



# BIG 3 INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

## STRUCTURED STUDENT TALK:

### **Some Examples Are:**

Four Corners, Talking Chips, Think Pair Share, Give One Get One, Number Heads Together, Sentence Frames

### **THE WHY:**

Increase the frequency and intentional use of modeling to highlight and reinforce academic language. Effective lessons should prioritize student voice, ensuring that students are speaking and engaging with the content more than the teacher.

### **THE BENEFITS:**

- Offers multiple entry points so all students can meaningfully participate
- Begins with simple structures and can evolve into more complex academic discourse
- Offers varied strategies to meet diverse learning needs
- Encourages students to process, articulate, and reflect on their thinking

## ACTIVE NOTE TAKING:

### **Some Examples Are:**

Focused Note Taking, Interactive Notebook, Note-Taking Formats

### **THE WHY:**

Promoting interaction with content helps students process and internalize information as they learn, rather than simply copying it down. This active engagement supports deeper understanding and retention.

### **THE BENEFITS:**

- Improved retention and understanding of key concepts
- Personalized learning through visuals, summaries, and reflection
- Increased engagement during lectures and discussions
- Stronger critical thinking by encouraging questions and connections
- Better organization of information for future studying and test preparation

## READING WITH PURPOSE:

### **Some Examples Are:**

Annotating Texts, Close Reading, Think-Alouds, Graphic Organizers, Three Reads

### **THE WHY:**

Engaging students in thoughtful reading practices fosters metacognition—encouraging them to reflect on how they read and make meaning from the text. This moves students beyond surface-level reading to actively processing, analyzing, and interacting with what they read.

### **THE BENEFITS:**

- Shift the student from a passive receiver to an active constructor of meaning
- Help students navigate complex texts with purpose
- Foster deeper comprehension of content across subjects
- Build lifelong reading habits and academic resilience

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# A Message from Lake County Superintendent of Schools



At the Lake County Office of Education, we are committed to creating learning environments where every student feels seen, supported, and challenged.

Students learn more deeply when they can talk about their ideas, read with purpose, write to make sense of what they've learned, and reflect on their thinking.

While there are many evidence-based instructional strategies available to educators, these three were chosen with intention.

The three areas are foundational across grade levels and subject areas. They are versatile, high-leverage practices that help students process content more deeply, make their thinking visible, and build critical academic skills. Most importantly, they empower students to take ownership of their learning.

This guide is not just a collection of tools. It is a reflection of our values: that learning is active, that students thrive when given opportunities to engage meaningfully with content and with each other, and that excellent teaching evolves through collaboration and shared knowledge.

The Big 3 Instructional Strategies represent a unified approach across our schools, anchored in research, informed by practice, and driven by our belief in every student's potential.

Thank you for your dedication to this work, and for your role in helping every student in Lake County succeed.

Brock Falkenberg,  
Lake County Superintendent of Schools



# Why the Big 3

In response to a request made at the January 27, 2025 Superintendent meeting, the Lake County Office of Education (LCOE) is leading a countywide effort to identify and elevate three high-leverage academic strategies, referred to as The BIG 3, that will be implemented consistently across all classrooms in Lake County.

This initiative aims to unify instructional practices that are proven to support student learning, while honoring the expertise and successful strategies already in place across districts.

The ultimate vision is for every educator in Lake County to be equipped and confident in using these three strategies, with a focus on consistency, impact, and long-term growth.

LCOE is further committing to embedding The BIG 3 into ongoing professional learning, including new teacher induction and support systems.

To launch this collaborative effort, LCOE has convened a representative Task Force made up of district leaders from across the county. This group met in May and June 2025 to contribute, review, and analyze commonly used and effective instructional strategies, using the LCOE Instructional Strategies Playbook as a foundational guide.

Through shared discussion, review of classroom practices, and research, the Task Force reached consensus on the final three strategies that will serve as the instructional anchors for the 2025–2026 school year. These strategies were unveiled on July 2025, with comprehensive planning underway for how to support educators in implementing The BIG 3 countywide in the coming year.

Our hope is that we build academic cohesion amongst our school systems throughout Lake County by focusing on these BIG 3 Strategies and that when implemented with intention and purpose within the classroom a routine is established that will amplify the learning impact.

# Participating Members

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Instructional Coach, Kelseyville USD

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**Christina Sherick**

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**Angie Stevenson**

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**Aaron Carter**

Senior Director, Teaching and  
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**Kim Ferguson**

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**Jennifer Kelly**

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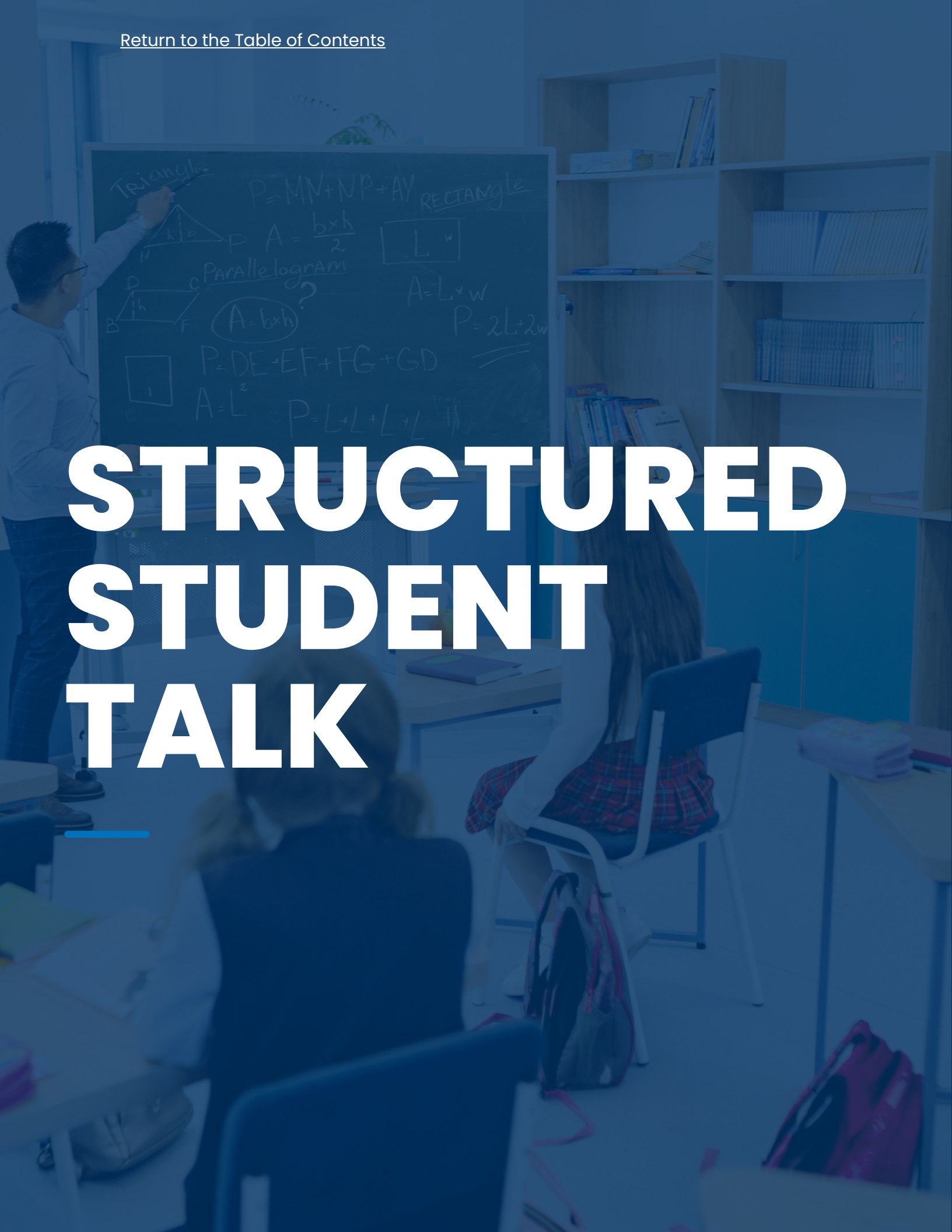
Learning Support Specialist, LCOE

**Kim Tyler**

Learning Support Specialist, LCOE

**Rebecca Walker**

Deputy Superintendent, LCOE



The background image shows a classroom setting. A male teacher is standing on the left, writing on a large whiteboard. The whiteboard is filled with handwritten mathematical formulas and diagrams for various shapes: a triangle with perimeter  $P = MN + NP + AY$  and area  $A = \frac{b \times h}{2}$ ; a rectangle with perimeter  $P = 2L + 2w$  and area  $A = L \times w$ ; a parallelogram with area  $A = b \times h$ ; and a square with perimeter  $P = DE + EF + FG + GD$  and area  $A = L^2$ . There are also diagrams of these shapes. In the foreground, several students are seated at their desks, facing the whiteboard. The room has bookshelves filled with books in the background.

# STRUCTURED STUDENT TALK

# Four Corners

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will deepen their understanding of a topic by collaborating with peers who share a similar perspective or baseline level of knowledge, while also developing reasoning, speaking, and listening skills.

| Benefits                  | Why It’s Important                                                                     |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Encourages movement       | Combines physical activity with cognitive engagement, boosting energy and focus        |
| Promotes academic talk    | Students must articulate and justify their thinking in small and large group settings  |
| Builds community          | Students hear a variety of perspectives in a safe and structured environment           |
| Checks for understanding  | Teachers quickly gauge where students stand on a topic and the reasoning behind it     |
| Fosters critical thinking | Students must make decisions, defend their views, and sometime reconsider their stance |

**Research Support:** Structured academic discussion strategies like Four Corners enhance student engagement, speaking fluency, critical reasoning, and collaborative learning (Zwiers, O’Hara, 2013).



### Step 1: Prepare the Room

- Place a poster in each corner of the room, corresponding to response choices.
- Make sure students understand what each poster/response represents.

*Tip: Color code or use icons for early learners or multilingual students.*

### Step 2: Present the Prompt

- Read a clear, debatable statement or question aloud.

Examples:

*"Climate change is the most urgent global issue."*

*"This book deserves an A grade."*

- Ask students to write their response (e.g., Strongly Agree, Agree...) and briefly justify their position in writing before moving.

### Step 3: Move to the Corner

Instruct students to stand and move to the corner that aligns with their opinion, choice, or evaluation.

*Tip: This physical choice holds students accountable and reinforces ownership of thinking.*

### Step 4: Small-Group Discussion

In each corner:

- Students share their reasons for choosing that response.
- The group selects a spokesperson to summarize key ideas for the class.

Discussion prompts:

- "Why did you choose this corner?"
- "What evidence or reasoning supports your view?"
- "Can we agree on a common argument to present?"

Encourage active listening and note-taking in preparation for whole-class discussion.

### Step 5: Whole-Class Share

- Each group's spokesperson shares their group's reasoning.
- Require each group to summarize the point made by the previous group before presenting their own.

Purpose: Promotes listening, synthesis, and respectful dialogue.

### Step 6: Debrief and Reflect

- Ask students to reflect in writing or discussion:
  - "Did you hear any perspectives that made you reconsider your own?"
  - "What new information or angle did you learn today?"
  - "How might your thinking evolve on this topic?"

*Optional: Exit ticket, notebook reflection, or journal entry.*

### Adaptations

- Use familiar or visual-based categories (e.g., characters, seasons, animals).
- Implement a Two Corners version (True/False, Yes/No).
- Use visual cues and gestures (e.g., thumbs up = agree).
- Pair students for shared reading or pre-discussion before corner selection.

### Extension Options

Evaluation Corner:

- Replace "Agree" signs with grades: A, B, C, D.
- Provide a product to evaluate (e.g., a book, a paragraph, a peer project).
- Students justify their rating in writing before joining their corner.

### Four Corners Debate:

- After each group presents, students rotate corners to argue another side.
- Encourages empathy, argumentation, and flexible thinking.

# Talking Chips

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will engage in equitable, structured, and respectful academic conversations in small groups using a visual and physical system for turn-taking and contribution.

| Benefits                             | Why It's Important                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Equitable participation</b>       | Ensures all students contribute and no one dominates the conversation             |
| <b>Builds academic discourse</b>     | Encourages thoughtful, content-focused dialogue                                   |
| <b>Promotes active listening</b>     | Students listen because they must wait their turn and attend to others' responses |
| <b>Fosters respectful discussion</b> | Reinforces classroom norms for civil, inclusive, and productive conversation      |

**Research-Based Justification:** Cooperative learning structures like Talking Chips increase engagement, improve group interaction skills, and build oral language proficiency—particularly beneficial for multilingual learners and students needing structured discourse.



### Step 1: Prepare the Chips

- Give each student three sticky notes or paper slips.
- Instruct them to write their name on each one—these are their “Talking Chips.”

*Optional: Use colored chips for visual clarity or laminate reusable tokens.*

### Step 2: Introduce the Purpose and Expectations

Explain:

- Talking Chips promote accountability, inclusion, and fair participation.
- Everyone must use all three chips—no more, no less—before speaking again.

*Teacher script example:*

*“When you’re ready to speak, place a chip in the middle. That’s your signal to speak while everyone listens. Once you’ve used all three chips, you’ll need to wait until the group resets before speaking again.”*

### Step 3: Begin the Group Discussion

- Present a content-based discussion question or prompt (open-ended).

*Examples:*

- “Which character had the most growth in the story and why?”
- “What strategy did you use to solve this problem?”
- “How does this scientific process relate to our experiment?”

### Step 4: Use the Chips to Manage Talk

- As students contribute:
  - They place one chip in the center of the table.
  - All others pause and listen attentively.
- Once a student uses all their chips, they must wait until everyone has also used their three before contributing again.

*Tip: Encourage paraphrasing or questioning during turns for deeper engagement.*

### Step 5: Reset the Chips

- Once all chips are in the center:
  - Students retrieve their chips.
  - Begin the process again if the discussion continues or moves to a new topic.



## Adaptations

*Primary Grades:*

- Use pictures or colors instead of names on chips.
- Start with 2 chips per student for shorter turns.
- Allow sentence stems:
  - “I think \_\_\_ because \_\_\_.”
  - “I agree with \_\_\_ and want to add...”

*Secondary Grades:*

- Add roles (e.g., summarizer, questioner, timekeeper) to build leadership.
- Combine with content-based sentence frames or discussion protocols.
- Use Talking Chips – Plus: After each round, students write a reflection or synthesis.

# Think–Pair–Share

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will individually process a question or concept, then engage in structured peer discussion to clarify, compare, and deepen their understanding.

| Benefits                         | Why It’s Important                                                                  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Supports all learners</b>     | Provides time to think and rehearse ideas before sharing, reducing possible anxiety |
| <b>Increases Engagement</b>      | Every student participates, not just a few confident volunteers.                    |
| <b>Improve retention</b>         | Encourages active processing and verbal rehearsal of content.                       |
| <b>Builds academic discourse</b> | Fosters respectful listening and builds communication skills.                       |



### Step 1: Pose a Prompt or Question

Select a question that requires more than a yes/no response—ideally one that involves interpretation, reasoning, or justification.

Examples:

- Why do you think the author chose this ending?
- What strategies can you use to solve this math problem?
- What causes seasons to change on Earth?

*Tip: Ensure the prompt is accessible to all learners but allows room for higher-order thinking.*

### Step 2: Think (Silent Reflection and Writing)

Instruct students to think silently and jot down their response for 1–2 minutes.

Emphasize:

- No talking
- Write down ideas, evidence, or questions
- Use notes to support later sharing

*Primary adaptation: Allow drawing, sentence stems, or verbal rehearsal at a table group.*

### Step 3: Pair (Partner Discussion)

Have students turn to a partner using a predetermined method (e.g., shoulder partner, WICOR Study Buddies, random match).

- Student A goes first:
  - Shares their idea and supporting evidence
- Student B listens actively and may ask clarifying questions
- Then, they switch roles.

*Model this process once at the beginning of the year so students know what “good pairing” looks and sounds like.*

*Example sentence starters:*

- “I thought that \_\_\_ because \_\_\_.”
- “I agree/disagree because \_\_\_.”

### Step 4: Share (Whole-Class Synthesis)

Call on randomly selected students to share what they or their partner said. You may also ask:

- “Who heard an idea that was different from their own?”
- “What’s one thing you learned from your partner?”

Encourage students to:

- Reference their partner’s ideas
- Build on or compare responses

### Classroom Management Tips

- Use visual cues for transitions:
  - Touch your brain = Think
  - Hold up 2 fingers = Pair
  - Hand motion = Share
- Circulate and listen in on discussions

### Adaptations

- Allow students to generate responses with table groups first.
- Use visuals or manipulatives for idea generation.
- Pre-assign partners and keep the process structured and short.
- Incorporate movement cues or hand signals.

# Give One, Take One

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will activate prior knowledge or process new learning by sharing and gathering ideas through structured peer interaction.

| Benefits                                | Why It's Important                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Builds metacognition</b>             | Students reflect on and articulate their thinking.                                      |
| <b>Encourages collaboration</b>         | Students must listen, summarize, and exchange ideas with multiple peers.                |
| <b>Promotes movement and engagement</b> | Increases energy and attention through purposeful interaction and kinesthetic learning. |
| <b>Reinforces content</b>               | Students hear multiple perspectives and deepen their understanding.                     |
| <b>Accessible for all learners</b>      | Builds confidence through structured participation and low-stakes peer sharing.         |



### Step 1: Introduce the Purpose

Explain to students:

- They will brainstorm ideas individually and then share and collect new ones from classmates.
- The goal is to give one idea and get one in each conversation.

*Teacher prompt example:*

*"You'll each start with your own list of ideas. Then, you'll talk to classmates one-on-one and exchange ideas. By the end, you'll have a collection of thoughts bigger than just your own."*

### Step 2: Individual Brainstorming

- Give students a question or topic to think about.
- Ask them to write down as many ideas as possible in 2–3 minutes.

*Examples:*

- *What do you know about the water cycle?*
- *What strategies can you use to solve a word problem?*
- *What connections can you make to today's story?*

### Step 3: Draw a Line Under Their Ideas

- Once brainstorming ends, students draw a line beneath their last idea.
- This creates a visual marker to distinguish their original ideas from new ones they will gather.

### Step 4: Partner Up and Share

- Students pair up and take turns sharing one idea at a time.
- Each student:
  - Gives one of their ideas
  - Gets one from their partner
  - Writes down the new idea under the line along with the partner's name.

*Example:*

- *Original idea: "Clouds form from water vapor."*
- *Below the line: "Evaporation happens from oceans – from Jamie"*

### Step 5: Rotate and Repeat

- After both students have shared and recorded, they:
  - Say thank you
  - Find a new partner
  - Continue the give one, get one process

### Step 6: Whole-Class Share

- Ask for volunteers or select a few students to share:
  - One idea they gave
  - One interesting idea they got

### Adaptations:

*Primary Students:*

- Use sticky notes for listing items like sight words or number facts.
- Add stickers as a visual incentive: students give one idea, get one, and then place a sticker on their recording sheet.
- Move all students at once (e.g., ring a bell every 1–2 minutes)

*Upper Grades / Secondary:*

- Encourage content application: ask students to justify answers or connect to key concepts.
- Have students create leveled questions based on ideas they collected (Depth of Knowledge strategy).
- Use sentence frames for academic discussions:
- "One idea I had was \_\_\_\_\_. I learned from \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_."

# Number Heads Together

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will engage in small-group academic conversations and demonstrate individual and group accountability by sharing their group's thinking when called upon.

| Benefits                             | Why It's Important                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Equal Participation</b>           | Everyone is responsible for knowing the answer – not just the outspoken students. |
| <b>Accountable Talk</b>              | Students must be ready to explain the group's answer at any moment.               |
| <b>Engagement Booster</b>            | The structure builds anticipation and keeps students on their toes.               |
| <b>Listening and Speaking Skills</b> | Encourages active listening, summarizing, and respectful communication.           |
| <b>Formative Assessment Tool</b>     | Teachers can check for understanding in real-time across the class.               |



### Step 1: Set the Purpose

Let students know:

- They'll be working in teams to discuss and agree on answers.
- Any one of them could be chosen to speak for their group, so everyone needs to understand the response.

### Step 2: Create Groups and Number Off

- Place students in groups of 3–5.
- Have each student number off within their group (e.g., 1–4).
- Confirm understanding by asking all the "1s" to raise their hands, then "2s," etc.

*Tip: Use flexible grouping strategies (mixed ability, random, or content-based).*

### Step 3: Pose a Question or Topic

Ask a thought-provoking or content-based question related to your lesson.

*Examples:*

- *Math:* "What is the best strategy to solve this problem?"
- *ELA:* "How would you describe the main character's motivation?"
- *Science:* "Why does the experiment produce these results?"
- *SEL:* "What does being a good listener look like?"

### Step 4: Heads Together

- Students discuss the answer quietly in their group.
- They must make sure everyone understands and can explain the group's answer.
- Encourage strategies like:
  - "Can you explain why that works?"
  - "What part are you unsure about?"
  - "Let's say it in another way."

*Optional: Have students write down their team's response on a shared paper or whiteboard.*

### Step 5: Call a Random Number

- Randomly call a number (e.g., "2s!").
- All students with that number stand or step forward and share their group's answer with the class.
- Encourage clear explanations and support from their group if needed.

*Extension Tip: Use a digital randomizer (e.g., Wheel of Names, online spinner)*

### Step 6: Repeat With New Questions

- Pose additional questions or prompts.
- Have students rotate their numbers each round (optional) to give everyone a chance to participate.

*Structure a full review session using 5–10 short questions in rapid rounds to increase engagement.*

## Adaptations by Grade Level

*Primary Grades (2–4):*

- Use larger groups to increase support.
- Allow more time for discussion.
- Use whiteboards for each student to show their response visually.
- Provide sentence frames:
- "We think the answer is \_\_\_ because \_\_\_."

*Upper Elementary to Secondary (5–12):*

- Incorporate academic language goals.
- Use higher-order questions and expect justifications.
- Assign roles: recorder, paraphraser, timekeeper, reporter.

# Sentence Frames and Sentence Starters

Sentence frames are partial sentences that give students a structure to express their thinking, allowing them to focus on the content without getting stuck on language.

*Example:*

- *Frame: "I agree with \_\_\_ because \_\_\_."*
- *Full Sentence: "I agree with Carlos because his explanation about photosynthesis is clear and accurate."*

## **Reasons for use:**

- Purpose: Comparing, drawing conclusions, citing evidence, supporting academic language, encourage full sentences, support language development, model critical thinking
- Discourse: Agreement, disagreement, persuasion
- Grammatical: Tenses, subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions
- Mechanical: Punctuation, paragraphing, capitalization

## **Before Instruction:**

- Identify the skill or content you wish to target
- Develop sentence frames or stems that support that goal
- Differentiate sentence frames by proficiency level

## **During Instruction:**

- Introduce the frames/stems to students
- Explain how to use the sentence frames/stems
- Model how to use them
- Give students practice using the frames in speaking and writing



## Step 1: Identify the Purpose of the Task

Decide what kind of thinking or communication you want students to do.

| If students need to... | Use frames like...                          |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Justify reasoning      | "I think ____ because ____."                |
| Compare ideas          | "_____ is similar to _____ because _____"   |
| Make predictions       | "I predict _____ will happen because _____" |
| Ask for clarification  | "Can you explain what you meant by _____."  |
| Summarize a reading    | "This passage is mostly about _____."       |

## Step 2: Choose or Create Sentence Frames for Content

*Examples by Content:*

- *ELA/Literacy:*
- "The author's main point is \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_."
- *Math:*
- "I solved the problem by \_\_\_\_ and got \_\_\_\_."
- *Science:*
- "The experiment showed \_\_\_\_, which means \_\_\_\_."
- *History/Social Studies:*
- "One cause of \_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_."

## Step 3: Explicitly Teach the Sentence Frame

- Write it on the board or chart paper.
- Model using the frame with a simple example.
- Show multiple variations to demonstrate flexibility.

*Teacher example:*

"Watch how I answer using the frame: 'I agree with \_\_ because \_\_.'"

*I agree with Jamie because her example of erosion shows water can change land."*

## Step 4: Provide Guided Practice

- Use think-pair-share, sentence strips, or choral responses.
- Allow students to practice the frame with a partner or in small groups.
- Provide scaffolds like fill-in-the-blanks or word banks if needed.

## Step 5: Incorporate Frames into Writing and Discussion

- Use frames in writing prompts, exit tickets, and essays.
- Embed them into student discussions, debates, or Socratic seminars.

*Writing Prompt:*

"Using the frame: 'The evidence shows \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_,' explain how the character changed."

## Step 6: Differentiate Based on Student Need

- Provide more support for English Learners or students with IEPs:
  - Visual sentence starters
  - Color-coded templates
  - Word banks or sentence stems on desk cards

*Tip: Use tiered frames for varied language levels:*

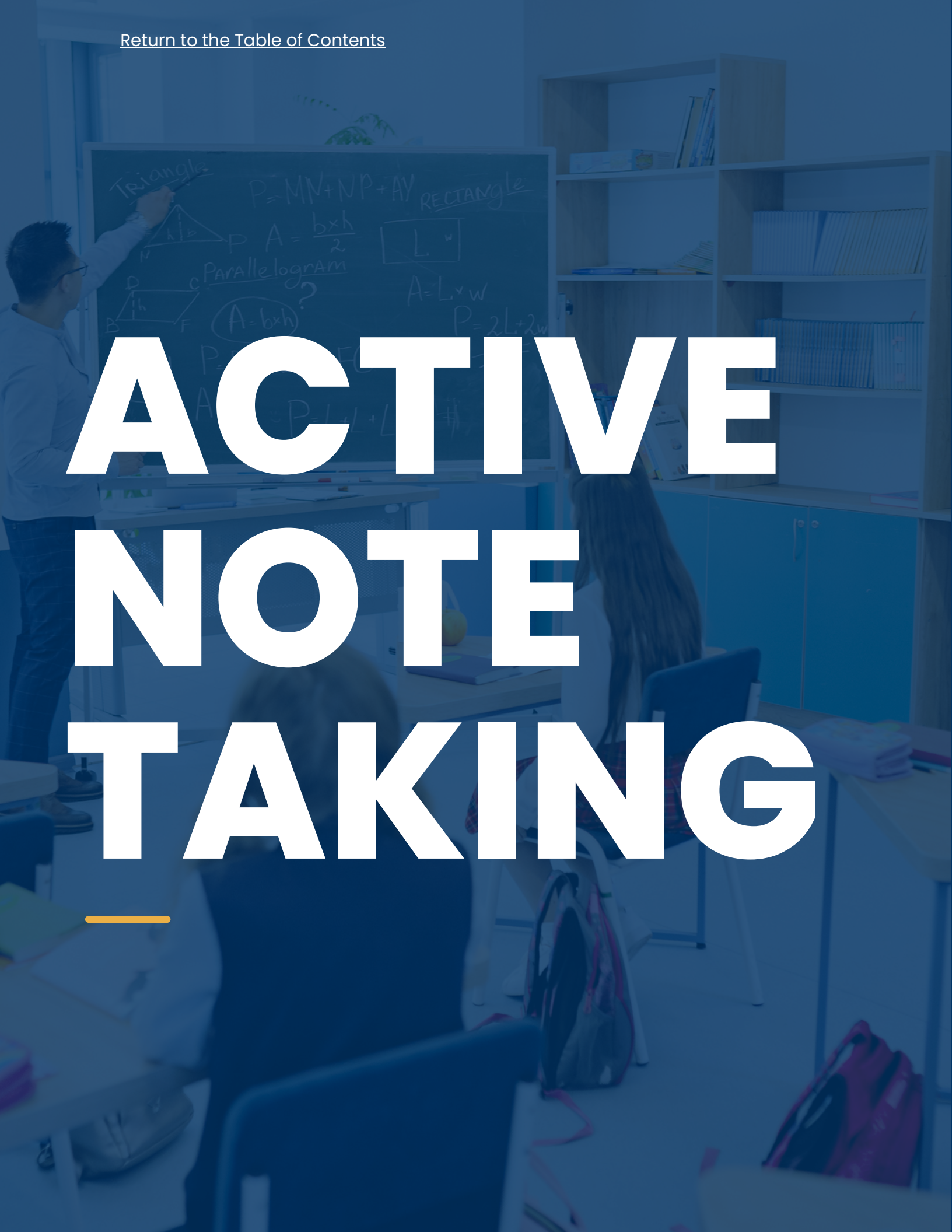
- *Emerging:* "I like \_\_\_\_."
- *Developing:* "I like \_\_ because \_\_\_\_."
- *Advanced:* "I prefer \_\_ over \_\_ because \_\_\_\_."
- 

## Step 7: Make It Routine

- Use daily in oral discussions, partner work, and assessments.
- Encourage students to create their own frames as they grow in confidence.

*Anchor chart idea:*

*Keep a running list of commonly used sentence frames on your wall organized by subject or task type.*



# ACTIVE NOTE TAKING

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# Focused Note –Taking Strategy

The Focused Note-Taking Process is a systematic approach designed to enhance students' learning and retention by engaging them in active note-taking. This process is divided into five phases: Taking Notes, Processing Notes, Connecting Thinking, Summarizing and Reflecting on Learning, and Applying Learning. Each phase builds upon the previous one, guiding students from initial note-taking to practical application of their knowledge.

## Phase One: Taking Notes

Create the notes. Select a note-taking format, set up the note page, record the Essential Question, and take notes based on an information source (lecture, book, website, article, video, etc.), selecting, paraphrasing, and arranging information in a way that meets your note-taking objective.

## Phase Two: Processing Notes

Think about the notes. Revise notes—by underlining, highlighting, circling, chunking, questioning, adding, deleting—to identify, select, sort, organize, and classify main ideas and details. Evaluate the relative importance of information and ideas in the notes.

## Phase Three: Connecting Thinking

Think beyond the notes. Analyze the notes using inquiry to make connections and deepen content knowledge by asking questions and adding your own thinking to create greater understanding, identify gaps or points of confusion, and connect your new learning to what you already know.

## Phase Four: Summarizing and Reflecting on Learning

Think about the notes as a whole. Pull together the most important aspects of your notes and your thinking about them to craft a summary that captures the meaning and importance of the content and reflects on how the learning helps you meet the note-taking objective.

## Phase Five: Applying Learning

Use the notes. Save and revisit your notes as a resource or learning tool to help you apply or demonstrate what you have learned.  
(AVID Resource)

# Interactive Notebooks

Interactive Notebooks (INBs) are structured learning tools that help students organize content, reflect on learning, and develop ownership over their academic growth.

## Part 1: Define the Purpose & Gather Materials

### Why Use INBs?

- Build metacognition and retention
- Make learning visible
- Organize notes, vocabulary, and reflections
- Support differentiation and engagement

### Materials Checklist

- Composition notebook (preferred for durability)
- Glue (glue stick recommended)
- Scissors, colored pencils/highlighters
- Ruler
- Labels, tabs, or a ribbon bookmark

## Part 2: Teacher Planning & Structure

Before diving in with students, decide:

- Notebook structure (unit-based, subject-based, or sequential)
- Assessment plan (rubrics, checkpoints, peer/self evaluations)
- What goes in the “Front Matter” and how often notebooks will be used

## Part 3: Set Up with Students — Gradual and Guided

“Notebook setup doesn’t need to be finished in one day—take your time and build it together over the first few weeks.”

| Pages       | Content                        | Purpose                                                                       |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1           | Cover Page - student decorated | Must include student name, teacher name, class period                         |
| 2           | Grading Rubric (optional)      | Easy reference for peer/self/teacher grading                                  |
| 3 through 6 | Table of Contents              | Updated regularly, track entries chronologically or by unit                   |
| 7           | Student Goals Page             | Helps redirect behavior and track motivation                                  |
| 8-onward    | Starting of the notes          | To have a place to put handouts of value, notes from learning, reflections... |

*Note: Skipping pages is OK—leave room for content you’ll insert later.*

## Part 4: Teaching Setup and Procedures

### Option 1: In-Class Setup (Recommended)

- Use a document camera to model each step.
- Explain, demonstrate, and pause for students to complete each page.
- Encourage questions and neatness.
- Use transition time to discuss why each page matters.

### Option 2: Flipped Setup (Optional)

- Record setup instructions as videos and assign as homework.
- Ideal for grades 6–12 or tech-integrated classrooms.
- Great for saving class time while building digital responsibility.



## Part 5: Daily Use & Lesson Integration

Use a consistent structure:

| Notebook side   | Purpose                                | Examples                                          |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Left side page  | Student thinking, reflections, visuals | Quick Writes, Questions, Diagrams                 |
| Right side page | Direct Instruction, notes, input       | Foldables glued in, guided notes, vocabulary maps |

### At the start of each lesson:

- Write date, title, and page number
- Add to the Table of Contents
- Reinforce the habit of using bookmarks or sticky notes

## Part 7: Assessment & Reflection

- Have regular checkpoints (weekly, end of unit)
- Optional: include student reflection questions like:
  - What was most important this week?
  - What strategy helped you the most?

## Part 6: Personalization & Student Ownership

- Allow space for students to draw, highlight, and code pages
- Let students create tabs, color-code sections, or use washi tape
- Incorporate student reflection prompts and weekly goal-checks

## Part 8: Tips for Success

- Label everything clearly, from page numbers to foldables
- Model gluing technique and cutting cleanly
- Keep scrap bins and shared supply caddies
- Be flexible—adapt the INB structure to what's working
- Review and reuse pages during lessons to build value



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## Selecting the Appropriate Format for Note-Taking

**Cornell Notes:** Includes a space at the top to write the Essential Question, a large column on the right for the notes themselves, a slimmer column to the left of the notes space for questions, and a place for a summary at the end. The format facilitates the phases of the focused note-taking process by designating space for note-taking, connecting, and summarizing. The notes column may be lined or unlined and can be used with many notetaking styles.

**Two- and Three-Column Notes:** A structured form of notetaking in which content is organized into two or three columns based on notetaking objectives and the purpose of the lesson. This style of notes is useful when information is highly structured or the note-taker's response to the information follows a repetitive pattern. It can also be useful if the instructor wants to build in space for student input or processing in multiple modes. The headings or purposes for the columns can be adapted to many situations and note-taking styles, both linguistic and visual, and are usually determined by the instructor.

# CORNELL NOTES

|       |          |        |
|-------|----------|--------|
| Date: | Subject: | Topic: |
|-------|----------|--------|

| Questions | Notes |
|-----------|-------|
|           |       |

| Summary |
|---------|
|         |

# TWO-COLUMN NOTES

|       |          |        |
|-------|----------|--------|
| Date: | Subject: | Topic: |
|-------|----------|--------|

Essential Question:

# THREE-COLUMN NOTES

|       |          |        |
|-------|----------|--------|
| Date: | Subject: | Topic: |
|-------|----------|--------|

Essential Question:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

# READING WITH PURPOSE

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# The Art of Annotation: Elementary Process

## Annotation Look-Fors

| Key Words & Ideas<br>What is the author saying? | Craft & Structure<br>How is the author saying it? |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Who + What                                      | Title + Headings                                  |
| Emphasis of words, phrases and ideas            | Text structure                                    |
| Images/Graphic Features                         | Elements of genre                                 |
| New words or concepts                           | Repetition of words, sounds or ideas              |
| Moments that make you stop and think            | Figurative language                               |
| Author/Narrator/Character Perspective           | Connections with/across section                   |

*This list is by no means exhaustive, and can be edited as needed.*

## Introducing Each Lens

1. Choose the lens through which you will be approaching the text. In the introductory stage, it is recommended to read the same text twice — one session for Key Words and Ideas, another for Craft and Structure. Provide the annotation look-fors as an anchor chart or include it on the template itself.
2. Give students a copy of the text and display your copy of the text for all to see. As students watch, read a section of text aloud, stopping to underline, box, and make notations.
3. Think aloud as you annotate. Read, stop, jot, explain. You are responding to the text as you encounter each element rather than searching the text for specific items. Students should either be watching or copying the teacher's moves at this stage.

### WHAT TO SAY: KEY WORDS AND IDEAS

"When the author says, "\_\_\_" it makes me think the author wants us to know \_\_\_\_\_. I'm going to underline this sentence."

"I'm going to box \_\_\_\_\_ because I'm not sure what it means and I want to remember to look that up."

"I'm writing this word down because it keeps repeating and authors repeat words that are important."

"Now watch me as I take the words I wrote down to create a one-sentence summary of the text."

### WHAT TO SAY: CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

"I notice that the text is organized by a series of dates. These words signal to me that this is a sequence text. Let me write that down here."

"The picture shows \_\_\_\_\_. I can connect that to the sentence in paragraph 2 that specifically mentions what I see in the picture. I'll draw an arrow and write a quick note about that."

"The author uses the term \_\_\_ to suggest \_\_\_\_\_. I'm circling that word and writing \_\_\_ above it."

## Guided Annotation (Whole Group)

4. Guide students through the next section of the text, first by reading it together and then by asking open-ended questions related to the chosen lens. For example:

### For key words and ideas

"What is the author saying here?  
What words seem important?  
What part made you stop and think?"

### For craft and structure:

"How does the author show you what the character is feeling in paragraph 5?"  
"Who can find and annotate a connection between paragraph 3 and paragraph 4?"  
"What does the author mean by \_\_\_\_\_?"

5. Students take a turn with another section of the text. Prompt students to share their thinking and show what they did. This is a great opportunity to validate or course-correct as needed.



## Guided Annotation (Individual)

6. When they're ready for the next stage, provide each student with a new text. Give several minutes to read and annotate, one section at a time. Circulate the room, monitoring and offering feedback. As students make their way through each section, give the green light to move on.

*Giving feedback in real time adds encouragement and reinforces desired reading behaviors. This type of gradual release model works best when the teacher is responsive to the needs of the class, moving on only when they're ready.*

7. Once they have the hang of it, students continue to read and annotate on their own. Those who need support can now be pulled into a small group. This is also a good time to implement partner annotation for students who may not be ready to read the text independently.

*Continue to use the template to support students as they annotate for either key words and ideas or craft and structure. It can be modified to merge the lenses once they can do both with confidence. After several guided annotation lessons, students should be ready to annotate on their own without needing the scaffolding of this stage every time.*

## Discussion and Feedback

*Now that students have a sense of what to look for when they read, what they need at this juncture is a chance to see what other readers are doing and compare it to their own work. This not only deepens their understanding of the text through discussion, it strengthens their grasp on what they should be noticing.*

8. Gather the class and project student work (in my class, students volunteer to share). Prompt students to compare annotations, note their peers' insights, and offer feedback.
9. Allow students to "borrow" snippets of each others' annotations if they wish. This is intentionally a collaborative process that promotes the sharing of insights and ideas.
10. Students can use the template as long as it's needed. The cycle of discussion and feedback can continue indefinitely. At any point, the annotation look-fors can be edited for specific genres, content areas, or other purposes for reading.

# High School Collaborative Annotation

**Purpose:**

To engage students in meaningful, collaborative annotation using four core reading skills:

**Identify, Analyze, Evaluate, Synthesize.** This process enhances comprehension, critical thinking, and student voice.

## Preparation

**Choose 4 Focus Skills**

- Select four key concepts or teaching points recently taught (e.g., Identify, Analyze, Evaluate, Synthesize).

**Select a Passage**

- Pick a rich, content-aligned text that allows exploration of the 4 focus skills.

**Create Guiding Questions**

- For each focus skill, develop open-ended guiding questions to scaffold students' thinking.

## Independent Annotation

**Review Protocol**

- Introduce the "Group Annotation Practice Protocol" and expectations.

**Read-Aloud**

- Read the passage aloud. Check for understanding with questions (Who? What? When? Where? Why?).

**First Impressions**

- Students re-read the passage individually and jot down initial thoughts or questions.

## Group Annotation

**Assign Roles**

- In small groups, assign each student one focus skill (Identify, Analyze, Evaluate, Synthesize).

**Annotate Together**

- Tape the text to chart paper. Each student uses a marker to annotate based on their guiding questions for 15 minutes.

**Facilitate Thinking**

- Teacher circulates, prompts deeper thought, and encourages connections among group members.

**Group Sharing**

- Each student shares key insights. Synthesizers reflect on patterns and group meaning.

**Gallery Walk**

- Groups post posters on the wall. All students walk around, read others' work, and add sticky-note responses:
  - "This makes me think about..."
  - "Additionally, this could mean..."
  - "I wonder why..."

**Final Reflection**

- Groups return to original posters, review peer feedback, and add final ideas. Optional: whole-class share-out.

# Close Reading

*There is no specific sequence in a close read; these steps are meant to generally guide you in crafting a lesson that scaffolds students and focuses on increasingly complex text dependent questions. Begin with questions about the big ideas in the text and gradually ask higher level questions.*



## First Read: Key Ideas and Details

Set the purpose for reading and have students read text as independently as possible. Depending on the text complexity and the readers, the first read may be done independently, as a read aloud/think aloud, or paired or shared reading. The first read should be without building background; students should be integrating their background knowledge with the text as they read. Focus on the key ideas and details in the text, making sure that readers know the main idea, story elements, or key details that the author includes.

Following the first read, have students Think-Pair-Share to assess what they have gleaned from the text. By listening to students as they share, you can determine the focus of the first read, etc.

## Second Read: Craft and Structure

For a second, close read, select a portion or chunk of the text that is “close read worthy.” That is, have students reread a section that includes complex elements or ideas that they should explore to arrive at a deep understanding of the text. After rereading, students discuss the text with partners or in small groups, focusing on the author’s craft and organizational patterns. This may include vocabulary choices, text structure or text features that they author included.

Use a Text Dependent Question to focus or set a purpose for a close rereading. After students share with partners or in small groups, have groups share out with entire class to assess understanding.

## Third Read: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

The third close reading of a text should go even deeper, requiring students to synthesize and analyze information from several texts or media. They may record their ideas on sticky notes, graphic organizer, or a thinking sheet.

Have students journal a response to a Text Dependent Question. Focus the discussion on text evidence.

# Think Aloud Strategy

*Students will verbalize their thought process as they read, solve problems, or complete complex tasks, promoting metacognition and reflective learning.*

## Step 1: Introduce the Strategy

- Explain what a think aloud is: saying what you're thinking as you work through a problem or task.
- Describe its purpose: to make thinking visible, promote self-monitoring, and model expert problem-solving.

*Example:*

*"Today, I'm going to model how I think through a problem aloud so you can hear what's going on in my head."*

## Step 2: Model a Think Aloud

- Choose a task (e.g., solving a math problem, reading a text).
- Think aloud while completing the task. Verbalize:
  - Your thoughts
  - Predictions
  - Confusions
  - Strategies
  - Self-corrections

Sentence starters to consider:

- "I think this means..."
- "Hmm, that doesn't make sense. Let me go back."
- "This reminds me of..."
- "I'm going to try...because..."

## Step 3: Guide Students in Group Think Alouds

- Include students in the process. Pause and ask:
  - "What should I do next?"
  - "What are you thinking?"
- Record their thoughts on the board or chart paper.

## Step 4: Pair Students for Reciprocal Think Alouds

- Pair students. One thinks aloud while the other listens and records.
- Then, switch roles.
- Have students reflect on and discuss their thought processes together.

## Step 5: Use Think Alouds as Assessment

- Ask students to complete a task while thinking aloud.
- Observe or record their verbal reasoning.
- Use guiding prompts if needed:
  - "What are you thinking now?"
  - "Why did you choose that strategy?"

## Step 6: Debrief and Reflect

- What worked?
- What was confusing?
- How did it help you understand better?

# Graphic Organizers

## Step-by-Step Process for Using Graphic Organizers

### Step 1: Identify the Learning Objective

- Determine what concept, skill, or thinking process you want students to focus on.
  - Examples: Comparing ideas, sequencing events, supporting a claim, describing a concept, etc.

*Ask yourself:*

*What type of thinking or learning do I want my students to engage in?*

### Step 2: Select the Appropriate Graphic Organizer

- Elaboration/Description: To describe attributes or characteristics.
- Cause/Effect: To explore reasons and outcomes.
- Compare/Contrast: To highlight similarities and differences.
- Sequence (Chronological/Story Map/Plot): To organize steps or events.
- Claim/Evidence or Persuasion Map: To support arguments and opinions.

### Step 3: Prepare Materials

- Print or digitally distribute the chosen graphic organizer template.
- Provide students with background content or reading needed to complete the organizer.

### Step 4: Model the Process

- Demonstrate how to complete the graphic organizer using a familiar topic.
- Think aloud as you make connections and classify information.
- Highlight how the structure helps organize thinking visually.

### Step 5: Guided Practice

- Work through an example together as a class or in small groups.
- Scaffold support with prompts, sentence starters, or partially filled organizers.

### Step 6: Independent or Group Use

- Assign students to complete their own graphic organizers during a lesson, after reading, or as a prewriting activity.
- Encourage peer collaboration and discussion to refine thinking.

### Step 7: Share and Reflect

- Have students share their completed organizers with partners or small groups.
- Facilitate a brief discussion on new insights or misunderstandings that became clear through visual organization.

### Step 8: Connect to Writing or Assessment

- Guide students to use the information from their graphic organizers to develop writing, presentations, or discussions.
- Emphasize how the organizer supports structured, thoughtful responses.

### Step 9: Reinforce and Reuse

- Integrate graphic organizers regularly into instruction.
- Refer back to past organizers when revisiting content or skills.
- Encourage students to choose organizers independently.

# Three Read Protocol

## What is this strategy?

The Three Read Protocol is one way to do a close read of a complex math word problem or task. This strategy includes reading a math scenario three times with a different goal each time. The first read is to understand the context. The second read is to understand the mathematics. The third read is to elicit inquiry questions based on the scenario.

## Why would I use this strategy?

The Three Read Protocol is designed to engage students in sense-making of language-rich math problems or tasks. It deepens student understanding by surfacing linguistic as well as mathematical clues. It focuses attention on the importance of understanding problems rather than rapidly trying to solve them. It allows for the use of authentic, instead of overly simplified, text. This strategy also allows for natural differentiation within a class of diverse learners.

## When do I use this strategy?

This strategy can be used for math tasks that include complex language structures or language that lends itself to a variety of interpretations. While this is a particularly useful strategy for English Language Learners, all students can benefit from the deeper understanding of word problem structures and open-ended questioning.

## How do I use this strategy?

The Three Read Protocol uses the “problem stem” of a word problem. This is essentially the word problem without the question at the end. The purpose of presenting the problem stem alone is to have students focus on the contextual and mathematical information before dealing with any question that is involved. This gives students the freedom to create their own questions for a given scenario, which is an excellent skill to develop both in math and in reading in general. It is important that the teacher chooses the problem carefully and anticipates potential linguistic and mathematical roadblocks the students may encounter.



**First Read: Teacher reads the problem stem orally.**

The teacher may have visuals to accompany the oral read of the problem stem. Students listen to the story with the goal of turning to a partner and sharing what they remember of it. Memorizing it is not necessary.

**Key Question: What is this situation about?**

After the Turn-and-Talk, the teacher asks students to volunteer information they remember from the story. Teachers and students ask clarifying questions about the vocabulary as needed.

**Second Read: Class does choral read or partner read of the problem stem.**

The teacher projects the problem stem so the whole class can see it. The teacher leads the class either in a choral read of the problem or has partners read the problem orally to each other. Choral read is preferable because it allows all students to participate without excessive pressure, but a partner read can work fine if that is a better fit to the classroom culture or age of students. The teacher explains that math stories usually have information about quantities (numbers) and the units that are being counted.

**Key Question: What are the quantities in the situation?**

An example is 25 cats, where “25” is the quantity and “cat” is the unit. Sometimes the quantities are implied. For example, “some cats” implies a quantity but we do not know what it is. There can also be implied units. An example is “I have one at home.” The implied unit in this case depends on the context of the story. Bottom line: The discussion of quantities and units can be important for focusing student attention, but how deeply the teacher delves into the explicit and implicit information depends on the math and language objectives.

**Third Read: Partner or choral read the problem stem orally one more time.**

The teacher asks students to do one more read of the “story” and asks them to think, “What is missing to make this a good math problem?” Students volunteer their answers to that question. Responses will likely vary because many students assume there is a question without actually reading one. Without correcting student responses, the teacher probes until the class decides that a question is missing. The teacher asks, “Is there only one question that we can ask of this story?” Students responses may vary, but there are usually many different questions that can be asked of almost any scenario.

**Key Question: What mathematical questions can we ask about the situation?**

The teacher asks partners to determine at least two questions that can be asked using the problem stem. Students share their questions. The teacher writes a couple of the questions and clarifies language as appropriate. After each question, the teacher asks the class, “Can this question be answered with the information from this story?” and the class discusses why or why not.

**Students work in collaborative groups on the problem.**

Students work in groups to solve a question based on the problem stem. The teacher may assign a specific question for all groups to answer, or groups may choose a question from the list asked by the class. If groups are asked to choose their own questions, it is important that the teacher circulate and clarify expectations for the work. This can be an opportunity to differentiate the math work because the range of possible questions to a problem stem is broad.

|                    | What the teacher does                                                                                                                                                                                                | Key Question                                                       | What the students do                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Preparation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies appropriate problem stem</li> <li>Anticipates linguistic and mathematical challenges</li> <li>Creates visuals to support understanding</li> </ul>                  |                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>1st Read</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows visuals</li> <li>Orally reads the “story” (problem stem)</li> </ul>                                                                                                     | <b>What is this situation about?</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit with a partner</li> <li>Listen to the “story”</li> <li>Turn to partners to discuss the “story” in their own words</li> <li>Say what they remember of the story</li> </ul> |
| <b>2nd Read</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows problem stem (for example, on overhead projector or poster)</li> <li>Leads class in choral or partner read</li> <li>Leads discussion of quantities and units</li> </ul> | <b>What are the quantities in the situation?</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read chorally with the class or with partners</li> <li>Volunteer quantities and units they identify</li> </ul>                                                                |
| <b>3rd Read</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asks partners to read with specific goal</li> <li>Leads discussion of potential questions</li> <li>Clarifies language as needed</li> </ul>                                    | <b>What mathematical questions can we ask about the situation?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read one more time with partners</li> <li>Brainstorm with partners several questions that could be asked using the problem stem</li> <li>Volunteer questions</li> </ul>       |

## **Considerations for use of the Three Read Protocol**

### **Is the problem stem sufficiently interesting as a story?**

It does not need to be long, but it should have some narrative structure.

### **Does the problem stem have quantities, both explicit and implicit?**

Ideally it has easily identifiable explicit quantities but may have implicit ones as well for a richer discussion and potentially more interesting math investigations.

### **Does the problem stem have extraneous explicit quantities or a variety of implicit quantities?**

This strategy can model how to understand math problems with this characteristic and teach students how to discern salient information.

### **Is the language of the problem stem likely to create obstacles for English Language Learners or is the context of the problem likely to be unfamiliar to students from diverse backgrounds?**

Surfacing the language structures and contextual clues within the problem stems allows students to focus on the mathematical structures as well as evaluate the reasonableness of their work.

## **Sample Problem Stems:**

### **Animal Shelter Problem**

Tasha wants a pet. She goes to the animal shelter to ask how much it will cost to adopt and care for a dog. The vet at the shelter tells her that big dogs have an adoption fee of \$200, a vaccination fee of \$300, and that they eat about 35 pounds of food per month. Small dogs have an adoption fee of \$300, a vaccination fee of \$450, and they eat about 18 pounds of food per month. The vet says that dog food costs about \$3 per pound.

### **Judy's Berries**

Judy loves to eat berries for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. She sees that Clear Lake School is having a fundraiser to raise money for a new playground. The students are selling fruit baskets to raise money. Strawberries sell for \$3 per basket. Blueberries sell for \$4 per basket. Raspberries sell for \$5 per basket. Judy has \$20 to spend on berries.

### **Joining a Gym**

Carlos wants to join a gym. The gym offers three membership options. The first one is called "Pay as you go" and costs \$6 each time you work out. The second one is called "Regular deal" and costs \$50 per month and \$2 each time you work out. The third one is called "All-in-one price!" and costs \$100 per month for unlimited use of the gym.

### **Squirrels and Their Acorns**

Austin likes to watch squirrels find and store acorns for the winter. Brown Squirrels can carry two acorns at a time. Gray Squirrels can carry three acorns at a time, and Black Squirrels can carry five acorns at a time. There is a pile of 24 acorns.





# LAKE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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