



DRAWING CONCLUSIONS THINKING GUIDE

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, students learn to use a graphic organizer to structure the process of drawing logical conclusions based on large quantities of information. It helps to guide students to make meaning out of information that might otherwise be overwhelming. Students learn to follow the following steps:

1. Gather information.
2. Find relationships.
3. Describe categories.
4. Combine into organizing idea.
5. Draw conclusion and write concluding statement.

LEARNING STRATEGIES Determining Importance, Inferring, Synthesizing

LESSON PLAN STAGE Investigation, Synthesis

SKILLS Summarizing

PREPARATION

- Find or create a graphic organizer that lists these steps and that leaves space for students to write a concluding statement. You may consider organizing the steps in a funnel shape, to emphasize the idea that students are paring down a large quantity of information to arrive at an essential conclusion.
- Identify the text(s) (written, film, or lecture) that you would like students to use.

ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

- 1 Teacher displays and reviews the steps of drawing conclusions. Teacher models by using these steps on a sample text.

Expect students to need significant modeling, direct instruction, and closely monitored practice when they are initially learning this process. It may help to focus on just a step or two of the process each day over several days. Eventually, students should be able to use these steps even on a very large quantity of information, such as when conducting a large-scale research project.



DRAWING CONCLUSIONS - THINKING GUIDE

ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

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| <p>2 Teacher distributes text(s) to the students. Students read (or watch) them as a class, individually or in pairs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Initially students should practice on a single, relatively simple text, but then can move towards longer and more complicated texts, and multiple texts.You can confer with students as they are reading, gauging their understanding of the text and asking them about their thoughts |
| <p>3 Either alone or individually, in writing or in conversation, students reflect on their learning process.</p> | <p>Students respond to questions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">How well did this activity help you to draw conclusions about the text?How is this activity similar to and different from the way you usually try to understand text? In what ways is it more or less effective?When might this strategy be most useful to you? |
| <p>4 Step 1: Students gather information. They identify ideas in the text that are important, and they record these ideas on index cards.</p> | <p>Writing ideas on index cards helps students to arrange them visually and flexibly. Another alternative is to type their notes, or to use a virtual Post-it note app.</p> |
| <p>5 Step 2: Students seek relationships among the various ideas they have written, and organize them spatially in a way that makes sense.</p> | <p>You can cue students with questions such as: “Which ideas go together?” or “How are the ideas connected?” Help them to recognize and represent semantic relationships such as cause-effect, category-member, idea-example, or entity-attribute.</p> |
| <p>6 Step 3: Students write one or two sentences summarizing each of the primary categories or relationships they identified.</p> | <p>This step encourages students to integrate information at an intermediate level, before they are required to synthesize information overall. In this step students are asked to consolidate each of the component main ideas in the text. This is a great time to confer to check for understanding, since students who are confused at this step will not be successful in subsequent steps.</p> |
| <p>7 Step 4: Students examine all the sentences they wrote in step 3, and they combine these into several organizing statements that capture the big ideas and trends.</p> | <p>Here students are asked to synthesize and integrate the component ideas that they identified in step 3.</p> |
| <p>8 Step 5: Students critically examine the organizing ideas that they wrote about in step 4, and determine if they make sense. If they make sense, then students write a concluding statement that summarizes the main thing they learned from the text. If the organizing ideas do not make sense, then students return to step 4, considering a better way to represent the ideas.</p> | <p>The concluding statement should be a full sentence or set of sentences that answers these questions about the text: “What does this mean? What is the main point?”</p> |