

Lesson 11: Chapter 4

3 Class Periods

**Reading Skills: Determining Importance
 Summarizing**

Purpose:

Being able to determine the important and less important ideas in text is an essential reading skill – especially when working with non-fiction text. The act of summarizing requires prioritizing ideas and then conveying them in a manner that does not replicate the author’s original language. Chapter 4 offers a wonderful opportunity for the teacher to model and for the students to practice these skills.

I felt that it would be nearly impossible for students to summarize an entire chapter at once; I knew their skills were not sophisticated enough to handle that big a task. Therefore, I divided the chapter into sections that I thought were manageable. I also looked for groups of paragraphs containing related ideas to make the process easier for the students. These sections are noted at the end of this lesson plan.

In addition, a sample summary of the sections has been provided for your reference. Please do not regard my section-by-section summary of this chapter or any others as the absolute authority about the ideas that should be included. All summaries are a reflection of choices that were made about which ideas were important enough to include. These choices are, to some extent, a matter of judgment and opinion; this is what makes summarizing a difficult skill to teach. Your greatest challenge in teaching summarizing will be explaining to your students the reasons why you made the choices you made – both to include certain pieces of information and to leave out others. My reasoning for including some ideas but not others may not exactly match your reasoning.

Materials:

Each student will need a book or photocopy of Chapter 4 with stopping points marked. An overhead projector, blank transparencies, and overhead markers.

Process:

The teacher and students will work through this chapter together. The teacher will provide lots of modeling and support in the beginning. As the students demonstrate increasing mastery of the skills, the teacher will gradually withdraw support and push students to work with increasing levels of independence.

Read section #1 aloud while the students read along. Think aloud about the main idea(s) of the section. Then write a sentence or two that summarizes this section. Repeat this process for sections #2 and #3.

When you feel that the students are ready, read aloud while they read along. Then ask them to write a sentence or two that summarizes the main ideas of the section. Monitor the students as they work. After allowing a few minutes of work time, show the students your summary of section #4 and ask them to check it against their own work. Clarify and explain as needed. Continue in this same way for several more sections until you feel the students are ready to take another step toward independence.

The next step for Chapter 4 is to assign the students several sections at once to read and summarize on their own before checking. Decide how large a portion to assign for independent work based on your judgment of your students' proficiency.

The last step of this lesson is to have the students consolidate their section-by-section summary into a final summary of the chapter. Related ideas should be grouped together into paragraphs. Tell the students that it is permissible to change the order of ideas from the section-by-section summary in order to group them together. It is also okay to delete some ideas that may have been important in their section but may not be as important in the over-all view of the chapter.

This final summary was an important diagnostic tool. I found that most students simply recopied their section-by-section summaries. Frequently, they used no paragraph breaks at all. Some ideas may have been important within a particular section but were not so important in comparison with other sections of the chapter. In other words, some ideas made the preliminary cut for the section-by-section summary but not the final cut for inclusion in the chapter summary. My students did not get this. They did not delete less important ideas or rearrange related ideas so as to group them together. I realized that they were lacking the skills needed to perform these tasks; therefore, I designed the lesson for Chapter 5 to address these needs.

Sections – Chapter 4

1. Page 45 “On arriving in Rotterdam...” to page 46 “...she cried all the time.”
2. Page 46 “After three months...” to page 47 “...pour into the country.”
3. Page 47 “In the fall of 1939...” to page 48 “...longed-for visa for America.”
4. Page 48 “We worried...” to page 49 “...be on our way!”
5. Page 49 “While Ruth and Walter...” to page 50 “...puppy on a leash.”
6. Page 50 “In those early months...” to page 51 “...my appreciation.”
7. Page 51 “Spring was...” to page 51 “...for the answer.”
8. Page 51 “On May 10...” to page 52 “...in the Netherlands.”
9. Page 52 “At first the changes...” to page 54 “...went into hiding.”
10. Page 54 “At Westerbork...” to page 54 “...every twenty-four hours.”
11. Page 55 “What did we know...” to page 55 “...refused to believe them.”
12. Page 55 “On July 15...” to page 56 “...strolled on the boulevard.”
13. Page 56 “As the months went by...” to page 57 “...room to breathe.”
14. Page 57 “It was now a little more...” to page 59 “...no gas chambers.”
15. Page 58 “When, on January thirtieth...” to page 59 “would be different.”

Four Perfect Pebbles Ch.4
Summary by Sections

1. The Blumenthal family lived in several refugee camps after arriving in Holland. (January 1939) (14 words)
2. After three months, the family moved to Gouda, Holland to work in a camp for refugee children. Meanwhile the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and Poland in September 1939. This caused more refugees to look for a safe haven. (40 words)
3. Late in 1939 the Blumenthals arrived at Westerbork refugee camp. They had a small house in which they could live as a family. Ruth and Walter worked; there was some schooling for the children. (34 words)
4. In January 1940 the Blumenthals received their visas for America. They made reservations on a ship scheduled to leave Holland in March 1940. (23 words)
5. At Westerbork families visited and children played. The Blumenthals lived as normal a life as is possible in a refugee camp. (21 words)
6. Food at Westerbork was “plain but plentiful.” Luxuries like sweets were rare. (12 words)
7. The Blumenthal’s date for sailing to America was postponed until June 1940. In April, the Nazis invaded Denmark and Norway. (20 words)
8. In May 1940 the Nazis invaded Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. The warehouse in which the Blumenthals possessions were stored was destroyed. There was no longer any hope that the family would sail for America from Holland; they were caught in the Nazis trap. (44 words)
9. Westerbork gradually became more crowded. The Nazis imposed policies in Holland similar to those they had imposed on German Jews: registration of businesses, loss of jobs and school, property confiscated, yellow star, teenagers “called up” for “work camps.” (38 words)
10. On 1 July 1942 the Germans took over command of Westerbork. Watchtowers and barbed-wire fences were installed. Daily roll calls began. The name was changed to “Police-Supervised Transit Camp, Westerbork.” The camp began to function as a center for deporting Jews to killing centers like Auschwitz. (47 words)
11. Rumors about death camps, like Auschwitz, were spreading around Westerbork the summer of 1942. Most people didn’t want to believe them. (21 words)

12. Starting 15 July 1942, one or two trains left Westerbork each week. On each train 1000+ people were loaded into freight cars with only buckets for toilets. (27 words)
13. Westerbork became very crowded as Jews were rounded up, processed through the camp, then shipped East. The Blumenthals were forced to share their small house with another family. (28 words)
14. Walter applied, through the International Red Cross, to be exchanged for German POW's and allowed to immigrate to Palestine. (19 words)
15. In February 1944, the Blumenthals left Westerbork for Celle, Germany where they hoped the exchange process would happen. Marion was 9 and Albert 11; they had lived at Westerbork for four years. (32 words)

Approximately 400 Words Total

Four Perfect Pebbles Ch.4
Summary

The Blumenthal family lived in several refugee camps after arriving in Holland in January 1939. Meanwhile the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and Poland in September 1939.

Late in 1939 the Blumenthals arrived at Westerbork refugee camp. They lived as a family in a small house. Ruth and Walter worked, and the children received some schooling. During their free time, families visited and children played. Food at Westerbork was “plain but plentiful” although luxuries like sweets were rare.

In January 1940 the Blumenthals received their visas for America. They made reservations on a ship scheduled to leave Holland in March; however, the shipping company postponed their sailing date until June 1940. In April, the Nazis invaded Denmark and Norway.

In May 1940 the Nazis invaded Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. The warehouse in which the Blumenthals possessions were stored was destroyed. The family lost hope that they would sail for America from Holland; they were caught in the Nazi’s trap.

On 1 July 1942 the Germans took over command of Westerbork. They installed watchtowers and barbed-wire fences and began daily roll calls. The camp’s name was changed to “Police-Supervised Transit Camp, Westerbork.” It became very crowded as Jews were rounded up and processed through the camp; therefore, the Blumenthals were forced to share their small house with another family. The camp began to function as a center for deporting Jews to “the East.” Rumors about death camps, like Auschwitz, were spreading around Westerbork the summer of 1942, but most people didn’t want to believe them. Starting 15 July 1942, one or two trains left Westerbork each week. On each train 1000+ people were loaded into freight cars with only buckets for toilets.

Walter applied, through the International Red Cross, to be exchanged for German POW’s and allowed to immigrate to Palestine. In February 1944, the Blumenthals left Westerbork for Celle, Germany where they were hope the exchange process would happen. Marion was 9 and Albert 11; they had lived at Westerbork for four years.

Approximately 335 words