

Comprehension Instructional Routine: Create a Summary from Expository Text

Prerequisites: Students must be fluent in finding the main idea before learning a summarization strategy.

Preparation/Materials: One large copy and student copies of “Alligator Nests,” one large copy and student copies of summary graphic organizer, pencils

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- *Italicized type is what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say
- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slides finger under the underlined letter(s) or word(s)



Note: This routine consists of three lessons.

Day 1

Read “Alligator Nests” text with students so they are familiar with the text and its vocabulary. Sequence the important events from the story using the large summary graphic organizer.

Day 2

TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to summarize a text.

TEACHER MODELS TASK

When we summarize a text, we find all the main ideas of the text. Together, all of the main ideas are called the summary. The summary is a shortened version of the text.

For this lesson on summarization, we will read the “Alligator Nests” text again. This text should already be familiar to you.

Display the large teacher’s copy of “Alligator Nests.” Pass out student copies of “Alligator Nests.”

The title of our text is “Alligator Nests.” Listen and follow along on your own copies as I read.

Point to each word as you read aloud from the large copy of the text.

Alligator Nests

1 A female alligator builds her nest in early April. **2** First, she uses her body and tail to clear an area that is sheltered and near water. **3** Second, she uses her jaws to find vegetation like grass, leaves, sticks and dirt. **4** After this, she builds a mound and digs a hole in it with her back legs. **5** The nest is finished.

6 Next, the female alligator lays 20-70 eggs. **7** Then she covers the eggs with the vegetation to keep them warm. **8** The eggs are buried 3-14 inches deep in the nest. **9** During this time, the alligator protects her nest from predators such as raccoons, opossums and skunks. **10** Never go near an alligator’s nest!

11 After 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch. **12** Then, the new babies make a sound called yerping and the female alligator opens the nest. **13** Finally, the alligator helps some of the babies out of the eggs by rolling the eggs in her mouth. **14** Some baby alligators stay near the nest for about two years.

Now you will read “Alligator Nests” with me, one paragraph at a time. You will read from your copy and I’ll read from mine. Look at paragraph 1.

Ready? Read aloud with students, pointing to each word on the large copy of the text so they have a model to follow if necessary.

1 A female alligator builds her nest in early April. **2** First, she uses her body and tail to clear an area that is covered and near water. **3** Second, she uses her jaws to find vegetation like grass, leaves, sticks and dirt. **4** After this, she builds a mound and digs a hole in it with her back legs. **5** The nest is finished.

Display the summary graphic organizer. Pass out student copies of the summary graphic organizer. Teacher and students point to each section as it is mentioned.

We will use this graphic organizer to help us summarize “Alligator Nests.” The organizer consists of three parts. On the left side, are the main details from the “Alligator Nests” text. Point to the section for details. We identified the main details the first time we read the text on Day 1. In the middle, we will write the main idea from each paragraph. Point to the section for main ideas. Finally, on the right side, we will write a summary paragraph. Point to the section for the summary paragraph. We will write the summary at the end, once we have all of the main ideas.

Reviewing important details is helpful before finding the main idea. Touch number 1 on your graphic organizer. Let’s read aloud the important events or details of paragraph 1 together.

Ready? *Point to each detail for paragraph 1 as you read aloud with students.*

- alligator clears an area with her body
- uses jaws to find vegetation
- builds mound and digs hole with back legs

Now I will identify the main idea from paragraph 1. This can be tricky because there are many important details about alligators in the first paragraph.

First, I name who or what this paragraph is mostly about.

This paragraph is mostly about the female alligator.

Then I ask, “What is the most important thing about the female alligator?”

Model a think aloud.

To find the most important thing about the female alligator, I need to think about how the details are alike. In the first detail, the alligator uses her body to clear an area. Then, she uses her jaws in the next detail. And once again, in the last detail, she uses a part of her body to build a mound. All of the details tell that she uses her body to prepare the nest. Therefore, the most important thing about the female alligator is this:

The female alligator uses all parts of her body to build her nest.

This is the main idea of paragraph 1.

Point to the main idea section of graphic organizer. Students will write the main idea on their graphic organizer while the teacher writes the main idea on the large graphic organizer.

We will write ‘the female alligator uses all parts of her body to build her nest’ in the column under main idea on our summary graph organizers.

What will we write?

- The female alligator uses all parts of her body to build her nest.

Write on your own graphic organizer and I will write on the large graphic organizer.

Verify that students are writing in the correct place.

Now let’s do paragraph 2 together.

TEACHER & STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

When we summarize a text, we find all the main ideas of the text.

What do we do when we summarize a text?

- We find all the main ideas of the text.

All the main ideas of the text are called the summary.

What are all the main ideas of the text called?

- All the main ideas are called the summary.

Now we'll read paragraph 2 of "Alligator Nests" together.

You will read from your copy and I'll read from mine. Look at paragraph 2.

Ready?

Read aloud with students, pointing to each word on the large text. Students read from their own copies.

6 Next, the female alligator lays 20-70 eggs. **7** Then she covers the eggs with the vegetation to keep them warm. **8** The eggs are buried 3-14 inches deep in the nest. **9** During this time, the alligator protects her nest from predators such as raccoons, opossums and skunks. **10** Never go near an alligator's nest!

Point to the details on the summary graphic organizer. Verify that students have their graphic organizers.

Remember, reviewing important details is helpful before finding the main idea. Let's read the important events or details from paragraph 2 together. Touch number 2 on your graphic organizer.

Ready? *Point to each detail for paragraph 2 as you read aloud with students.*

- She lays 20-70 eggs.
- She covers the eggs with vegetation.
- The alligator protects her nest from predators.

Now we will identify the main idea from paragraph 2.

First, we name who or what the paragraph is mostly about.

What do we name?

- We name who or what the paragraph is mostly about.

Then, we ask, "What is the most important thing about the who or the what?"

What is the next thing we ask?

- What is the most important thing about the who or the what?

Paragraph 2 is mostly about the female alligator.

Who is paragraph 2 mostly about?

- It's about the female alligator.

Now we ask, "What is the most important thing about the female alligator?"

To answer this, we think about the details from paragraph 2 and how they are alike.

What do we think about?

- We think about the details and how they are alike.

Model think aloud.

The details from paragraph 2 tell us about her eggs, how she covers them, and how she protects them from other animals. She protects the eggs to keep them safe. So, based on the information from all of the details, the most important thing about the female alligator is this:

She protects the eggs in her nest from predators.

What is the most important thing about the female alligator?

- She protects the eggs in her nest from predators.

Yes. This is the main idea of paragraph 2.

We will write 'she protects the eggs in her nest from predators' in the column under main idea on our summary graph organizers.

What will we write for the main idea from paragraph 2?

- She protects the eggs in her nest from predators.

Write on your graphic organizer and I'll write on the large graphic organizer.

Let's look at our graphic organizers. Now we have the main idea of paragraph 1 and the main idea of paragraph 2.

After we complete the main idea of paragraph 3, we will write the summary. We write the summary at the end.

When do we write the summary?

- We write the summary at the end.

Now it's your turn to find the main idea of paragraph 3.

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

What do we do when we summarize a text?

We find all the main ideas of the text.

What are the main ideas of the text called?

The main ideas are called the summary.

Let's read paragraph 3 of "Alligator Nests" together.

You will read from your copy and I'll read from mine. Look at paragraph 3.

Ready? Read aloud with students, pointing to each word on the large text.

11 After 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch. **12** Then, the new babies make a sound called yerping and the female alligator opens the nest. **13** Finally, the alligator helps some of the babies out of the eggs by rolling the eggs in her mouth. **14** Some baby alligators stay near the nest for about two years.

Point to the summary graphic organizer.

Reviewing important details is helpful before finding the main idea. Let's read the important events or details from paragraph 3 together. Touch number 3 on your graphic organizer.

Ready? Point to each detail for paragraph 3 as you read aloud with students.

- after 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch
- the new babies make a yerping sound and the female alligator opens the nest
- alligator rolls eggs in mouth to help babies out
- baby alligators stay near the nest for two years

Now you will tell the main idea from paragraph 3.

What is the first thing you name?

We name who or what the paragraph is mostly about.

Then, what do you ask?

We ask, "What is the most important thing about the who or the what?"

Name who or what this paragraph is mostly about.

If students respond that the paragraph is mostly about the female alligator and the babies hatching, or mostly about the babies, then respond with the following think aloud.

This paragraph mentions the baby alligators and the female alligator. So, how do we name who this paragraph is mostly about? With difficult paragraphs, it is helpful to look at the details again to see how they are alike. When I read the details, I see that the paragraph is definitely about both the female alligator and her babies. Let's think about the action and decide who does the most, the babies or the female alligator?

What is the first thing that happens when the eggs begin to hatch?

The female alligator opens the nest when she hears the yeping sound.

What is the next thing that happens?

The female alligator rolls the eggs in her mouth to help the babies out.

What happens next?

The babies stay near the nest for two years.

If the babies stay near the nest for two years, then that must mean they still have the protection of their mother. So, who has the most action during the egg hatching process?

The female alligator has the most action.

Now that you've reviewed the details again, name who or what this paragraph is mostly about.

This paragraph is mostly about the female alligator.

Yes. That is correct. The female alligator does many things during this paragraph. She is very busy!

Tell the most important thing about the female alligator.

The female alligator helps her eggs hatch.

Yes. This is the main idea from paragraph three.

If students respond that the female alligator opens the nest and rolls the eggs in her mouth to help the eggs hatch, this is acceptable. Tell them that they are two important details that support the hatching of the eggs.

Nice work! You just found the main idea from a difficult paragraph!

Write the main idea of paragraph three on your summary graphic organizer.

What will you write?

The female alligator helps her eggs hatch.

Write on your graphic organizer and I'll write on the large graphic organizer.

Now we have the main idea from each paragraph of "Alligator Nests."

Let's review, starting with the first main idea. Read from your own graphic organizer while I read from the large graphic organizer.

Point to the large summary graphic organizer. Verify that students are pointing to the main idea from paragraph 1.

Ready?

- The female alligator uses all parts of her body to build her nest.
- She protects the eggs in her nest from predators.
- The female alligator helps her eggs hatch.

Day 3

TEACHER AND STUDENTS CREATE THE SUMMARY TOGETHER

Let's look at our graphic organizers. We have the main idea of paragraph 1, the main idea of paragraph 2, and the main idea of paragraph 3. Now we will write the summary.

What do we do next?

We write the summary.

We write the summary at the end. When do we write the summary?

We write the summary at the end.

Yes, we write the summary at the end, after having found the main idea from each paragraph.

Point to the summary section of the large graphic organizer.

When we write the summary paragraph, it is a little different than telling the summary. If I told you the summary, I'd just tell all of the main ideas.

Point to the main ideas on the graphic organizer.

However, when we write a summary paragraph, we start the paragraph by first writing a topic sentence.

The topic is what the entire text is mostly about. What is the topic?

- The topic is what the entire text is mostly about.

To figure out the topic of a text, we think about the title and each paragraph that we read. What do we think about to find the topic?

- We think about the title and each paragraph.

The title is "Alligator Nests." I know that every paragraph was mostly about the female alligator and her nest. Is this text mostly about the female alligator and her nest?

- Yes.

Based on the main idea of each paragraph in "Alligator Nests," we know this text is about the steps the female alligator takes to prepare and protect her nest while she waits for her eggs to hatch.

Another clue to finding the topic is to read the first sentence in the first paragraph of the text. What's another clue to finding the topic of a text?

- Another clue is to read the first sentence.

Let's look at the first paragraph. Take your copies of the alligator text. Listen as I read the first sentence.

A female alligator builds her nest in early April.

This sentence confirms that the text is mostly about the female alligator and her nest.

So let's think of a good topic sentence to begin our summary paragraph.

Let students respond. If necessary, remind them that the topic is what the text is mostly about. Encourage students to say the topic sentence in their own words, and, to say it as briefly as possible. Once you have received suggestions, say the following:

Based on your suggestions, this will be the topic sentence for our summary paragraph. The female alligator takes many steps to prepare a nest for her babies.

We are going to write the topic sentence on our graphic organizer in the summary section.

This is the first sentence. We will write 'the female alligator takes many steps to prepare a nest for her babies'.

What will we write?

- The female alligator takes many steps to prepare a nest for her babies.

Write on your graphic organizer and I will write on the large one.

Verify that students are writing in the summary section.

After the topic sentence, we write all the main ideas.

What do we write after the topic sentence?

- We write all the main ideas.

Let's do that now. Write each of the main ideas that you have on your graphic organizer in the correct order, starting with the main idea from paragraph 1, then paragraph 2, and then paragraph 3.

Now the summary of "Alligator Nests" is complete.

A summary helps us to better understand and remember the author's main message.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Provide students with other expository texts. Finding the main idea from expository text is challenging. Start with important details in each paragraph, then find the main idea from those important details; finally, make a summary paragraph from all of the main ideas.

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

If students are unable to read the text with teacher support, they may listen and follow along as the teacher reads aloud. If students are unable to distinguish important details in the paragraph from the main idea, say the following: All details in a text may be important. However, a summary must be shorter. So we try to find the most important message the author wants us to know from each paragraph. When we write the summary paragraph, we only include details that support and strengthen the main ideas.

Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:

- Review the First Grade Comprehension Instructional Routine: Identify the Main Idea from Text, and, the Second Grade Comprehension Instructional Routine: Create a Summary from Narrative Text for students struggling to find the main idea.
- Pair students for an oral activity. Each student takes turns retelling the story based on the summary, using the graphic organizer as a guide. Students use their own graphic organizers with the details, main ideas, and summary.
- Assess student understanding of "Alligator Nests" by having individual students retell the main ideas, based on the summary. Students will use their own graphic organizers to guide them through the retell.
- Refine the summary paragraph of the "Alligator Nests" text by including signal words such as first, next, and finally to show the sequence of events that occurs as the female alligator prepares the nest for her babies.
- Model how to include one or two of the most important supporting details in addition to the main ideas in the summary paragraph. Explain that some supporting details can be helpful in a summary if they are part of the author's main message. Use the "Alligator Nests" text. Details that one might include in the written summary are: She opens the nest, and, she rolls the eggs in her mouth to help the babies out. Do this when summarizing other expository texts.
- Model finding the main idea and summarizing frequently. Use different types of text, such as science, social studies, and literature. Think aloud so that students understand how you made your decisions. Students need to see and practice this process frequently in order to internalize the steps.
- Read chapter books and stop to summarize after every chapter as you read aloud to students. Have students do the same as they read chapter books. It helps to monitor understanding while reading.
- Practice finding the topic of a text by first identifying the text structure. Recognizing the text structure, (e.g., compare and contrast, sequence of events, cause and effect, problem and solution) assists in identifying the topic of the text. The text structure of "Alligator Nests" is sequence of events. If students understand that the sequence of events describes the steps the female alligator takes to prepare her nest, then they understand the topic of the text.

Below are links to FCRR Student Center Activities which provide additional independent practice for this skill.

- [C.012 Just the Facts](#)
- [C.031 Sum Summary!](#)

Title: Alligator Nests

Topic: _____

Details

Main Idea

Summary

Paragraph 1

alligator clears an area with her body

uses jaws to find vegetation

builds mound and digs hole with back legs

Paragraph 2

she lays 20-70 eggs

she covers the eggs with vegetation

the alligator protects her nest from predators

Paragraph 3

after 65-70 days the eggs begin to hatch

the new babies make a yelping sound and the female alligator opens the nest

alligator rolls eggs in mouth to help babies out

baby alligators stay near the nest for two years

Alligator Nests

- 1** A female alligator builds her nest in early April. **2** First, she uses her body and tail to clear an area that is sheltered and near water. **3** Second, she uses her jaws to find vegetation like grass, leaves, sticks and dirt. **4** After this, she builds a mound and digs a hole in it with her back legs. **5** The nest is finished.
- 6** Next, the female alligator lays 20-70 eggs. **7** Then she covers the eggs with the vegetation to keep them warm. **8** The eggs are buried 3-14 inches deep in the nest. **9** During this time, the alligator protects her nest from predators such as raccoons, opossums and skunks. **10** Never go near an alligator's nest!
- 11** After 65-70 days, the eggs begin to hatch. **12** Then, the new babies make a sound called yelping and the female alligator opens the nest. **13** Finally, the alligator helps some of the babies out of the eggs by rolling the eggs in her mouth. **14** Some baby alligators stay near the nest for about two years.

Title: _____

Topic: _____

Summary

Main Idea

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3
