

Get the Gist

Lesson Objective	(Comprehension) Students will identify the main idea of paragraphs or short sections of text.	
Vocabulary	<p>Get the Gist: a during-reading strategy in which students identify the main idea of short sections of text</p> <p>gist statement: a summary containing about 10 words or fewer that identifies the most important “who” or “what” of a text, and the most important information about that “who” or “what”</p>	
Reviewed Vocabulary	main idea, summary	
Instructional Materials	Teacher	Student
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Masters • Timer • Demonstrate—<i>Gist Statements Poster</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Booklet • Practice—Copies of text for each pair of students selected from a nonfiction text they will read in class that day. Selected text should be two paragraphs.

Preview

Writers connect ideas in small sections of text to express their overall point. As you get older and read more and more complex text, it is important to be able to summarize small sections of text as you read. Otherwise, you can lose track of what you have already read and miss the connections between the ideas.

A summary is a written statement that recaps important information contained in the longer original. “Get the Gist” is a summarizing strategy that will teach you to identify the main idea of a paragraph or short passage containing about 10 words or fewer.

Engage Prior/Informal Knowledge

What does “find the main idea of a text” mean? *(Answers will vary. Possible answers include: summarizing, saying what’s most important, and so forth.)*

In order to keep track of ideas in a challenging text, effective readers identify the main idea of short sections of text while they read. “Get the Gist” is a strategy that can help you do this.

Teacher Note

Because Get the Gist asks students to identify the main idea in small sections of text, a prereading activity such as Preview might provide a good foundation for this lesson.

Demonstrate

1. Introduce the Get the Gist strategy.

Today we will learn a strategy to find the main idea of a small section of text. This method is called “Get the Gist.” A good “gist statement” contains information that will help you to

remember the important details in a paragraph. Creating gist statements as you read helps you follow the essential ideas in a passage.

Point to the *TM#1: Demonstrate—Gist Statements Poster*.

A gist statement is a summary containing about 10 words or fewer that identifies the most important “who” or “what” of a text, and the most important information about that “who” or “what.” The gist statement must be in your own words. You will learn how to develop a gist statement, which represents the main idea of a paragraph or short section of text.

2. Model identifying the “who” or “what” and the most important information about the “who” or “what.”

Display the *TM#2: Demonstrate—Passage and Gist Log*. Cover the *Gist Log* at the bottom.

Follow along as I read the first paragraph. Listen carefully for the “who” or “what” that the paragraph is about.

“In the 1920s, two pennies would buy you a newspaper from a street vendor. These days, people don't even bother picking up pennies off the street.”

Who or what is this paragraph about? (*pennies*) The “who” or “what” that this paragraph is about is *pennies*. The paragraph tells me that people used to use pennies to buy things, but now they just leave them lying in the street.

Uncover the first row of the *Gist Log*.

The Gist Log helps me track this information as I read. I have written the “who” or “what” that the passage is about—*pennies*—and the most important information about *pennies*. In the last column, I turned that into a gist statement of nine words by putting it into my own words.

Notice that I shortened the information in column 3 when I wrote it in my own words. “To buy things” means to have

value. “People leave them in the street” means they don’t have value. So I wrote that pennies “used to have value, but now they don’t.”

Point to the second paragraph of the passage.

Follow along as I read the second paragraph. Listen carefully for the “who” or “what” that the paragraph is about.

“The sad fact is that pennies have lost value to the point that they are no longer useful as a form of payment. What's more, it now costs more than a penny to make a penny, highlighting the silliness of continuing to use the coin.”

Who or what is this paragraph about? (*pennies*) There are two pieces of information about pennies in this paragraph. The first is that they’re not valuable or useful, and the second is that it actually costs more to make them than they’re worth.

Display *TM#3: Demonstrate—Creating Gist Statements*.

If a paragraph has more than one piece of information, I create a gist statement by thinking about which information is the most important. I also decide if one of the ideas is included in another idea.

In this case, the idea that the penny is not valuable or useful is included in the idea that it costs more to make them than they’re worth. So I’m going to use this information to write my gist statement.

Display the *TM#2: Demonstrate—Passage and Gist Log* again. Write “Pennies are worth less than they cost to make” in the last column.

3. Model how to evaluate the gist statement by answering the questions on the *TM#1: Demonstrate—Gist Statements Poster*.

Do my gist statements include the “who” or the “what”? (yes)

Do my gist statements contain only the most important information? (yes)

Do my gist statements combine ideas if I need to? *(yes)*

Is the gist statement in my own words? *(yes)*

Does the gist statement contain about 10 or fewer words? *(yes)*

Practice

1. Practice creating gist statements, with class input.

Display the *TM#4: Practice—Passage and Gist Log*, and direct students' attention to their copies.

This passage was written by someone who thinks we should keep the penny. Follow along as I read the first paragraph. Listen carefully for the “who” or “what” that the paragraph is about.

“Does it still make sense to keep the penny when so many more purchases are made today with credit cards, and the cost to make coins has increased? The answer, for a number of reasons, is definitely ‘yes.’”

Who or what is this paragraph about? *(pennies)* **The “who” or “what” that this paragraph is about is *pennies*. Write *pennies* in the second column of the *Gist Log*.**

Complete the *Gist Log* at the bottom, and ensure that students complete theirs.

What is the most important information about pennies in this paragraph? *(Pennies aren't used as often as they once were, and they cost more, but we should keep them.)*

How can we turn that information into a gist statement containing about 10 words or fewer? Remember to keep the most important information and combine ideas if needed.
(Answers will vary. One possible answer: Even though there are downsides, we should keep pennies.)

Point to the second paragraph of the passage.

Follow along as I read the second paragraph. Listen carefully for the “who” or “what” that the paragraph is about.

“First, people benefit from having a low-value coin. The penny helps keep high prices in check. The alternative to the penny is rounding costs to the nearest nickel. But that will make goods and services more expensive: Since the objective of any business is to maximize profits, most prices would be rounded up—and that would hurt people every time they shop.”

Who or what is this paragraph about? (*pennies*)

 <p>Watch For</p>	<p>Students might focus on what they last read and identify “nickels” or “business” as the most important <i>who</i> or <i>what</i>. Explain that nickels and business are only discussed in order to highlight the importance of the penny in keeping prices down.</p>
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What is the most important information about pennies in this paragraph? (*Getting rid of pennies would make prices go up.*)

That statement is already a gist statement containing 10 words or fewer, so we can copy it in column 3.

2. Students work in pairs to complete the *SB#1: Practice—Passage and Gist Log* for a section of text from the day’s reading.

Distribute copies of text from the day’s reading. Have students complete the *Gist Log* for the passage you have provided. Have students restate the instructions and check for understanding. Set the timer for 5 minutes.

Circulate among the students, check for understanding, and provide corrective feedback as needed.

3. Review student responses.

When 5 minutes have passed, stop students. Ask for volunteers to share the Gist Statements they created. Provide corrective feedback and have students make corrections or additions to their papers as necessary.

Independent Practice

1. Have students complete the *SB#3: Independent Practice*.
2. Collect the materials, score the work, and check for mastery.