Summarizing and Sorting Details from an Informational Text
Identifying the Main Idea

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Grade Level	6th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-5 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	150 minutes

Essential Question

How can a reader identify the main idea of a text? How can a reader identify important supporting details?

Summary

Students need strategies to help them read informational texts and sort out the details that are important in contributing to the overall main idea of the text. This series of activities is designed to give students practice first with visual advertisements, then shorter texts, and then finally, a longer text they read on their own.

Snapshot

Engage

Students view five creative print advertisements and derive from each the main idea and the key supporting details that allowed them to understand the main idea.

Explore

Students are given a paragraph that has been cut out into individual sentences. In small groups, they sort out which sentence(s) contain the main idea, which sentences are crucial supporting details, and which sentences do not contain important details.

Explain

Students read a brief informational text on their own and identify four important pieces of information presented in the article. Next, they pair with another student and narrow that down to two important points. Finally, by partnering with another group, students identify the most important (main idea) of the article.

Extend

Students individually read and Why-Light an article—highlighting and recording why they highlighted what they did.

Evaluate

Students partner with someone who read the same article and create a poster identifying the main idea and supporting details from the article. Students also reflect, independently, on the strategies they used

to identify the main idea and supporting details.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.2.R.1: Students will summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize ideas, while maintaining meaning and a logical sequence of events, within and between texts.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 10)

11.2.R.1: Students will summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize ideas, while maintaining meaning and a logical sequence of events, within and between texts.

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 10)

12.2.R.1: Students will summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize ideas, while maintaining meaning and a logical sequence of events, within and between texts.

Attachments

- 4-2-1-Organizer-Summarizing-and-Sorting - Spanish.docx
- 4-2-1-Organizer-Summarizing-and-Sorting - Spanish.pdf
- 4-2-1-Organizer-Summarizing-and-Sorting.docx
- 4-2-1-Organizer-Summarizing-and-Sorting.pdf
- Lesson-Slides-Summarizing-and-Sorting.pptx
- Sentence-Sort-Summarizing-and-Sorting - Spanish.docx
- Sentence-Sort-Summarizing-and-Sorting - Spanish.pdf
- Sentence-Sort-Summarizing-and-Sorting.docx
- Sentence-Sort-Summarizing-and-Sorting.pdf
- Visual-Analysis-Summarizing-and-Sorting - Spanish.docx
- Visual-Analysis-Summarizing-and-Sorting - Spanish.pdf
- Visual-Analysis-Summarizing-and-Sorting.docx
- Visual-Analysis-Summarizing-and-Sorting.pdf

Materials

- Visual print ad examples
- 2-3 pieces of informational text (could be any text—the lesson uses text to build context for "A Raisin in the Sun")
- Poster supplies or digital means to create a visual poster
- Sentence Sort (attached; one per group)
- 4-2-1 Organizer (attached; one per student)
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Visual Analysis (attached; one per student)

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

Consider beginning the lesson with students seated in groups because, later, students will be working in groups.

Begin by briefly discussing the difference between reading literary texts and informational texts (one is more focused on literary techniques and theme, whereas informational text reading is more about deriving information from a series of details provided by the author). Then, display **slide 3** and introduce the essential questions.

Teacher's Note: Essential Questions

Consider visiting the essential questions on slide 3 either through a written Bell Ringer reflection or discussion. These essential questions can be revisited at the end of the lesson.

Display **slide 4** and give students directions for the first activity. Tell students that in this activity, they will be shown a series of creative print advertisements (**slides 5-9**) and should identify the main idea each ad is trying to convey. Pass out to each student the attached **Visual Analysis** handout and instruct students to write down what they identified as the main idea and include which details helped them choose that main idea. Point out details in the images that don't help you get to a main point and go over the idea that not all details are crucial in developing an understanding of the main point.

Display **slide 10** and have students explain in a few sentences how they could identify the supporting details that helped them get to the main idea each advertisement was trying to convey.

The key outcomes from this activity are for students to understand the difference between the main idea and the supporting details and to understand that some details are not crucial to understanding the main point.

Explore

Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

For this activity, you might find it helpful to have the paragraphs already cut into sentence strips for students to use. This saves time and alleviates potential messes.

Display **slide 11** and put students in groups of 2-3. Using a brief informative paragraph from the attached **Sentence Sort**, have the students sort the sentences into three categories:

1. Main idea
2. Important supporting details
3. Non-important details

Display **slide 12** and have each group turn to an Elbow Group (a group next to them) to compare their choice of main idea, their choices for supporting details, and what details they decided were not important. They should then discuss with the group any differences and justify why certain details were or were not included. Finally, lead a class discussion on the consensus on the main idea and most important supporting details. In looking at the complete paragraph, you might isolate where the main idea came from and discuss how the topic sentence and clincher (last) sentence are good places to start to look for a main idea.

Explain

Display **slide 13** to present instructions for the next activity. Using a brief informational article, instruct students to read individually and record the four most important pieces of information from the article (instructions are outlined in the first bullet point on the slide).

Optional Addition

You can choose your own article for this or use the recommended article. In this case, the 2013 New York Times article "Discrimination in Housing Against Nonwhites Persists Quietly, U.S. Study Finds," works well. An easy-to-read, printable version can be obtained by clicking on the arrow in the upper-right hand corner of the article and then clicking the printer icon.

Once students have all read the article, pair them up to share their ideas and pass out the attached **4-2-1 Organizer** handout to each student. Students should use the 4-2-1 strategy outlined on the handout. Pairs should work together to narrow their four ideas to two of the most important ideas from their lists. Finally, each pair should combine with another pair to make a group of four students, and this group should determine the most important overall idea from the article (the main idea). Finally, instruct each group to discuss the main idea they chose with the rest of the class and support their choice with the details that helped them find the main idea.

Extend

Display **slide 14** to display directions for the next activity. Have each student choose one of the three articles you present them with to use for this activity. The suggested articles, listed below, all relate to the play "A Raisin in the Sun" and are listed in order of reading level, from easiest to most difficult. These are just a suggestion, however; any informational text will work.

- "THEATER; A Landmark Lesson in Being Black" by Michael Anderson, The New York Times, March 7, 1999
- "An Atlas of Upward Mobility Shows Paths Out of Poverty" by David Leonhardt, Amanda Cox, and Claire Cain Miller, The New York Times, May 4, 2015
- Section I (only) of "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates, The Atlantic, June 2014

Have each student use the Why-Lighting instructional strategy to explore the article they chose, isolating important information by highlighting or underlining and writing notes in the margin that explains why they highlighted that particular statement. Circulate as they read to see how they are doing with isolating important information. Immediate feedback can come through brief discussions with students as to why they highlighted certain details.

Evaluate

Display **slide 15**. Have students partner with someone who read the same article. Each pair should create a visual that conveys the main idea and the 3-4 supporting details that contributed to their understanding the main idea.

Their visual will be evaluated on the following factors:

1. How well they've identified the main idea
2. How well they've identified the important supporting details
3. Their use of a visual or design that supports their main idea
4. Clarity of the visual

Display **slide 16**. When their visuals have been turned in, have students independently write a brief reflection on the lesson, responding to the following questions:

1. What are the key ways in which you can tell what the main idea is in an informational text?
2. What roles do supporting details play in identifying the main idea?
3. What reading techniques can you use when approaching an informational text?

Teacher's Note: Lesson Pacing

If the essential questions were visited at the beginning of the lesson, this reflection would be a good time to revisit that initial discussion.

Resources

- Anderson, M. (1999). THEATER; A landmark lesson in being black. The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/07/theater/theater-a-landmark-lesson-in-being-black.html?mcubz=0
- Coates, T. -N. (2014). The case for reparations. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/
- D., L. (2014). 33 Powerful and creative print ads that'll make you look twice. http://www.boredpanda.com/creative-print-ads/
- Dewan, S. (2013). Discrimination in housing against nonwhites persists quietly, U.S. study finds. The New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/12/business/economy/discrimination-in-housing-against-nonwhites-persists-quietly-us-study-finds.html
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 4-2-1. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/142
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- Leonhardt, D., Cox, A., & Cain Miller, C. (2015). An atlas of upward mobility shows paths out of poverty. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/04/upshot/an-atlas-of-upward-mobility-shows-paths-out-of-poverty.html?action=click&contentCollection=The%20Upshot&module=RelatedCoverage&region=Marginalia&pgtype=article
- OPTIONAL RESOURCE: Chenelle, S., & Fisch, A. (2014). Text to text: 'A raisin in the sun' and 'Discrimination in housing against nonwhites persists quietly.' The New York Times. https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/03/13/text-to-text-a-raisin-in-the-sun-and-discrimination-in-housing-against-nonwhites-persists-quietly/?_r=0