

Lesson 13: Chapter 5

2 Class Periods

Reading Skills: **Sequencing Ideas**
 Grouping Related Ideas
 Summarizing

Purpose:

When I read the final summaries for Chapter 5, I realized that my students were not able to make the leap from summarizing section-by-section to summarizing a whole chapter. They didn't know how to sequence ideas in a logical way. And they did not seem to know how to group similar ideas together into paragraphs. Those two skills are the focus of this lesson. Lesson 13 builds on the work done in Lesson 12. It would not need to be taught if your students were able to complete the whole-chapter summary satisfactorily.

Materials:

Photocopies of "Ch.5 Summary Cut-Apart."

These need to be cut into strips and place in an envelope. Each pair of students needs an envelope of containing sentence strips for the entire chapter summary. Transparencies of "Ch.5 Summary Cut-Apart" and "Ch.5 Summary OH"

Process:

I began by giving the students some feedback about their performance on the whole chapter summary. I started by telling them that deciding what's important is a really difficult skill and that they were making progress toward mastering it. I used the analogy of a target in darts or archery to illustrate the idea that I was seeing improvement in their choice of the ideas they included in their summaries. They were hitting the inside rings; they just weren't hitting the bull's eye yet. I also told them that what's important depends, in part, on the reason for their reading and summarizing. Because we were reading a memoir rather than a history book, our main purpose in reading and summarizing is to learn about and re-tell what happened to the Blumenthal family.

Next, I told the students that although I was seeing improvement in their choices about which ideas to write down, they were still having difficulty grouping related ideas together and sequencing ideas. The purpose of today's lesson was to help them practice those skills.

I divided the class into groups of two and gave each group an envelope filled with sentence strips. Together, the sentences made up my final summary of Chapter 5. Their job was to decide which sentences were related closely enough to make up a paragraph. And then, after figuring out which sentences went together to form each paragraph, they needed to arrange the paragraphs into a logical order.

Caution: This activity took more than one class period. I had to give the groups paper clips to secure the sentences that they thought went together. They packed everything back into the envelope and wrote their names on the outside so that they could easily pick up where they left off.

The next day, they finished grouping and sequencing. We talked about the fact that there could be very reasonable differences in the sequencing decisions groups made – especially concerning details. However, since the memoir is in chronological order, it would be most logical for the summary to also be in chronological order.

The last step of the lesson was checking group work against the original. I put a transparency of the cut-apart version of the summary on the overhead for the pairs to see how closely their sequence matched the version I wrote. Then I showed it to them the way it would look if the sentences of the paragraphs were written together – a final draft. I asked them to notice which ideas I grouped together into paragraphs. We talked about the differences between their versions and mine and the reasons for these differences.

NOTE: Any time I model my work for students, I try NOT to hold my work up as the definitive answer. I try to approach my students from the point-of-view of a more-experienced learner/ reader/ writer who has simply had more opportunity to practice than my students have had. I like to think of my modeling language skills for students as an apprentice - master craftsman relationship. I try to help them understand that, although there certainly will be high degrees of similarity between two different summaries of the same chapter, there is almost always more than one way to successfully accomplish the task. I simply try to show them one way it could be done.

Four Perfect Pebbles Ch.5
Summary: Cut-Apart

The Blumenthals felt uneasy as they boarded the overcrowded train destined for Celle, Germany in February 1944.

They feared that their train had no special status and were worried about being sent back to Germany as prisoners.

The train took the family to Bergen-Belsen where the conditions there were far worse than those at Westerbork.

However, they were still hopeful that they would soon be exchanged for German POW's.

In May 1944 the names of the exchange Jews were announced.

The Blumenthals names were not on the list.

When Walter approached the Nazi officer to politely inquire if a mistake had been made, he was beaten.

The Nazi's refusal to honor the Palestine certificate was their greatest disappointment and the end of all their hope.

The Blumenthals struggled to survive daily life at Bergen-Belsen.

Ruth was lucky to have a job in the kitchen where there was some chance to gather extra food.

Once a guard gave an apple to Albert, which he shared with the family. This small gesture of kindness was a "flicker of light in the darkness."

At Bergen-Belsen, the prisoners were forced to take monthly showers.

They had heard rumors of gas chambers that looked like showers at Auschwitz and were afraid that the showers at Bergen-Belsen might be the same.

Bergen-Belsen had a crematorium to burn the bodies of prisoners who died of starvation, exhaustion, and disease.

As the camp became more crowded and death rates increased, the crematorium could not keep up with the bodies.

Bodies were sometimes burned in open pits, buried in mass graves, or piled up aboveground.

After D-Day in June 1944, the Nazis began to lose the war.

To hide their crimes from the advancing Allied forces, the Nazis began to move prisoners into Germany.

Bergen-Belsen became even more overcrowded.

The winter of 1944-1945 was especially difficult for the Blumenthals.

It was bitterly cold.

The camp was horribly overcrowded.

Daily rations were far less than 600 calories per day.

There was not enough water for drinking, bathing, and washing clothes.

The inmates' clothes and hair were infected with lice.

In addition, typhus, a disease carried by lice, spread throughout the camp. The death toll continued to increase because of the horrid conditions and lack of food.

In early April 1945, Mama and Marion made a fire in their bunk and cooked some soup.

When the soup was almost done, they heard guards approaching.

As they tried to hide what they were doing, they spilled the soup on Marion's leg.

Because she did not cry out, the guards did not find out what they had been doing.

Within a short time, the burn became infected and Marion could not walk on the leg.

On 9 April 1945, the Blumenthals were loaded on a train heading east.

They had no idea where they were going or why.

On 15 April 1945, six days after the Blumenthals left, the British liberated Bergen-Belsen.

Aprox. 491 words

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