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Think of It This Way

SKILL: SEQUENCE EVENTS IN LOGICAL ORDER

One of the organizational structures students can use to summarize text is to put events in a logical order. Events could be ordered chronologically or by importance, from most important to least or vice versa. Of course, a text may not always present all information in the most logical order for summarizing. Visualization strategies help students keep events in a logical order so that they can summarize text in a useful way. A science or social studies text works well to model the four strategies presented for this bookmark. First, students are asked to notice key words that signal order of time or importance. They then apply visualization techniques to help them “see” what they are reading in the order it is presented in the text. Students are asked to consider if the text presented the events in a logical order. Next they represent the images in a flow chart so that they can rearrange events or details in logical order. Finally, students use their flow charts to write a brief summary of the text.

The following mini-lessons use selections from *Oh, Yuck! The Encyclopedia of Everything Nasty* by Joy Masoff (Scholastic, 2000).

STRATEGY 1: Look for words that signal order of time or importance.

Copy the signal words on the board or chart paper so students can refer to them. Encourage students to add words they discover from their independent reading to the list. Look for additional examples in students’ subject area texts. If necessary, provide explicit instruction of the meanings of the words “logical” and “chronological.”

Teacher: Sometimes authors present information or events in an order that makes sense. It could be in the order in which they happen. It could also be in the order of their importance. Of course, not all details and events are presented in a logical order, or an order that makes sense. That’s why it’s important to be aware of words that signal order of time and importance. Look at the list on the chart. These words act as signals for readers to help trace the sequence of events or the importance of details. Listen for any of these words as I read aloud this section about what to do if you have dandruff. (*Reads aloud the section “Beat the Blizzard” from the chapter about dandruff.*)

Did you hear any of these words that signal order?

Carla: “First of all” was at the very beginning.

Suggested Text

*Oh, Yuck! The
Encyclopedia of
Everything Nasty*
by Joy Masoff
(Scholastic, 2000)

Alex: And I heard "then."

Teacher: Excellent. What did those words suggest to us about taking care of dandruff?

Lauren: It said first, be glad you have dandruff.

Justin: It said "then" wash your hair and keep it clean.

Teacher: So those words signaled to us that those are two important details to remember. One detail is to be grateful that you have dandruff because your body needs to shed dead skin, and a second important detail is that you need to keep your scalp clean. Of course, authors don't always use those signal words, but for today I want you to look for any of them in whatever you are reading. Check any of these words you see while reading, and add other words that you discover that signal the order of time or importance. We'll add them to our chart. Don't forget to record your starting and stopping page numbers. Leave your bookmark in your book to mark the place you stop reading. Remember, the reason you are identifying these signal words is to help you keep events or details in a logical order so that you don't become confused while reading. I will leave my copy of *Oh, Yuck!* in our read-aloud spot so that anyone who wants to can finish reading it.

STRATEGY 2: Visualize key events or details.

Review strategies for visualizing text. Explain to students that picturing key events and details will prevent confusion during reading. Provide students with blank paper to practice creating images of the most important events or details in the read-aloud. Put up chart paper and have two volunteers sketch their images as models for the class. Remind students to listen for words that signal order of time or importance.

Teacher: Now that everyone has paper and our two volunteers are ready at the board, let's listen to what you should do if you get skunked. I'll read the excerpt twice. First, just listen to pick out three or four of the most important events or details. (*Reads aloud the section "What If You Get Skunked?" from the chapter about skunks.*)

Now listen to the excerpt again. Remember, when you are trying to summarize anything, it's best to do a second reading. This time as I read, sketch pictures or symbols to represent the key events in the order I read them. Don't worry if the events are not presented in a logical order. We'll talk about that after we share our sketches. (*Rereads the excerpt, slowing down to give students a chance to sketch images. Class shares images and discusses that they were actually presented in chronological order.*)

STRATEGY 3: Create a flow chart for your images.

The sketches that the students did for the previous mini-lesson were not necessarily in logical order. By using a flow chart, students learn to order events by importance or chronology. Once again, provide students with blank paper for sketching images and provide blank chart paper in the front of the room for two new student volunteers. However, this time divide the paper into sections and add arrows to indicate what comes first or what is most important in the text. Tell students to listen for the big ideas as you read the excerpt. Then read it a second time for students to arrange the key events or details in logical order. The excerpt for this lesson is an example of a text that is just a list of ideas. Students will have to decide on their order of importance.

Teacher: *(Reads aloud the insert "5 Ways to Have Fragrant Footsies" from the chapter "Foul Feet.")* Let's talk about the order in which you arranged these five suggestions. Did you put ideas in the order of time or importance?

Carla: I don't think there was an order of time.

Reggie: Yeah, it doesn't matter which one of these things you do first.

Justin: I know. It wasn't like that thing we read about getting the skunk smell off. That was like a recipe or set of instructions. It was like how to do something. This just said you might want to do some of this stuff.

Teacher: Great observation, Justin. So talk about the images you drew on the board.

Justin: I drew a picture of changing your socks first.

Teacher: Did that seem most important to you?

Justin: Not really. It just seemed like the easiest thing to do. I did mine in order of easiest to hardest. That's why I put washing shoes last. I'm not putting my shoes in the dryer.

Teacher: Sounds like you guys were making connections to the text as you read to determine what was most important or more practical. I like the way you are thinking seriously about what you are reading. Did anyone do a different order?

Lauren: I kept my flow chart in the same order as the book. I don't think one thing was more important than another. They all seemed like good ideas.

Reggie: I didn't do mine like that. I put my pictures in order of what I thought was the most important to what I thought really didn't matter much at all.

Teacher: Okay, Reggie. Explain your thinking.

Reggie: Well, it's most important that your feet don't stink. So I put the part about spraying on deodorant first. Then I added changing your socks and washing your shoes. Everybody can't buy new shoes, you know what I mean?

Alex: Yeah, but who is going to soak their feet in cold water, man? That's crazy. So I put that last. That's why I put mine in order of things I might try to things I will never try.

Teacher: The point is you are all thinking. Reggie thinks of the details one way; Alex thinks of them another way. The key is that you can organize the details to make sense of what you are reading. So, can you do this when you are reading your own book today?

Carla: Suppose you're reading a story?

Teacher: Then select a part of the story to sketch out the main events. Be sure you ask what is happening and what happened before and after it happened. That way you won't get confused when you are tracing the events of the story.

STRATEGY 4: Use a flow chart to write a summary.

A sentence frame supports students as they are working on writing succinct summaries of what they have read. They can use the flow charts they created for the previous mini-lesson to practice using the sentence frame to summarize key events or details. Write the sentence frame on the board or chart paper before class and encourage students to use it as they are writing their summaries. Remind students that this type of summary works well whether the text is presented in chronological order or as a list of ideas. (See the Think Back bookmark and mini-lessons for further explanation.) For longer pieces of text, provide students with copies of the excerpt to refer to as they are preparing their summaries.

Teacher: (*Reads aloud the section "House Beautiful, Circa 2000 B.C." from the chapter on mummies.*) I just read a lot of information to you. First, let's decide how it was presented. Was it in chronological order or order of importance?

Justin: A little bit of both.

Reggie: Yeah, they took us through the steps to get the mummy ready, but they also talked about what was the most important thing to do.

Teacher: Well, think of it this way. If you had to summarize it, would you explain what happened first, next, and last? Or would you say the most important thing to remember like in the excerpt we read about dandruff?

- Lauren:** I would go in order of first to last.
- Justin:** So I guess it's in chronological order mostly.
- Carla:** Yeah, and it's in the right order. I mean we don't have to reorder it when we summarize.
- Teacher:** That's a great observation. So how should we get started?
- Alex:** I say we think of this like a set of instructions. What's the first thing you do to get a mummy ready?
- Lauren:** Take out the lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines.
- Reggie:** But even before you do that you have to make a slash on the left side of the body.
- Teacher:** Can we combine those first two steps into one?
- Alex:** Cut open body and take out organs.
- Carla:** Except for the brain and heart. They were last.
- Teacher:** So in my first box, I will write using as few words as needed, "Cut open body and take out . . ."
- Justin:** Lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines. You should write them all. They're important details.
- Teacher:** I like the way you are thinking. What's next?
- Carla:** You put the organs in jars. Can't we just add that to the first idea?
- Alex:** Yeah, that makes sense. Because the next thing you do is rinse out the body with wine. Hey, it's like we're writing a recipe for a mummy.
- Teacher:** *(Continues facilitating discussion and filling in flow chart.)* Okay, now that we have our flow chart complete, we can use it to write our summary. Look at the sentence frame on the board. Notice I started it with "According to the author." Why is that?
- Reggie:** So we just write the facts, not our opinions.
- Teacher:** Exactly. Now what the first fact? Who would like to start our sentence frame?
- Lauren:** According to the author, first you cut open the body and remove the lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines. You put them all in a jar.
- Justin:** I'll do the next part. Then you rinse the body with wine.
- Alex:** After that, you scoop out the brain.
- Carla:** Can I change the signal word?
- Teacher:** Sure. Let's hear your idea.
- Carla:** In the end, the heart stays in the body so they can test it on the other side.