Unit 3 • Module 3: Writing Summaries

Section 1

Slide 1—Title Slide

Welcome to the third module in the Comprehension Instructional Routines unit, Writing Summaries.

Slide 2—Comprehension Strategies Across Content Areas

This module brings together comprehension support before, during, and after reading by using a complete note-taking routine. You will combine previewing text and identifying main ideas and details with writing summaries.

You can return to **Handout 1: TEKS Connections** at any time to review the relevance of this module to your particular subject area.

Slide 3—Objectives

The objectives for this session are: to understand how writing summaries after reading improves students' comprehension of text; and to apply the three-step process for explicit instruction to the implementation of the Notes Log for writing summaries.

As we begin the module, you may hear or see terms with which you are unfamiliar. These will be explained as we work through the slides.

Slide 4—The Benefits of Explicit Instruction in Summarization

The previous module introduced a routine for identifying main ideas and details in text. Now, we will teach students how to make connections among the main ideas and details they have listed on their Notes Log.

Research shows that when students are explicitly taught how to summarize, their comprehension improves along with their ability to make connections among main ideas.

Writing summary statements in collaborative learning groups also helps improve comprehension and learning of content area information.

Slide 5—The Benefits of Explicit Instruction in Summarization (cont.)

Direct instruction in the use of a summarization strategy improves the comprehension and answering of both literal and inferential questions for students with learning disabilities.

Literal comprehension requires students to identify information that is directly stated in the text.

Inferential comprehension involves the correct interpretation of implied meanings. This often requires students to connect given information with information from other texts or from the students' background knowledge.

Cognitive strategy instruction, including the instruction of summarization strategies, enhances English language learners' comprehension of expository text.

Supporting the link between reading and writing is important for all students, especially those still learning English.

Slide 6—Summary vs. Main Idea of the Passage

In the main idea module, we addressed writing a main idea, or "gist," statement for the entire passage or section of text. Some students will confuse a summary and a main idea when asked to compose both using the same material. You will need to point out the differences in how each is written and what information is included.

The summary includes information across the entire passage, while the main idea of the passage provides the overall gist. The summary contains more than one significant detail, while the main idea of the passage contains only the most significant idea about the topic. The summary is a paragraph in length, but the main idea of the passage is only one sentence.

Slide 7—Main Idea Instructional Routine

As you learned in the last module, comprehension support begins *before* reading with previewing, and continues *during* reading with recording main ideas and details. Here is a recap of the steps we learned in the previous module. Take a moment to review.

The speaker pauses for 15 seconds.

Section 2

Slide 8—Summarization Instructional Routine

In this module, we will continue using the Notes Log by constructing summaries after reading a passage. We will use a six-step process for writing the summary.

Be sure to define the term *summary* for students: Unlike our one-sentence gist statements, a summary is more than one sentence long. In it, you give the main points from across the passage. You want to be clear and not go into too much detail, while still connecting the main points.

You could write the six-step summarizing instructional routine on chart paper and hang it in your classroom to remind students of the process.

Slide 9—Notes Log: Science Sample

Please turn to **Handout 2: Notes Log: Summarization: Incomplete Science Sample.**

This is the same sample science Notes Log we used to help students preview text in a systematic way before reading the chapter. It was also a beneficial organizer for recording main ideas and details during reading. We will now return to the log to help students summarize what they have learned after reading.

This log should cover a complete section of text, not just a single paragraph. It's important to have enough information to make a summary worthwhile.

Slide 10—Summarization: Modeling Phase: *I Do*

Explain the purpose of the activity so students learn when they should apply this technique in the future to support their independent learning. You might tell students: "You will need to summarize information throughout your life. The goal of summary is to give a shortened version of something. Whenever you are reading or listening to a lot of information, you want to check whether you understand and remember the most important points. You do this by composing summaries."

Remind students of the primary focus for the chapter or section and how it relates to their prior learning.

Slide 11—Summarization: Modeling Phase: *I Do* (cont.)

The slide reviews the six steps of the routine in more detail.

First, list all the main ideas. Second, underline terms or phrases that contain the most important information. Third, combine any ideas that could go into one sentence. Fourth, number the ideas in a logical order. Fifth, write your summary in one paragraph. And sixth, edit your summary.

It's important to model the process of deciding which ideas are most important while composing a logical, orderly summary.

Slide 12—Summarization: Modeling Phase: *I Do* (cont.)

Please return to Handout 2 for the next section. Step 1 of the routine is to list all the main ideas, which has been done for us on the slide. Step 2 is to underline terms or phrases that contain the most important information.

"Think aloud" to model the process of considering whether each statement contains the most important information from the passage.

For example, I might say: "Since this passage is about the flow of energy in an ecosystem, I need to include how that energy first enters. I will have to add the significant detail that autotrophs can convert sunlight to energy. Then, I need to know how energy is transferred, so I will keep the part about heterotrophs eating autotrophs for food. In order to know the parts of the food chain, I first have to know how autotrophs and heterotrophs are classified. I'll keep the main idea about classifying them by their energy roles and add the significant details about which organism is a producer and which a consumer or decomposer. Finally, I will need to keep the parts about food chains and webs illustrating the flow of energy among producers, consumers, and decomposers."

When you transition to using longer sections of text or complete passages, the Notes Log will contain a greater number of main ideas. In addition, the information will be less condensed. Therefore, you would expect more variation in underlining. Students do not all have to use the same pattern of underlining. However, they must be able to explain their decisions and use the terms and phrases to construct a logical and accurate summary.

Slide 13—Summarization: Modeling Phase: *I Do* (cont.)

In the next steps of the summarization routine, we combine any ideas that could go into one sentence and then number the ideas in a logical order.

Please turn to **Handout 3: Notes Log: Summarization: Science Sample With Steps**. Notice that in the correct example on the slide, significant details were added in No. 1 and No. 3. Knowing the relation among autotrophs, heterotrophs, producers, consumers, and decomposers will help the ideas make sense when they are put together.

These ideas were numbered to coincide with a logical sequence for explaining the various concepts contained in this lesson on energy flow in an ecosystem.

Slide 14—Summarization: Modeling Phase: *I Do* (cont.)

The incorrect example does not combine related ideas or consider the appropriate sequence. It starts with food webs before establishing the energy roles. Then, it addresses how heterotrophs acquire energy without explaining how the energy first entered the ecosystem. Finally, it combines undefined energy roles with the term *food chains*. A person who did not know about the flow of energy in ecosystems would not benefit from a summary constructed this way because too much information is left unknown and unconnected.

One teaching suggestion is to write each idea on a separate slip of paper or sticky note. That way students can move them around or change which ideas to include without marking up their papers.

Slide 15—Summarization: Modeling Phase: *I Do* (cont.)

In step 5, write your summary in one paragraph. Step 6 asks you to edit that summary.

A proper summary paragraph contains both main ideas and significant details. Keep in mind, this correct example is not the only way the main ideas could have been arranged. It is correct because, in the final steps of the routine, the sentences were combined and revised to be accurate and concise.

The incorrect example is just a listing of the underlined main idea statements. They have not been revised, nor have significant details been added to clarify key points. Therefore, it is not a connected paragraph, but a list of random facts. Another type of incorrect example might have too many details, making the summary too long.

Following the six steps of summarization will not lead students to identical summary paragraphs; many versions of the summary on this Notes Log would be correct.

Please turn to **Handout 4: Notes Log: Summarization: Complete Science Samples**, which features two completed science logs. The summary from Sample 1 is shown on the slide. Please review these samples at the next break between sections.

Slide 16—Notes Log: Science Sample

The Notes Log is a structured way for students to record basic ideas and check their fundamental understanding of the information. However, it's still necessary to help students consider the significance of this information.

Slide 17—Summarization: Peer-assisted Phase: *WE Do*

"Several studies documented that students with learning disabilities required repetitive, intensive opportunities to practice using strategies before they became proficient." It is critical to provide repeated exposure to this routine through modeling and guided practice.

Gradually release responsibility and create more opportunities to practice by having students work collaboratively to write summaries. However, if students are having difficulty, you may opt to work as an entire class to practice before shifting to individual partners.

Evaluate summaries after completing each section. Are they accurate and concise? Do they include the most significant information from across the entire passage or section of text?

Return to *I Do* and model the routine again if necessary. **Handout 5** contains a list of main ideas with which you could practice writing a summary.

In the following video, the science class continues the lesson on climate change by writing summaries from the main ideas and details on their Notes Logs. As you watch the video, pay attention to how the students determine what to include in their summaries and how to organize the information.

Video: Summarization Routine (4:00)

Section 3

Slide 18—Notes Log: Social Studies Sample

Please turn to **Handout 6: Notes Log: Summarization: Social Studies Sample.**

This is how a sample social studies Notes Log might look when every section is completed.

Remember, the sample Notes Logs always reflect a teacher's version. It is not expected that middle school students would produce this amount of detail, so teachers should use their professional judgment to determine how much information is appropriate for students to include.

Slide 19—Summarization: Independent Practice: *YOU Do*

Please turn to **Handout 7: Summarization Routine**, which gives you a compilation of the steps in this routine.

Do not shift to *YOU Do* until you are confident students can handle the routine on their

own. It is best to have students practice the routine in pairs several times before working independently.

Have students verbalize the steps of the routine several times. You might prompt them with questions like this: "Why would you need to identify or write a summary of a passage? What are the six steps in our summarizing routine? What should the summary include?"

Monitor closely and provide any necessary feedback.

Periodically stop to have students share their summaries. Discuss their summaries and how they might be improved. If students have difficulty, identify exactly which steps are causing the problem. Reteach those steps or break the tasks into even smaller steps.

The final classroom video from the science class shows students writing and editing their summaries on climate change. Pay attention to how the teacher has gradually shifted responsibility for completing the steps of the routine to her students. How has she made sure that everyone is able to compose a summary independently?

Video: Summarization: Student Practice Writing and Editing (2:14)

Section 4

Slide 20—Notes Log: Mathematics Sample

Please locate **Handout 8: Notes Log: Summarization: Mathematics Sample**.

These sample Notes Logs show the Previewing, Main Idea/Details, and Summarizing steps completed for a section of a mathematics textbook. Notice that the summary includes information from across the entire selection. The completed summary for Sample 1 is shown on the slide.

Using a Notes Log will most likely be an occasional practice in a math class, perhaps used as a culminating activity in a geometry or statistics lesson. Consider implementing the routine after students engage in the lesson. Students can discuss, see, and work on two-dimensional figures, for example, and then read a related passage, record the main ideas and details, and synthesize the information in a summary.

Slide 21—Notes Log: English Language Arts Sample

Please locate **Handout 9: Notes Log: Summarization: English Language Sample**.

In the last module, we introduced the main idea of a section with these Notes Logs from

English language arts or reading. Let's use Sample 1 to review the differences between the main idea of the section and the summary: A main idea is one complete sentence; a summary is a paragraph. The main idea has only the most significant idea, but a summary can contain more than one significant detail. A summary contains information from across the entire passage.

There is no one correct way of wording a main idea or summary. Preparing a teacher key will help you consider the possible combinations of suitable ideas, but the sophistication of the language will vary according to your students' level of skill and English proficiency. Displaying and discussing numerous examples of students' work will provide useful peer models for improving students' writing, moving it closer to an approximation of the goal.

Slide 22—Scaffolding

Please turn to **Handout 10: Scaffolding Summarization,** which lists the scaffolding steps presented on this slide.

Gradually increase the length of the text or passage for which students compose summaries. This gives students time to develop their ability to condense information into accurate and concise "shortened versions."

For further information on dividing text, see **Handout 11: Moving from Paragraph Level to Increasingly Longer Sections of Text**.

Many students will need extensive modeling and increased support in constructing summaries of complex text. Be sure to provide only the necessary scaffolds. It is helpful to surround the activity with many opportunities for discussion so students hear and see models of language use. This practice also helps students to process information before actually composing their response.

Always complete a teacher key of the Notes Log so you can anticipate potential problems and student responses.

Don't force students through the steps of this routine for too long. Eventually, you want students to compose summaries without having to go through a step-by-step process.

Slide 23—Summary

We have reached the end of this module.

The objectives for this module were: to understand how writing summaries after reading improves students' comprehension of text; and to apply the three-step process for explicit

instruction to the implementation of the Notes Log for writing summaries.

Handout 12: Notes Log Templates provides two versions of the log to use as a classroom master. One version has all sections on a single page, and the other has the Main Idea and Notes sections expanded to two pages.