and the end of a story at each end of the yardstick. Place Velcro along the yardstick so students can take cut outs of the story and “stick them” in the correct order in which the event occurred in the story onto the yardstick. These cut outs should reflect the main events of the story. The students can retell a story by placing the cut outs along the yardstick, or the teacher can provide the yardstick with cut outs already placed on it so students who need that support can have it.



## Retelling Drawing

Give students a piece of paper that has been divided into four squares. Instruct students to draw a picture that tells what happened in the beginning of the story in the first box, a picture that tells what happened in the end in the last box, and then fill in the middle boxes with events from the middle of the story. Students can then use their illustrations to verbally retell the story to the teacher, a group of students, or an individual student. Grouping: small group, partner, or individual.

## Low-Battery Retell

After reading a story, list details/events from the story in sequential order. Tell students to pretend that they are talking to someone on their cell phone who needs to know about the story, but the battery is about to die any second. If they had to pick just a few things, from all the details/events listed in the story to hurry up and say before the phone died—what would be the most important things for them to let the other person on the phone know? Go through different options and discuss why some pieces of information would be more helpful than others for the other person to have as much of an understanding of the story possible.



## Storytelling Glove

Using white garden gloves or food handler's gloves, write storytelling elements on each finger of the glove: characters, setting, problem, events or plot, and solution. In the palm of the glove, place a heart titled the author's message or lesson. Students wear the glove when retelling the story they have read. (Hoyt, 1999) Retell Checklist. Allow students to use the checklist to retell the events of a story to a partner, a volunteer, a parent, book buddy or other individual and use the checklist to personally reflect on their work. (Hoyt, 1999) [http://www.teachertreasures.com/uploads/Story\\_gloves1.pdf](http://www.teachertreasures.com/uploads/Story_gloves1.pdf)



## Prop Retellings

Visual prompts help children organize their thoughts when retelling a story. Props such as finger puppets and felt boards provide a concrete structure to frame the story. Make simple puppets by photocopying or drawing the main characters from a story and gluing them to craft sticks. You can also use these with a felt board—a small board covered in felt—using adhesive or Velcro. (Owocki, 1999)



## Paper Bag Reports

Purpose: To show understanding of characters, setting, conflict and resolution by choosing symbols that represent significant events or characters in the book.

1. On the front of a lunch bag, students draw a scene from a book that they have read.
2. Include the title of the book, the author's name and the student's name.
3. On the back of the lunch bag, students write the names of the main characters and summarize the conflict and resolution.
4. Inside the lunch bag, students place objects that represent significant events in the book. They could also put in objects that represent aspects of the character's personality.
5. Students share their Paper Bag Reports with classmates.



## Story Wheel

Purpose: To help students practice sequencing skills, summarizing a story, visualizing story elements and recognizing story structure.

1. This activity can be completed when students have finished a reading assignment.
2. Ask students to list the important events in the story. Emphasize that the events should be from the beginning, middle, and end of the selection.
3. Next have the students narrow the list of events to the seven most important.
4. Provide students with blank story wheel.
5. Students write story title and author's name in a wedge of the story wheel.
6. Students should then illustrate a story event in each of the story wheel wedges; so that when the story wheel is completed they have a summary of the story. Students could also include the written event in each of the story wheel wedges.
7. Have students share their story wheels with their classmates.

Wisconsin: Into the Book Story Wheel Graphic Organizer

[http://reading.ecb.org/teacher/pdfs/lessons/vis\\_lp\\_StoryWheel.pdf](http://reading.ecb.org/teacher/pdfs/lessons/vis_lp_StoryWheel.pdf)



## Story Frames

Story frames are visual representations that focus students' attention on the structure of a story and on how the content of the story fits its structure.

Students use story frames as a way to activate their background knowledge of the elements of story structure and thus to organize and learn new information from a story. Simple story frames require students to provide basic information about the sequence of events in a story:

**The problem in the story is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**This is a problem because \_\_\_\_\_.**

**The problem is solved when \_\_\_\_\_.**

**In the end \_\_\_\_\_.**

## One-Sentence Paraphrase (1 SP)

This strategy encourages students to focus on learning rather than on specific details. 1 SP requires students to synthesize information and identify important learning.

Steps:

1. Model the process prior to assigning students work on individual 1 SP lessons.
2. Select a section of text that includes several paragraphs. Consider placing the sections on an overhead transparency or PowerPoint presentation so the class can work as a group on their first efforts.
3. Read the first paragraph with the class. Cover the paragraph. Ask students to write one sentence—and only one sentence—that reflects their understanding of the paragraph.
4. Share several sentences, looking for similarities and differences.
5. Read the next paragraph and continue the process.
6. After students feel comfortable with the process, have them work independently. (Lawwill, 1999)

## Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then Strategy

The strategy “Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then” is used to help students understand plot elements such as conflicts and resolutions. It can be used as a “during reading” or “after reading” strategy. Student can complete a chart or graphic organizer that identifies the character, the goal of the character, what problems or conflicts that are being faced, and what the resolution of the conflict is.

1. Teacher selects a piece of text that has previously been read with the class or one with which the class is most familiar.
2. Teacher models the SWBST strategy on a chart of an overhead and uses the information to write a summary of the text.
3. Students analyze what makes it a summary and discuss as a whole group. Teacher begins a criteria chart that is posted for all to use.
4. Teacher then selects a piece of text to be read in a shared reading format.
5. Work together as a class to create a group summary, selecting and deleting details. Compare the work to the criteria chart to check for correctness.
6. Leave the work posted so that students have a model to refer to for future work.

Example of Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then

Somebody	Wanted	But	So	Then
The Big Bad Wolf	Pigs for dinner	They hid in the brick house.	He went hungry.	The pigs celebrated.

(Macon, Bewell, and Vogt, 1991; Beer, 2003)



## B, M, E Strategy (Beginning, Middle, End)

The B, M, E strategy can help students generate a summary of a passage of text. In this case, teachers can modify the B, M, E to include the elements of the story like the Story Arc or Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then.

What was the setting?  
Who were the characters?  
What are they doing?

**Beginning:**

What was the problem?

**Middle:**

How was the problem solved?  
What lessons were learned?

**End:**

*Beginning, Middle and End Elementary Video:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-E9V1D2OLkw>

## Nonfiction Summary Chart

Who/What	What	Where	When	Why	How
Is most important? ←	Is most important about them?	Did this occur?	Did this occur?	Is the subject important?	Did this occur?

Summary:

## Three Minute Pause

Explain to students that if they do not pause every few minutes to think about what they are hearing, viewing, or reading, then they are not retaining the information. New information may be stored in memory banks for a limited period, but much of it will be heard, seen, or experienced and then forgotten. Material can be saved to your memory if you pause every 10 or 15 minutes to think through or process the material.

1. Have students choose partners. Each pair decides who is Partner A and Partner B.
2. Students hear, view or read for about 10 minutes (or less if just beginning this practice).
3. Tell students to pause after 3 minutes.
4. During the pause, Partner A summarizes key points and Partner B comments on both familiar and confusing material. At the next pause, reverse these roles.



Variation: 10 minutes (reading)-3 minutes (pause to summarize)-1 minute (writing/drawing). The teacher can add additional components such as one minute of writing about what the partner said.

(Wiggins and McTighe, 20

## Stop and Jot

1. **Stop:** Ask students to draw a rectangle on the page where they are taking notes for the day. This will serve as their “stop box.”
2. **Jot:** At least once during a lesson, stop and ask an important question for students to respond to in their “stop box.”
3. **Share:** Reconvene and ask volunteers to share one or two responses with the whole class, or model your own response. These boxes also help students later by serving as a study tool, highlighting important information about the topic.

### When to Use

Use Stop and Jot at any point in the lesson to provide processing time and note-taking assistance for students:

- Before introducing new material to activate prior knowledge
- Before a new lesson to help assess what students already know
- Before a lesson to assist with planning instruction
- During the middle of a lesson to provide opportunity for students to make sense of the material
- During a lesson as a check for understanding
- During a lesson to provide time for students to create a written summary statement of auditory material
- After the lesson to provide closure, check understanding, and clarify any misunderstandings
- After a lesson to clarify key ideas or critical pieces of information
- After the lesson to allow students to make connections to previously learned material
- After a lesson to allow students to find personal relevance

### Variations

#### Jot-Pair-Share

Similar to *Think-Pair-Share*, a student jots down his or her own thoughts, pairs with a partner to exchange ideas, and then partners share their ideas with the rest of the class.

#### Quick Jot

Students are given between 60 to 90 seconds to respond to a given question or statement posed by the teacher.

#### Stop and Fill

If it is important that key points or important words are noted as students listen to auditory materials or read written material as they work independently, a Stop and Jot sheet with blanks to be filled in will be the best way to capture key information.

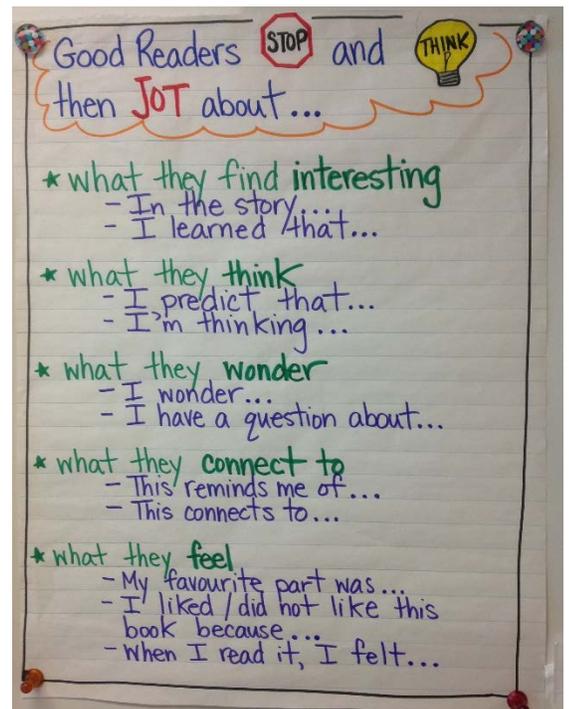
#### Group Jot

After completing the original Stop and Jot activity, ask students to compare their jots with a small group of students. Students discuss their Jots and add information to their notes based on this discussion. Students may also be asked to present a summary of their thoughts to the class.

#### Jot Survey

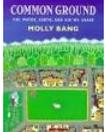
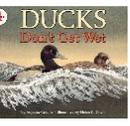
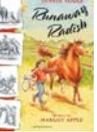
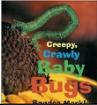
Instead of drawing a Stop Box on their note taking paper, students write their Jots on sticky notes. Students then take their sticky note Jots and post them on posters around the room. Posters may be made for individual questions or topics based on the content being covered. The teacher then sends the students around the room in small groups to survey the jots written by their classmates making comments or additions to their notes.

Retrieved from <http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/stop-and-jot>



## Picture Books to Use to Model Writing Summaries

The following are possible books that work well for making summaries.

Book	Description
	<p><b><i>Common Ground: The Water, Earth and Air We Share</i></b> by Molly Bang A beautifully painted and thoughtful environmental message about the natural resources we all share and our urgent need to preserve them.</p>
	<p><b><i>Togo</i></b> by Robert J Blake Although he is small, Leonhard Seppala's sled dog <b>Togo</b> displays courage and leadership to save the residents of Nome, Alaska.</p>
	<p><b><i>Ice Cream</i></b> by Elisha Cooper A lively, detailed exploration of how ice cream is made.</p>
	<p><b><i>Boxes for Katje</i></b> by Candace Fleming After World War II there is little left in Katje's town of Olst in Holland. Her family, like most Dutch families, must patch their old worn clothing and go without everyday things like soap and milk. Postman Kleinhoonte pedals his bicycle down Katje's street to deliver a mysterious box—a box from America!</p>
	<p><b><i>Buster</i></b> by Denise Fleming Buster's owner brought home a big box. The adorable pointy-nosed red dog hoped there would be juicy steaks or fancy cheeses in the box. But inside was something Buster did not want. And that something was a cat named Betty.</p>
	<p><b><i>Ducks Don't Get Wet</i></b> by Goldin A. Davie Why don't ducks get wet? Ducks dip and dive, but they stay dry because they spread oil over their feathers to make them waterproof. Learn more inside the book and get to know different kinds of ducks.</p>
	<p><b><i>Runaway Radish</i></b> by Jessie Haas Radish is a feisty pony--and the best teacher Judy has ever had. He teaches her how to ride, and how to go fast and far, and even how to fall off. But most of all, he teaches her to be patient. And when Judy outgrows him, he teaches Nina all the same things, and most of all, how to be brave.</p>
	<p><b><i>The Good Luck Cat</i></b> by Joy Harjo Some cats are good luck. You pet them and good things happen. Woogie is one of those cats. But as Woogie gets into one mishap after another, everyone starts to worry. Can a good luck cat's good luck run out?</p>
	<p><b><i>Creepy, Crawly Baby Bugs</i></b> by Sandra Markle This book compares how different insects begin life, grow into adulthood, and go off on their own.</p>
	<p><b><i>The Three Questions</i></b> by Jon. J. Muth Nikolai knows that he wants to be the best person he can be, but often he is unsure if he is doing the right thing, so he goes to ask Leo, the wise turtle.</p>
	<p><b><i>Clever Beatrice</i></b> by Margaret Willey What happens when a very little girl makes a bet with a very LARGE giant?</p>

## References

- Lawwill, K. (1999). *Using writing-to-learn strategies: Promoting peer collaboration among high school science teachers*. Diss. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, 29-30.
- Macon, J., Bewell, D., and Vogt, M. (1991). *Responses to Literature*. Newark, DE: IRA.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (Expanded 2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.