

## **Big6 #4: Use of Information**

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### **4.1 Engage in the source (read, listen to, view, touch, etc.)**

Students are still looking for keywords and related words, skimming and scanning, and reading for more detail. Skimming requires the reader to read quickly and look for main ideas or supporting details in a paragraph (Phipps, 4-5). Skimming requires the reader to take in large chunks of text at one time. The reader is concerned with getting an idea of the whole passage. Comprehension does not depend on reading every word. Teach students to read the first and last paragraph of sections for summaries of the content and the first and last sentences of paragraphs to gain an impression of the topic (Cheek and Collins).

Scanning requires the student to “move his or her eyes quickly over a piece of reading material looking for one specific point, the words they are looking for jump off the page at them. It is employed for pinpointing needed facts or ideas from the text or the index. It involves skipping words, but the emphasis is on recognition the reader knows what to look for and rapidly scans until words are found and closer reading can occur” (Phipps, 4-5). Here is where students will look for keywords and related words.

### **4.2 Take out needed information**

The trash-n-treasure strategy will teach students how to take knowledge-level notes (“answers” to memory level questions) that reference materials will provide. This is an introductory lesson for students who do not have experience taking notes. Here is the process:

After identifying appropriate sections in the source by scanning to locate keywords and related words in the table of contents, index, headings, subheadings, and captions, students are ready to begin extracting needed information. Direct instruction is necessary the first few times students are required to take notes for an assignment. Frequent review will help students become independent users of the process. Relate note-taking to a pirate's treasure map (show one if necessary). The map itself is like the article or chapter of a book containing information about the topic. The X on the map, which marks the exact location of the buried treasure, is the section of the text containing needed information, or an “answer” for specific questions defined in the task. A pirate must dig for the treasure chest, tossing aside dirt, weeds, and rocks (trash). A researcher must dig to find words that help answer the questions (treasure words). He or she must “toss aside” unnecessary sentences, phrases, and words (trash words). Of course, these words are not trash to the original source, only to the researcher because they do not answer the questions defined in the task. Demonstrate this concept using an overhead projector and transparency of an encyclopedia article or section. The students should each have a copy of the article so they can follow along and practice the technique.

1. Show a prepared question, including the underlined keywords and list of related words.
2. Scan the article until the appropriate heading is located.
3. Place a slash at the end of the first sentence and read it. Ask “Does this sentence answer the question?”
4. If the answer is no, tell the students that that sentence is “trash” to them. Go on to the next sentence, placing a slash at the end.
5. If the answer is yes, underline the first phrase and ask if that phrase answers the question. If the answer is no, underline the next phrase and repeat the question.
6. If the answer is yes, read that phrase word by-word, asking which words are needed to answer the question these are treasure words. Circle those words, then write them in the appropriate place on the overhead data chart (see sample) or whichever organizer the students are using. Those that do not answer the question are trash words. Continue phrase by phrase and word by word until coming to the end of the sentence. Count the words in the sentence and then count the treasure words. Students are very impressed when you say, "The sentence has 17 words and I only needed to write four of them. I don't know about you, but I would rather write four than 17!"

7. Demonstrate the process again, allowing the students to practice, using copies of the article. Allow students to independently practice a few times before they begin their own research. The librarian and teacher should monitor each student's work, reteaching as necessary.

Once students understand the concept of “trash-n-treasure” words, they begin to write fewer and fewer unnecessary words. Third, fourth, and fifth graders can begin to understand the concept of not copying every word, but mastery should not be required.

When students have located and extracted adequate information for the stated task, encourage them to summarize as necessary and add written comments and reactions concerning the use of the notes in the final product or performance. To avoid plagiarism, the notes should be turned in with the final project, whether or not it is written. And, of course, the more creativity that the final project requires (Stripling and Pitts, 117), students have no reason to “copy from the encyclopedia.”

*There are basically four kinds of notes that students will take (Stripling and Pitts):*

**Citation**—specific details, facts, definition, statistics. These “answer” memory level questions. The trash-n-treasure method is used for this type of note taking.

**Summary**—read a large section for overall meaning and summarize it into 1-2 sentences. Used for beginning research, i.e., general explanatory material.

**Paraphrase**—smaller sections of text, students are putting information in their own words. Appropriate for supporting information, biographical information, predictions, hypothesis, and drawing conclusions. This is the type of note taking in which students frequently plagiarize.

**Quotation**—reserved for 1-2 sentence statements that prove a point or reveal an attitude. Especially appropriate for primary sources. Need footnote.

Works cited:

Cheek, Earl H., Jr. and Martha D., Collins. 1985. *Strategies For Reading*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

Phipps, Rita. 1983. *The Successful Student's handbook: A Step-By-Step Guide to Study, Reading, and Thinking Skills*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.

Stripling, Barbara K. and Judy M. Pitts. 1988. *Brainstorms and Blueprints: Teaching Library Research as a Thinking Process*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.

*Other considerations for Use of Information (some from Loertscher and Woolls):*

- Critical evaluation is essential here, especially when students are conducting their own web searching. There are many good evaluation instruments for web sites (see one provided or go to Kathy Schrock's site). Time well spent would be a lesson or two on web site evaluation. This is often approached in Big6 #2: Information Seeking Strategies. It doesn't really matter if you evaluate web sites in Big6 #2 or #4, as long as it is done!
- Students should be taught that during the reading process, they should recognize main ideas since writers of nonfiction have for 200 years been using this technique in their writing style.
- Students need to take the time and teachers need to build in the time to actually read, view, listen, observe, collect, and compute using the materials and information they have located.
- Make sure students have a background knowledge of a topic before they attack multiple sources on the topic.
- Use viewing and listening together as a class activity to guide attention for discussion and for reflection.