



Social Studies Strategies: Summing it Up

What:

Summing It Up is a strategy that helps students summarize information from an expository text.

Why:

When reading informative or expository text, some students become so caught up in the processing of information that they lose sight of the big picture and try to remember too many details. By providing a framework for summarizing, teachers can help students to remember what they have learned and synthesize the details into a summary.

How:

The teacher should follow these steps to help students learn to summarize the text:

- Have students focus on the title of an expository text.
- Activate their prior knowledge about the subject of the text based on the title.
- Have them scan the text and read the first introductory sentence(s) and the subheadings of the text.
- Guide students as they select a purpose for reading by asking them what “big” question(s) will be answered in the text. The “big” question(s) should focus on what the reader is expected to learn about the topic.
- Have the students write the “big” question down on paper. If the title of the text is a question, then have them paraphrase the question in order to check for understanding.
- Ask students to restate orally the “big” question(s) as they begin reading and to return periodically to these questions as they read.
- Have students, after they finish reading, write the answer to the “big” question in a complete sentence with three supporting details. This answer is the summary.

<i>What is the topic?</i>	<i>What are three important details?</i>	<i>What is this mostly about?</i>

- Another way to help them answer the “big” question is to give students a specific limit on the number of words (12-15 words) to use to write the summary.
- Ask student, “As a result of this reading, what more did you learn about the topic?”



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When:

Use the *Summing It Up* strategy to help students learn how to summarize information or if they are repeatedly confusing main ideas and details.