

## Paragraph Shrinking

Choose the assigned reading and introduce the text to the students. Then create pairs within the classroom by identifying which children require help on specific skills and who the most appropriate children are to help other children learn those skills. Model the activity to ensure that students understand how to use the strategy.

During this process:

1. Each member of the teacher-assigned pair takes turns being "Coach" and "Player." These pairs are changed regularly. All students have the opportunity to be "coaches" and "players."  
**Note:** It is important for teachers to monitor and support students as they work together.
2. Each student reads aloud for five minutes without rereading a text. After each paragraph, the reader stops to summarize the main points of the reading. The reader is asked to summarize the following information: the who or what; the most important thing about the who or what and the main idea.

The coach says:

1. Name the most important who or what.
  2. Tell the most important thing about the who or what.
  3. Say the main idea in 10 words or less.
3. The "Player" and "Coach" switch roles after the "Player" has read for 5 minutes.

If a "Player" ever gives a wrong answer, the "Coach" asks the "Player" to skim the paragraph again and answer the questions a second time. Students must state the main idea in ten words or less.

Two of the most common errors are the following:

### Incorrectly summarizing the paragraph

1. The Coach says, "Check it!"
2. If the Reader is still incorrect, the coach gives either a hint or the correct answer.

"Let me give you a hint."

"The answer is \_\_\_\_."

### Summarizing using more than 10 words

1. The Coach replies, "Shrink it."

If the answer is still not the best, the coach helps the partner to give a better one.

**References:**

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- Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. (2005). Peer-assisted learning strategies: Promoting word recognition, fluency and reading comprehension in young children. *The Journal of Special Education*, 39(1), 34-44.
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