

STRATEGY: Key Word Notes

SKILLS ADDRESSED

- Reading with attention to meaning, not just "word calling"
- Purposeful reading (rereading) of text (to tell partner what you learned)
- Self-monitoring of comprehension ("What do I really understand?")
- Recalling what was read while not looking at text
- Distinguishing more important from less important words, concepts
- Writing information in own words rather than copying from text

PREREQUISITES

- Understanding that reading is more than pronouncing the words
- Experience with thinking about the meaning while reading
- Willingness to talk to and listen to a partner
- Ability to express what one learned from a text orally (and in writing)

STEPS INVOLVED

1. Students work in pairs; each individual gets Key Word Notes form
2. Everyone reads designated piece of text individually, silently
3. Each student selects 3-4 words as memory aids, writes in Box 1
4. Partners tell each other what words they selected and why
5. Students repeat steps 2-4, completing all segments, using boxes 2, 3, 4
6. Books closed, each student uses his/her Key Words to write summary in box 5

RELATED LEARNING PRINCIPLES

- Choice enhances learning and contributes to positive attitudes.
- Comprehension is reinforced and enhanced by adequate processing time.
- Bursts of concentrated attention are better than continuous attention.
- Articulating what one has learned reinforces the learning.
- Learning is enhanced when students read, listen, speak, and write.
- Meaningful repetition cements learning.

APPLICATION

This strategy works across grade levels and content areas but is best in grades 3-12. Can gradually increase segments to read and numbers of words to select at each reading. To differentiate instruction, have students read different texts, matched to their reading levels. Have students use strategy independently when they are studying or doing research.

Source: D. Nessel devised this strategy in working as a consultant with a variety of teachers. Others may use the same, or a similar, approach to note-taking.