

TEACHING ORGANIZATION

WHAT YOU'RE GOING FOR

- * Sense of sequence
- * Ability to organize & group
- * Sense of beginning
- * Sense of ending

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. WAS THIS A GOOD LEAD?

When you read stories (or other literature or writings) aloud, pause after the beginning to ask, "Why do you think the writer started this way?" Alternative: BEFORE beginning, ask, "Where do you think the writer will begin?"

2. PREDICT!

As you are reading, ask, "What do you think will happen next? What will this writer talk about next? How do you think it might end?"

3. LISTEN FOR THE END

Read a short story aloud and ask students to listen for the ending. Ask them to raise their hands when they think you have come to the end of the story. (Be careful to pick one without a too-obvious "lived happily ever after" sort of ending.)

4. USE STORY BOARDING

Tell stories with pictures using two, three, four or more story board blocks to convey different events. Variation: Give pairs or groups of three a story board sequence in pictures. Have them put the pictures in order showing what happens first, next, next, last. Ask them to talk about the clues they used in deciding on the “right” order. Could there be more than one order?

5. USE GROUPING

Give students lots of opportunities to group things together that go together: colors, shape, sizes. Any category will do.

6. GIVE ME SOME TIPS!

Ask for students’ help in organizing a paper of your own. Say you are writing a paper on black bears. Put two, three, or four major categories on the board: How they look, what they eat, how they act around people, etc. Use any categories you think are appropriate. Then, one by one, list for students the bits of information you want to put in your paper. You should have a dozen or so tidbits of information. Ask them to tell you which category is most appropriate.

7. WAS THAT THE END??!

As you’re reading, omit the ending from a piece. Ask students to make up their own to either write or share orally.

8. CAN YOU PUT THESE IN ORDER?

For readers, list three or four events that occur in a story. Ask them to put these in order. Next step: Expand the list to include one or two events that really don’t belong. Ask students, “What could you leave out? Is there something that might go better in another story?”

9. WHAT DOESN’T BELONG?

As you read a short piece, insert a comment or sentence that clearly does not belong. Ask students to identify it by writing it out, or just by raising their hands. Can they explain why it did not fit?