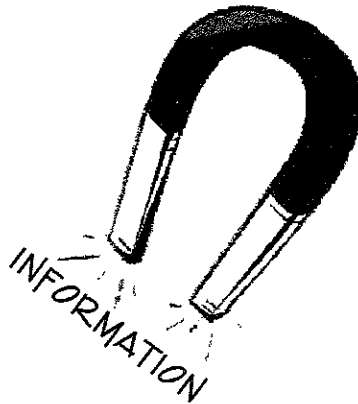


Magnet Summaries

Magnet Summaries help students expand on key terms or concepts from a reading. These “magnet” words help students organize information that becomes the basis for student-created summaries (Buehl, 2001).

Steps:

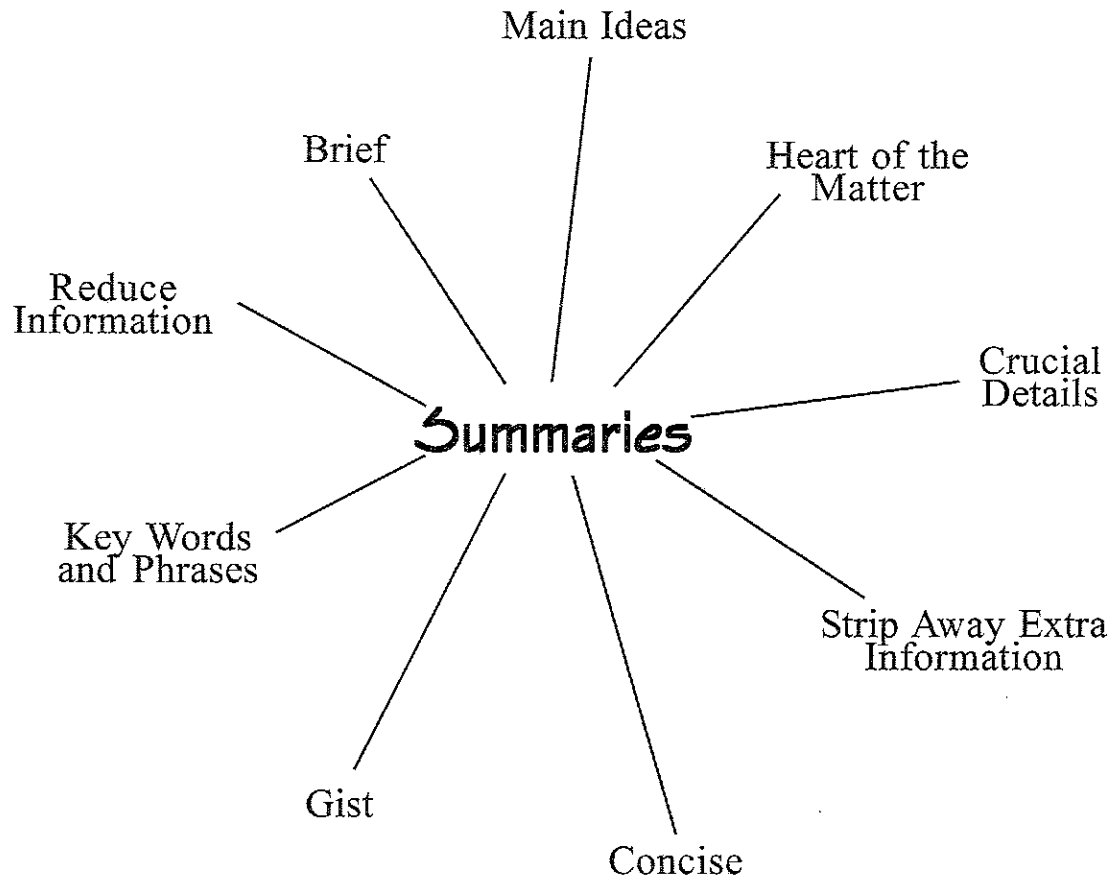
1. Introduce the concept of magnet words by connecting to students’ prior knowledge of magnets. Buehl suggests that just as magnets attract metal, magnet words attract information.
2. Instruct students to read a short piece of text.
 - As students read, they should look for key concepts that seem to organize the material.
 - After students have finished reading the material, discuss possible magnet words.
 - As a class, select one word to serve as the magnet term; write it on the chalkboard or on an overhead transparency. (When introducing the strategy, consider selecting the magnet words in advance rather than allowing students to generate the word choice.)
3. With the class, generate additional words, ideas, and details from the short reading that support the magnet word. Record the details on the chalkboard or transparency.
4. As a class or in small groups, write a paragraph using the magnet word and the details.
5. Assign the remaining text for students to read. Students can read cooperatively or independently but provide each student with several large index cards for additional magnet words and supporting details from the text. As they read the remainder of the text, they create magnet cards for selected terms.
6. Place students in cooperative learning groups. Students share cards and create summaries.
 - On the back of each magnet card write a summary statement.
 - Refine the magnet card summary statements into a summary paragraph.



Sources:

- Buehl, Doug. *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. 2nd edition. Newark, DE: IRA, 2001, 80-82.
- . “Magnet Summaries.” *WiLearns*. 15 June 2006
<<http://wilearns.state.wi.us/apps/default.asp?cid=18>>.
- Sejnost, Roberta, and Sharon Thiese. *Reading and Writing Across Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2006, Chapter 5.
- Urquhart, Vicki, and Monette McIver. *Teaching Writing in the Content Areas*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, McRel, 2005, 160-163.

Magnet Summaries



Magnet Summary Example Paragraph

A strong summary reduces information from a piece of text to get at the crucial details. Good summary writers are able to strip away the extra verbiage and go straight to the heart of the matter. These writers retain the main ideas and the key words and phrases. As a result, they record the gist of an article in a brief and concise manner.