

SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGIES

A variety of simple instructional strategies that incorporate the use of digital media in meaningful, effective, and practical ways.

6-WORD STORIES



BACKGROUND

According to [Reading Rocket](#), “Summarizing teaches students how to discern the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information, and how to integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way. Teaching students to summarize improves their memory for what is read.” By narrowing the number of words allowed, we require students to focus on the most important ideas and concepts of the content being shared.

EXAMPLE

- * Display the image “[Family on Bike Trail](#)” ([CDN Subscriber](#)).
 - * Have students discuss what they see, guess what happened right before the image was taken, and predict what will happen next.
 - * Explain to students that they need to individually summarize the photo in 6 words or less.
 - * Have students share their summaries. Discuss similarities and differences.
- * **Pro Tip:** Have students bring in their own pictures or draw images that represent the current topics being covered in class and have classmates create 6-word stories. Using these images, have students write creative stories with the 6 word caption as the title. Use [iPiccy.com](#) to create a collage or add captions on photos.

CHALLENGE

- * Select a video, image, or reading passage that corresponds with your current curriculum.
- * Have students discuss what they see, guess what happened right before the image was taken, and predict what will happen next.
- * Explain to students that they need to individually summarize the photo in 6 words or less.
- * Have students share their summaries. Discuss similarities and differences.

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GET VENN-Y WITH IT



BACKGROUND

According to Marzano, one high-yield instructional strategy is helping students identify similarities and differences. In Harvey Silver's book, *Compare and Contrast*, this strategy "strengthens students' memories by focusing their thinking on analyzing pairs of ideas, enhances their ability to remember key content and improves comprehension by highlighting important details, making abstract ideas more concrete, and reduces the confusion between related concepts." By using digital resources, you are able to help level the playing field for students who may not have had real life experiences on which to base their reasoning.

EXAMPLE

- * Display the following images side-by-side:
 - * Image 1: [Winter in the Country: a Cold Morning](#) (CDN Subscriber)
 - * Image 2: [Snow Covered Trees](#) (CDN Subscriber)
- * Have students compare/contrast images using a Venn Diagram. They must cite evidence to support their observations.
 - * "I think it's a farm because I see a barn and a horse."
 - * "I think the picture on the left is gloomy because there is a gray cloud in the upper left hand side of the image."
- * Use the following guiding questions:
 - * What are the differences in lighting in the two pictures?
 - * How does the difference in lighting affect how you see the picture?
 - * How does the inclusion of houses in the picture on the left make you see the picture differently?
 - * What was the author of each picture trying to capture in his or her winter scene?

CHALLENGE

- * Select two images and download the large versions.
- * Display them side-by-side and have students compare, providing evidence to support their statements, using a VENN Diagram.
- * Use guiding questions to allow students to dive deeper into the images and into their reasoning.

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TWEET, TWEET!



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Many educators use Twitter to as a way to build their Professional Learning Network (PLN) and share what they are doing in the classroom. Twitter is a social media platform that allows you to share small bits of information in 140 characters or less. Robert Marzano shares the importance of summarization, stating “effective learners are able to sift through a great deal of information, identify what is important and then synthesize and restate the information.” (*Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*) Using the Twitter format, this strategy engages students in the videos they are watching as they create “tweets” to summarize and share what they are learning.

EXAMPLE

- * Explain to students that they will be watching a video on the process of [Photosynthesis \(CDN Subscribers\)](#).
- * Have students create their own Twitter names (for example, @MichaelDavid).
- * Provide each student with 4-6 sticky notes. Tell students they will need to write a series of “tweets” as they watch the video. These should be 140 characters or less and should be explaining what they are learning in their own words.
- * Play the video segment.
- * Have students share their tweets with the class.
- * Organize similar tweets into groups and post them around the room.
- * Have students do a gallery walk and reply to at least 3 of their peers’ tweets using sticky notes.

CHALLENGE

- * Select a video segment from Discovery Education that matches your curriculum.
- * Provide students with 4-6 sticky notes.
- * Have students create a @TwitterName.
- * As you play the video, have students write a series of “tweets” on their sticky notes in 140 characters or less.
- * Display the tweets around the room and discuss whole group. Have students reply to at least 3 tweets.

Connect with the Discovery Educator Network
Community.DiscoveryEducation.com

For more S.O.S. examples visit:
DENblogs.com

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25 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT...



BACKGROUND

Open just about any entertainment magazine and you will inevitably find a page that shares “25 Things You Didn’t Know” about a certain celebrity. They often reveal surprising facts that give you a better idea of who they are. When students are learning about a new concept or historical figure, it is important to help them understand what’s most important to know. In a world where they are constantly surrounded by information, an effective learner must be able to filter out what is most important. Using some construction paper, markers and resources from Discovery Education, students will create a similar list of “25 Things You Didn’t Know” for a specific topic or historical figure as a way to share what they feel is most important.

EXAMPLE

- * Explain to students that they will be creating a “25 Things You Didn’t Know” list about the five committee members who drafted the Declaration of Independence: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston.
- * Divide students into 5 groups. Each group will be assigned one of the 5 authors.
- * Provide each group with a series of images, videos, and articles about their author from Discovery education. You may want to create a folder using “[my content](#)” ([CDN Subscribers](#)) for each author. Using these resources, each group must come up with a list of 5 “Things You Didn’t Know.” For example, the list of resources for Thomas Jefferson could include:
 - * [Thomas Jefferson Writes The Declaration](#)
 - * [Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#))
 - * [Thomas Jefferson](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#))
 - * [Image of Thomas Jefferson](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#))
 - * [Jefferson’s Draft of the Declaration](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#))
- * Using a large sheet of construction paper,, markers, and printed images from Discovery Education, students will create their “25 Things You Didn’t Know about The Authors of the Declaration of Independence” poster.
- * Have each group share their 5 facts and discuss why they chose those facts. Ask the groups to site evidence as to why the facts they chose are “important” to know.

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25 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT... CONT.



CHALLENGE

- * Select a topic that matches your curriculum.
- * Search Discovery Education to create a list of resources for students to explore. You may want to create a folder in [“my content”](#) ([CDN Subscribers](#)) for each topic or historical figure.
- * Divide students into groups and have them explore the Discovery Education resources to come up with at list of “Things You Didn’t Know.”
- * Using construction paper, markers, and Discovery Education images, have students create their “25 Things” poster.
- * Share the poster and facilitate a whole class discussion around why they chose their facts.