



Considerations for Teaching Students to **SUMMARIZE**





Summarizing

“...summarizing helps us to understand and make meaning of the events of everyday life —what we read, what we view, what we experience.”

(Kissner, 2006, p.3)





Summarizing

“To summarize effectively, students need to recognize main ideas and key details, disregard unimportant or repetitive ideas, construct topic sentences, paraphrase, and collapse or combine lists or events into general statements.”

(Graham, S., MacArthur, C., & Fitzgerald, J., 2013, p.339)





Laying the Foundation for Summarizing



“Model many times over how to make a summary of a short passage or a paragraph; progress gradually to longer segments of text. Summarizing is difficult and in the beginning should be taught through extensive modeling and supported practice.”

(Moats, 2005, p. 52)





Summarizing

A summary should

- reflect the structure of the text,
- include a topic sentence,
- include the main ideas,
- include important details, and
- be paraphrased and shorter than the original text.





Ecosystem Changes

Slow Changes

An ecosystem usually has *stability*, or balance. There are many changes occurring all the time, but they cancel each other out. For example, organisms live, die, and decompose, returning the materials they were made of to the soil. New plants grow and use the materials. Water evaporates from a pond, but rain adds more water. Because these changes balance each other, they do not cause the overall ecosystem to change.

Over time, however, changes in climate, rate of erosion, and populations can cause big changes in an ecosystem. New com-

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- **Summary:** What are the main ideas and important details that are necessary to include? How will you state them in your own words following the structure of the text? (As concisely as possible.)

Descriptive

Topic Ecosystem Changes

Important Details

- Small changes balance each other out
- Organisms live/die
 - Evaporation/rain
 - They cause no change in the overall ecosystem

Important Details

- Big changes affect the ecosystem
- Erosion
 - Population change

Succession is the process of an ecosystem changing into a different ecosystem

Main Idea

Small changes in the ecosystem balance out causing no effect on the overall ecosystem.

Main Idea

Succession occurs when big changes cause an ecosystem to change into a different ecosystem.

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Summary

Small changes in the ecosystem, such as rain and evaporation, cancel each other out. These small changes have no effect on the overall ecosystem.

Succession occurs when big changes, like erosion, cause an ecosystem to change into a different ecosystem.



Engage Students (Step 6)

Provide opportunities for students to Think-Turn-Talk as you work through the reading and complete the graphic organizer as a class.





Scaffold Practice (Step 7)

Complete the graphic organizer in pairs or small groups with teacher monitoring and support as necessary.





Provide Accountability (Step 8)

Complete the graphic organizer independently to demonstrate understanding. Use a rubric to support students and to assess.

Summary Checklist
Expository Text

Name _____ Date _____

Title of text _____

| | Beginning | Developing | Proficient | Does not apply to text |
|---|---|--|--|------------------------|
| Basic Summary Criteria | | | | |
| Important ideas from the text | Important ideas are missing OR Important ideas aren't stated accurately | Some important ideas are presented, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some are missing• Used author's exact words• Doesn't use key vocabulary from the text | Important ideas are presented clearly and in the student's own words | |
| Accurately paraphrases the author's words | Many inaccurate statements OR Copied directly from text | Attempt is made to paraphrase, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awkward wording• Best words not chosen | The author's words are accurately and precisely paraphrased | |
| Deletes trivia and repeated information | Many trivial or unimportant statements included | Some trivial or unimportant statements included | No trivial or unimportant statements included | |
| Collapses lists | Lists are copied directly from text | Attempt is made to collapse list, but word choice is not accurate | Lists are collapsed with accurate terms | |
| Reflects the structure of the text | Seems random OR Written in chronological order | Attempt is made to reflect structure of text | The structure of the text is apparent in the summary | |
| Optional Writing Criteria | | | | |
| Word choice | Words are not well-chosen, writing sounds awkward | Some specific words, may be slightly awkward or wordy | Brief and concise, specific, vivid words | |
| Sentence variety | Sentences are short and choppy, with unintentional fragments or run-ons | Some attempt is made to include variety | Sentences have a variety of patterns, length, and beginning | |
| Capitalization | Many errors in capitalization | Some errors in capitalization | Capitalization used where needed | |
| Punctuation | Punctuation errors interfere with meaning | Punctuation choices are mostly correct | Punctuation choices are correct and enhance the writing | |

FIGURE 4-4.
© 2006 by Emily Kriener from *Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Retelling*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.





Your Turn to Summarize

The Aztecs

In about 1200, people called the Aztecs began to migrate south from northern Mexico. According to legend, they were following the instructions of one of their gods, who told them to travel until they saw an eagle with a snake in its beak sitting on a cactus. There, he said, they should settle. When the Aztecs reached an island in Lake Texcoco, they at last saw what they had been searching for. Here, in the **Valley of Mexico**, they built **Tenochtitlan** (te nocht te TLAHN), meaning "near the cactus." Today the eagle, cactus, and snake appear as the central symbols on the flag of the country of Mexico.

Tenochtitlan grew into a great city. Causeways, or low bridges, linked Tenochtitlan to the land around the lake. As many as 300,000 people lived there, making it one of the largest cities in the world.

In order to have more land for farming, Tenochtitlan farmers created "floating gardens" around their island city. Farmers on other Aztec lands developed irrigation systems and created more farmland by carving terraces, or wide, flattened steps, into hillsides.

From Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs sent out armies to conquer other peoples in the Valley of Mexico. Soon they had created an empire that stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. An **empire** is a group of lands and peoples ruled by one leader.

MAP SKILL Place Which mountain range was located in the Incan homeland?

Adapted from: Deans-Barrett, C., Frassetto, M., Greenfield, G., Hoxie, F., Johnson-Odim, C., Khodarkovsky, M. (2003). The United States. Glenview, IL: Pearson Education, Inc. (p. 68)

- Use the completed graphic organizer in the Graphic Organizer packet.
- Plan how you will share your thinking with students.
- Complete a summary for the entire text.

| Descriptive Text Organizer | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Topic <i>The Aztecs</i> | | | |
| Important Details Aztecs left Northern Mexico around 1200 - in search of an eagle with a snake on a cactus Settled on Lake Texcoco - in the Valley of Mexico - built the city of Tenochtitlan | Important Details Tenochtitlan became a great city - Causeways built - 300,000 residents - one of largest cities in the world | Important Details Needed more farmland - Created floating gardens - Developed irrigation systems - Carved terraces into hillsides | Important Details Aztecs conquered others in the Valley of Mexico Created an empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans empire - group of lands and peoples ruled by one leader |
| Main Idea Around 1200, the Aztecs migrated from Northern Mexico south to an island on Lake Texcoco where they built the city of Tenochtitlan. | Main Idea Tenochtitlan grew to become one of the largest cities in the world. | Main Idea The Aztecs developed ways to increase their farmland beyond the island. | Main Idea The Aztecs developed an empire by conquering others in the Valley of Mexico. |
| Summary | | | |

Descriptive Texts

Descriptive texts are written to describe an object, person, place, event or idea.

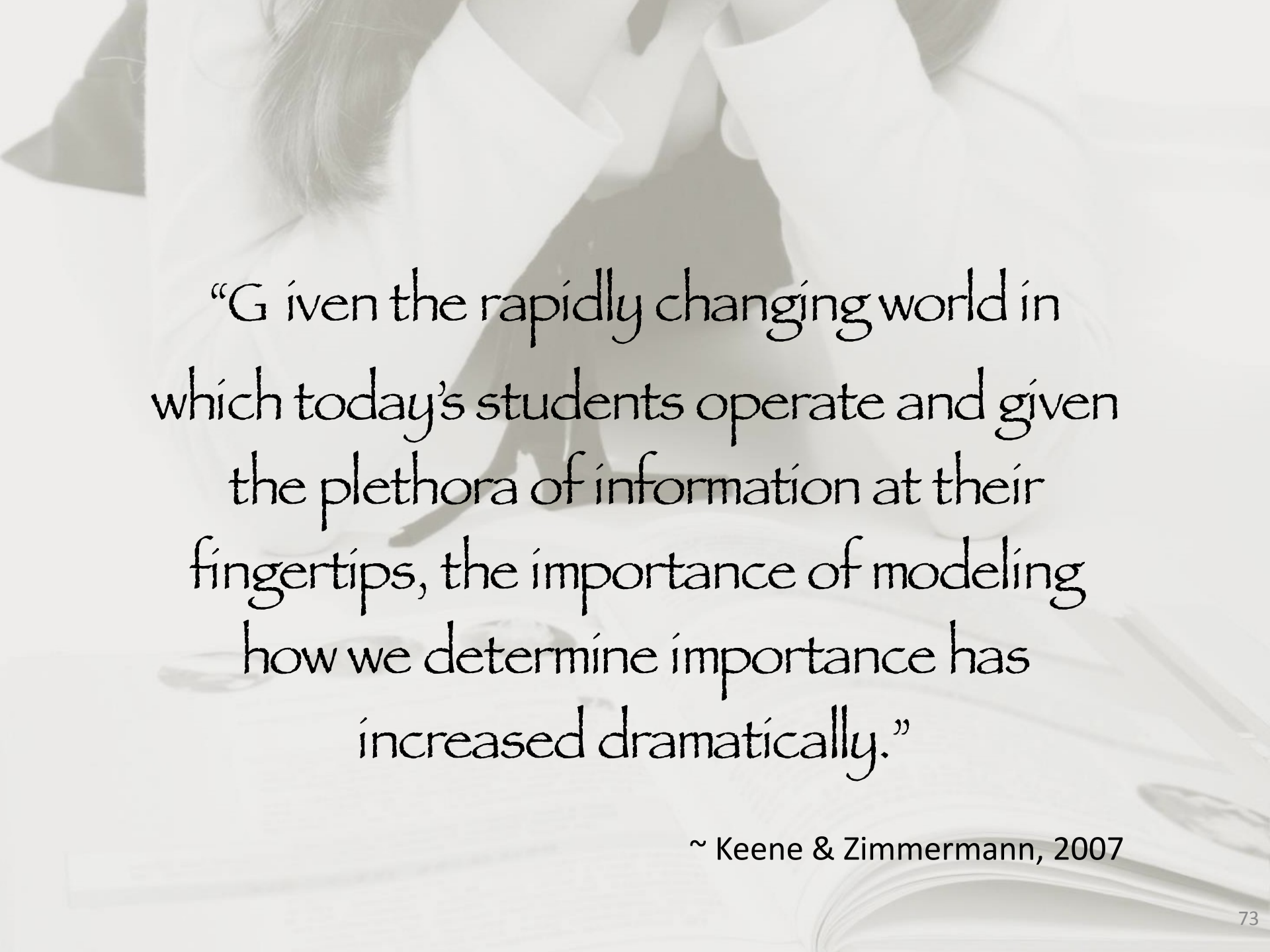
Signs of Descriptive Text

- Specific characteristics or features are described or explained (size, shape, location, color, etc.).
- Descriptive adjectives are used throughout the text.
- Details are provided to help the reader visualize the topic.
- Examples are often provided (for instance, such as, an example, to illustrate, to demonstrate).
- The topic word or a synonym for the topic is often repeated.

Guiding Questions

- **Topic:** What specific topic, person, idea, or thing is being described or explained? (One-two words.)
- **Important Details:** How is the topic being described or explained? (What is it, what does it look like, what does it do, what happens, etc.)
- **Main Idea:** What features or characteristics are important to remember or understand about the topic being described? (One sentence or less.)
- **Summary:** What are the main ideas and important details that are necessary to include? How will you state them in your own words following the structure of the text? (As concisely as possible.)



A person wearing a white lab coat is pointing their right index finger towards a screen. The background is a light, neutral color.

“Given the rapidly changing world in which today’s students operate and given the plethora of information at their fingertips, the importance of modeling how we determine importance has increased dramatically.”

~ Keene & Zimmermann, 2007