



Magnet Summary

Strategy

What is Magnet Summary? Summaries are brief statements that contain the main ideas from longer passages. Although it does not sound difficult, writing a summary is not a simple task. Not only must students must decide which details are important enough to include and which ones should be eliminated, they must also organize the material into a readable, coherent piece of writing. The Magnet Summary (Buehl 1995) is a strategy that helps students accomplish this task.

Why use it—expected outcomes? The Magnet Summary encourages summarizing and improves writing skills at the same time. Students practice putting main ideas into their own words and, more importantly, the strategy provides a logical and simple procedure to help students determine pertinent and irrelevant details while they synthesize information.

When to use it? After reading.

How to use it? Students first identify keywords from the passage they have read. Keywords are words that relate directly to the concept being taught. The keywords are then used to develop a summary of the reading. Students may do this individually or in small groups. The success of this strategy depends on teacher modeling to steer students through the procedure and sufficient guided practice before students can be released to independently use the strategy.

Procedures

- After reading a passage, help students determine some keywords from the passage.
- Explain to students that the keywords are like magnets since they attract information that is important to the topic.