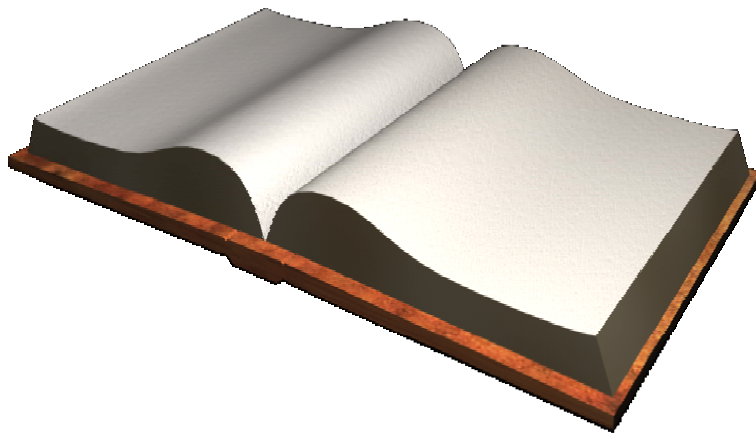


Ready, Set, GO!

Graphic Organizers for Reading Comprehension Across the Curriculum



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Session SS08

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Listen to the speaker's set of facts. Design a graphic organizer to help you remember the facts. Share your graphic organizer with a neighbor.

Why use graphic organizers?

Fact #1: Teachers nationwide are responsible for teaching strategies to prepare students for state reading assessments—and, more importantly, for success as life-long readers.

Fact #2: Graphic organizers help promote familiarity and mastery of these strategies by asking students to “show” their thinking processes.

What do the experts say?

Graphic organizers:

- are inexpensive, easily-accessible literacy tools
- help make a curriculum more supportive of students and teachers
- have been widely researched for their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes in reading, language arts, science, social studies, and math
- are tailored to current theory regarding how the brain processes information
- help students connect what they already know with what they are learning in order to comprehend and recall key concepts
- are effective in teaching both general and technical vocabulary in all genres and content areas
- allow students to see how texts are constructed
- cultivate active participation
- jump-start the flow of thoughts and words
- help students visually represent their ideas in order to clarify relationships among concepts
- help students organize, prioritize, categorize, and summarize material

How do graphic organizers fit into the learning sequence?

1. Study the standards and make a list of the reading skills and strategies your class needs to know.
2. Choose a skill or strategy to teach. Introduce it to the class. Afterward, invite students to discuss their reactions. Answer any questions they pose.
3. Introduce a **graphic organizer** that fits the skill or strategy. Explain whether you'll use the organizer before, during, and/or after reading and why. If applicable, provide cue words to watch for in the reading selection.
4. Read aloud a fiction or nonfiction selection that provides a strong example of the skill or strategy.
5. Model how to fill out the **graphic organizer** based on the information in the reading selection. Invite students to discuss their reactions. Answer any questions they pose.
6. Have students practice by applying the same **graphic organizer** to other reading selections individually, with a partner, or in a small group. Monitor their work, providing support as needed.
7. Ask students to use the **graphic organizer** as a pre-writing tool to apply the skill or strategy in a related writing assignment. Afterward, have them share their writing with a partner.
8. Extend students' learning by providing opportunities to use the **graphic organizer** in multiple contexts.
9. Use the **graphic organizer** to assess students' acquisition of the skill or strategy.
10. Conduct individual or small-group conferences to review students' **graphic organizers**, clarify any confusion, and answer any questions they still have about the skill or strategy.
11. Use this information to plan additional instruction, if needed, along with opportunities for periodic review and practice.
12. Permanently post the **graphic organizer** in the classroom for students to use independently throughout the school year. If possible, enlarge it to poster size and laminate. Explain that learning to select an appropriate graphic organizer for text is a valuable skill in itself.

1. Study the standards and make a list of the reading skills and strategies your class needs to know.

Example

Fiction

Previewing and Predicting
Asking Questions and Setting a Purpose for Reading
Analyzing Story Elements
Making Inferences
Analyzing Cause and Effect
Comparing and Contrasting Characters
Retelling to Monitor Meaning
Identifying Story Theme
Evaluating Stories
Connecting With Stories

Nonfiction

Surveying Text Features and Identifying the Author's Purpose
Building Background
Asking Questions and Setting a Purpose for Reading
Drawing Conclusions
Identifying Main Idea and Supporting Details
Examining Descriptions
Analyzing Cause and Effect
Analyzing Problem and Solution
Identifying Fact and Opinion
Identifying Persuasive Techniques
Comparing and Contrasting Information and Ideas
Sequencing Events—Time Order in History
Sequencing Events—Following Directions
Restating to Monitor Meaning
Making Judgments
Connecting With Information and Ideas

Word Study

Finding Meaning—Prefixes and Suffixes
Finding Meaning—Homographs
Finding Meaning—Synonyms and Antonyms
Finding Meaning—Context Clues
Descriptive Language—Similes and Metaphors
Descriptive Language—Idioms

2. Choose a skill or strategy to teach. Introduce it to the class. Afterward, invite students to discuss their reactions. Answer any questions they pose.

Homographs: Homographs are words that are spelled the same but have different meanings and different origins. Some homographs have the same pronunciation, such as *fan* and *fan*, but others are pronounced differently, such as *bass* and *bass*. When looking up a homograph in the dictionary, readers will see different entries for each version of the word and must be sure to choose the one that makes sense in the text.

Introduce the Strategy

Assign each student a partner, and give each pair a homograph written on a slip of paper. Have each partner act out a different meaning of the word while the class tries to guess what it is. For example, for the word *bat*, one student might pretend to fly while the other pretends to hit a baseball. Continue until all students have had a turn and then discuss the homographs they have pantomimed. Following are some sample homographs and meaning clues. (Those that are pronounced differently are underlined): *bow* (ribbon/greeting), *box* (container/sport), *close* (shut/near), *crow* (rooster call/black bird), *desert* (dry region/leave), *dove* (bird/did dive), *felt* (touched/soft cloth), *hide* (keep out of sight/animal skin), *jerky* (uneven movements/dried meat), *lead* (show the way/tip of pencil), *lie* (falsehood/rest), *loaf* (goof off/bread), *object* (complain/item), *palm* (inside of hand/tree), *pen* (tool for writing/enclosed area), *pitcher* (container for liquids/baseball player), *pound* (sixteen ounces/hit hard), *present* (to introduce/gift), *punch* (hit/beverage), *pupil* (student/center of eye), *racket* (noise/tennis tool), *rare* (unusual/barely cooked), *record* (write down/document), *refuse* (say no/trash), *row* (line/using oars), *saw* (did see/cutting tool), *sow* (scatter seeds/female pig), *squash* (vegetable/press flat), *stick* (piece of wood/pierce), *tear* (liquid from eye/pull apart), *tire* (become weary/rubber on wheel), *well* (satisfactory/hole dug for water), *wind* (moving air/turn).

4. Read aloud a fiction or nonfiction selection that provides a strong example of the skill or strategy.

Good News Night

“It’s Friday—Good News Night,” Dad said as he carried a bowl of spaghetti into the dining room. “Who wants to go first?”

“Pasghetti for supper is good news,” said Frankie, holding out his plate.

“Frankie learning to say ‘spaghetti’ would be good news,” said Carla as she passed a basket of garlic bread around the table.

“Come on, you know what I mean,” said Dad. “What happened this week that made you excited or content? I can think of lots of things! Bo finally learned not to bark at the mail carrier when she comes into the yard. I got the bills paid with enough money left over to take you two to the fair tomorrow. And to top it all off, the local radio station read a clip from my newspaper column on the air. It’s been a great week!”

“Congrats, Dad!” said Carla. “Let’s see . . . I found my missing birthstone ring under my bed. I lowered my time at swim team practice by three seconds per lap. Oh yeah . . . I also got the top score in the class on my math test.”

“Way to go!” said Dad. “Your turn, Frankie.”

“Well . . . I learned to count to 100 at kindergarten—except for some of the seventies and eighties. I learned to tell which is my left hand and which is my right—unless I’m standing on my head. And . . . and . . . I didn’t get chased by a bear!”

Dad laughed and ruffled Frankie’s hair. “That’s great, son!” he said.

“Good News Night is certainly never boring!” said Carla, smiling. “Any more pasghetti, anyone?”

5. Model how to fill in the graphic organizer based on the information in the reading selection. Invite students to discuss their reactions. Answer any questions they pose.

Record homographs from the reading selection. Show how they are used in the story. Then create sentences that show another use of each homograph.

Word	Story Sentence	Sentence with Homograph
<i>bowl</i>	<i>Dad put a bowl of spaghetti on the dinner table.</i>	<i>My uncle likes to bowl with his buddies every Tuesday night.</i>
<i>table</i>	<i>Carla passed a basket of garlic bread around the table.</i>	<i>The average rainfall is included on the weather table in the newspaper.</i>
<i>content</i>	<i>What made you excited or content?</i>	<i>The content of the documentary was too complicated for young children.</i>
<i>bark</i>	<i>Bo learned not to bark at the mail carrier . . .</i>	<i>The woodpecker chipped away at the tree bark looking for insects to eat.</i>
<i>yard</i>	<i>when she comes into the yard.</i>	<i>I used one yard of fabric to make the pillow on the sofa.</i>
<i>bills</i>	<i>I got the bills paid . . .</i>	<i>Birds' bills come in many shapes, sizes, and colors.</i>
<i>fair</i>	<i>with enough money to take you two to the fair tomorrow.</i>	<i>I'm only a fair soccer player, but I excel at basketball.</i>
<i>clip</i>	<i>The local radio station read a clip from my newspaper column.</i>	<i>Clip these papers together before putting them in the file cabinet.</i>
<i>ring</i>	<i>I found my missing birthstone ring.</i>	<i>Grandma will ring the bell on the porch when breakfast is ready.</i>
<i>seconds</i>	<i>I lowered my time at swim team practice by three seconds . . .</i>	<i>This cake is delicious. May I have seconds?</i>
<i>lap</i>	<i>per lap.</i>	<i>The baby sat quietly in his mother's lap.</i>
<i>top</i>	<i>I got the top score in the class on my math test.</i>	<i>The spinning top flew off the table and onto the floor.</i>
<i>count</i>	<i>I learned to count to 100.</i>	<i>The count commanded his subjects to pay taxes on their farm animals.</i>
<i>left</i>	<i>I learned to tell which is my left hand.</i>	<i>We left school as soon as the final bell rang.</i>
<i>bear</i>	<i>I didn't get chased by a bear.</i>	<i>I don't think this flimsy shelf can bear the weight of all those books.</i>
<i>ruffled</i>	<i>Dad ruffled Frankie's hair.</i>	<i>The ruffled blouse will go perfectly with this skirt.</i>
<i>boring</i>	<i>"Good News Night" is certainly never boring.</i>	<i>The carpenter is boring holes in the wood before attaching the sections.</i>

8. Extend students' learning by providing opportunities to use the graphic organizer in multiple contexts.

Have students:

- repeat the “Introduce the Strategy” activity using different homographs.
- write their own lists of good news items using as many homographs as possible.
- locate and share examples of homographs from their content-area textbooks.
- explore several homographs in the dictionary and see who can find the one with the most entries.
- play a game in which a student says two sentences using a homograph but leaves out the word. The rest of the class then tries to guess the missing word, such as *My big brother told a funny (blank). The elevator broke down on the fourth (blank) of the building.* (Answer: *story*)
- make a booklet that includes drawings of various homographs, such as a *school* where classes are held and a *school* of fish or a *bank* where you can deposit money and a river *bank*.

9. Use the graphic organizer to assess students' acquisition of the skill or strategy.

As students sketch their own homograph graphic organizers on notebook paper, write some or all of the following statements on the board. Have students analyze them and record the results on their graphic organizers.

- “Don’t forget to *duck* when you go under the tree branch,” said Dad.
- “I wish I could *fly* over the branches,” said Frankie.
- “Hiking is *fine* with me,” said Carla.
- “Your *gum* is swollen,” said the dentist.
- “You’ll need a *light* jacket for the field trip,” said Mr. Berl.
- “May I have the *rest* of the cereal?” Krissy asked.
- “Mom always leaves a nice *tip* for the waitress,” Hunter said.

10. Conduct individual or small-group conferences to review students' graphic organizer, clarify any confusion, and answer any questions they still have about the skill or strategy.

11. Use this information to plan additional instruction, if needed, along with opportunities for periodic review and practice.

12. Permanently post the graphic organizer in the classroom so students can use it independently throughout the school year. If possible, enlarge it to poster size and laminate. Explain that learning to select an appropriate graphic organizer for text is a valuable skill in itself.

Tips

- ✓ Make three copies of the blank graphic organizer for each student in your class (one for reading practice, one for writing, and one for an extension activity). Once students are used to the format, encourage them to replicate the graphic organizer themselves on their own notebook paper.
- ✓ Utilize modeling, demonstrations, and think-alouds at every phase of the skill/strategy acquisition process until students are skilled and confident enough to carry out the steps on their own.
- ✓ If the whole class does not require instruction in a particular skill or strategy, follow the learning sequence with individuals, partners, or small groups.
- ✓ Scaffold English-language learners or students with special needs by pairing them or pulling them aside as a small group to read a selection and fill out a blank graphic organizer as many times as needed.
- ✓ If no overhead projector is available, draw the graphic organizer on the chalkboard or on chart paper when modeling.
- ✓ Because filling out a graphic organizer is a prerequisite to note-taking, show students how to utilize key words and phrases when applicable rather than always writing in complete sentences.
- ✓ Teach students that graphic organizers are not static. Although students should maintain the overall organization of the forms, they should feel free to add lines, rows, columns, circles, boxes, and so on to fit their own recording purposes.
- ✓ Make sure the reading materials students use when practicing are at or below their independent reading levels. If learners are struggling with the words, they won't be able to concentrate on the skill or strategy.
- ✓ Always model how to use the completed graphic organizer to summarize the reading selection, and always have students use their completed graphic organizers to summarize their reading to a partner.
- ✓ If your school is departmentalized, grade-level teachers can meet and decide who will teach which skills and strategies. For example, the social studies teacher might want to teach analyzing cause and effect, the science teacher might want to teach sequence of events, the math teacher might want to teach restating to monitor meaning, and each teacher could teach the prefixes and suffixes applicable to his or her subject area. Alternately, the reading teacher could introduce and teach all the skills and strategies and then count on the content-area teachers to apply them as opportunities arise. Regardless of how you organize the learning sequence, make sure everyone is involved so students can see the real-world purpose of graphic organizers and you can get the most bang for your buck.

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Thank you for coming to our session!

Katherine and Vickie