



SAVE THE LAST WORD

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, adapted from Short, Harste, & Burke's *Creating Classrooms for Authors and Inquirers* (1996), students will read a text and select five statements that they think are important to discuss. On index cards, the students will write the statement on one side and then a comment on the other. In groups, students share and discuss. The student who shared the statement must comment last. The purpose of this activity is for students to engage more deeply with the text.

LEARNING STRATEGIES Determining Importance, Questioning, Synthesizing

LESSON PLAN STAGE Reflection, Synthesis

SKILLS Clarifying Confusion, Main Idea vs Details

PREPARATION

- Select and read a text prior to the activity. Decide whether all students will use the same text or different texts. For example, as a review for a novel, students could be assigned different chapters. Or for a social studies class you might have students read various articles on the same event.
- Gather index cards.
- Create student groups.

ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

1 Model selection of a statement.

Model the statement selection by reading an excerpt of the text aloud. After reading the text, think aloud the selection of the most important statement within that passage.

- Why did you select that statement passage?
- What about made the other statements in the passage less important?

2 Model a comment.

Model writing a comment based on the statement you previously selected. Again, think aloud as you write your comment. The comment is more than a justification for selecting the statement. The comment should reflect the content of the statement. It should be something that would spark conversation when shared with other students. It can be an opinion or reflection on the statement.



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ACTIVITY STEPS

TEACHING TIPS

3 Select five statements.

Students will have already read the text. Distribute the index cards to students. As students go through the text, they will select the five most important statements in the text. They will write the five statements on separate index cards.

4 Write five comments.

Students will write comments on the back of each of the index card.

5 Share and discuss in groups.

In groups, students will rotate presenting their cards. The first student will read their statement. All of the other students in the group will comment on the statement before the first student shares the comment written on the card.

If there are additional comments that students want to make about the statement it is open to anyone in the group. Depending on the allotted time and group size, students will rotate through the group reading and commenting on the statements.

6 Reflect.

Students can reflect individually or as a group, orally or in writing.

- Which statement sparked the best discussion within the group? Why do you think that particular statement was so interesting? Summarize that discussion.
- How did this activity help you form a deeper understanding of the topic or text?
- When might you use this form of discussion again?