

# Get The Gist

## Comprehension and Learning Strategy

### After Reading Comprehension Strategy



## Get the Gist - Summarising

### Purpose of the 'Get the Gist' strategy:

'Get the Gist' (Cunningham, 1982) is an acronym for Generating Interactions between Schemata and Texts. It is a summarising strategy. Effective summarising leads to an increase in student learning. Summarising requires students to focus on the main ideas of a text and to decide what is important without omitting key ideas. The ability to summarise has significant benefits for comprehending and ultimately retaining and recalling information. Teaching students summarising strategies, like 'Get the Gist', helps them learn to synthesise information, a higher-order thinking skill which includes analysing information and identifying key concepts.

### Explicitly teaching 'Get the Gist':

#### Step 1

Choose an informational paragraph from a science, history, etc. textbook. Scan the text pulling out any key ideas from the text features. Read the text. (Pick a textbook piece that contains some trivia, as well as several ideas). Put the text on the overhead or board. Read it aloud to students and demonstrate deleting the trivia, putting a line through the unnecessary text.

#### Step 2

Continue reading and demonstrate picking out the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* of the paragraph and related important information.

#### Step 3

Demonstrate pulling together the above information into a 10/20-word 'gist' or summary.

#### Step 4

In pairs, guide students in completing a 'Gist' sheet or 'Sum It Up'\* sheet. Support students in creating summaries until they can do them independently. The number of words in a 'gist' summary can vary.

\* Sum It Up is a variation on this strategy. The teacher tells the students to imagine they are going to place an ad in the local newspaper on a specific topic and that each word they use will cost 10 cent. They only have €2.00 to spend, so they can only use 20 words in their summary (or €3.50 and 35 words, etc). An example of this strategy is in this resource.

\*\* Students' summarising skills can be further developed by using other NBSS strategy resources e.g. *Somebody Wanted But So*, *Summarising Maps*, *5-4-3-2-1*, *Exit Slips*.

# Get the Gist

The *Get the Gist* strategy will help you find the main idea as you have to limit the number of words used and so focus on the important ideas rather than on details.

Heading:

Textbook Page:

1. Scan the page/section.

2. Read the paragraph.

3. Who or what is the paragraph mostly about?

This paragraph is mainly about...

4. What important pieces of information are linked to the 'who' or 'what'?

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5. Put together the answers above and tell the main idea in 10 words or less!

# Get The Gist!

The *Get the Gist* strategy will help you find the main idea as you have to limit the number of words used and so focus on the important ideas.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the page or section of the textbook.
2. Fill in the 5Ws and 1H you found out from your reading.

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

How:

3. Write a 20-word GIST summary.

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# Get the Gist

The *Get the Gist* strategy will help you find the main idea as you have to limit the number of words used and so focus on the important ideas.

Heading:	Textbook Page:
1. Read the text	
2. Fill out the 5Ws and H	
Who:	
What:	
When:	
Where:	
Why:	
How:	
3. Write the gist of what you have read in 40 words or less!	



# Sum it UP!

Title and pages: \_\_\_\_\_

1. While reading, think about keywords and phrases that explain the main idea. List the keywords or phrases below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Circle all the keywords above that are the most important in the text.

3. Summarise your learning in 20 words:

# Sum It UP!

Read the entire selection (paragraph, section, handout, etc.) and, as you read list the main idea words on the 'Sum It Up' sheet. Then write a summary of what you've read using as many of the main idea words as possible. Now imagine you have €2.00 and that each word you use is worth ten cent. So...you'll 'Sum It Up' in 20 words.

Title of Section: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the section and underline the key words and main ideas. Write these in the blank space below where it says 'Main Idea Words'.

Main Idea Words:

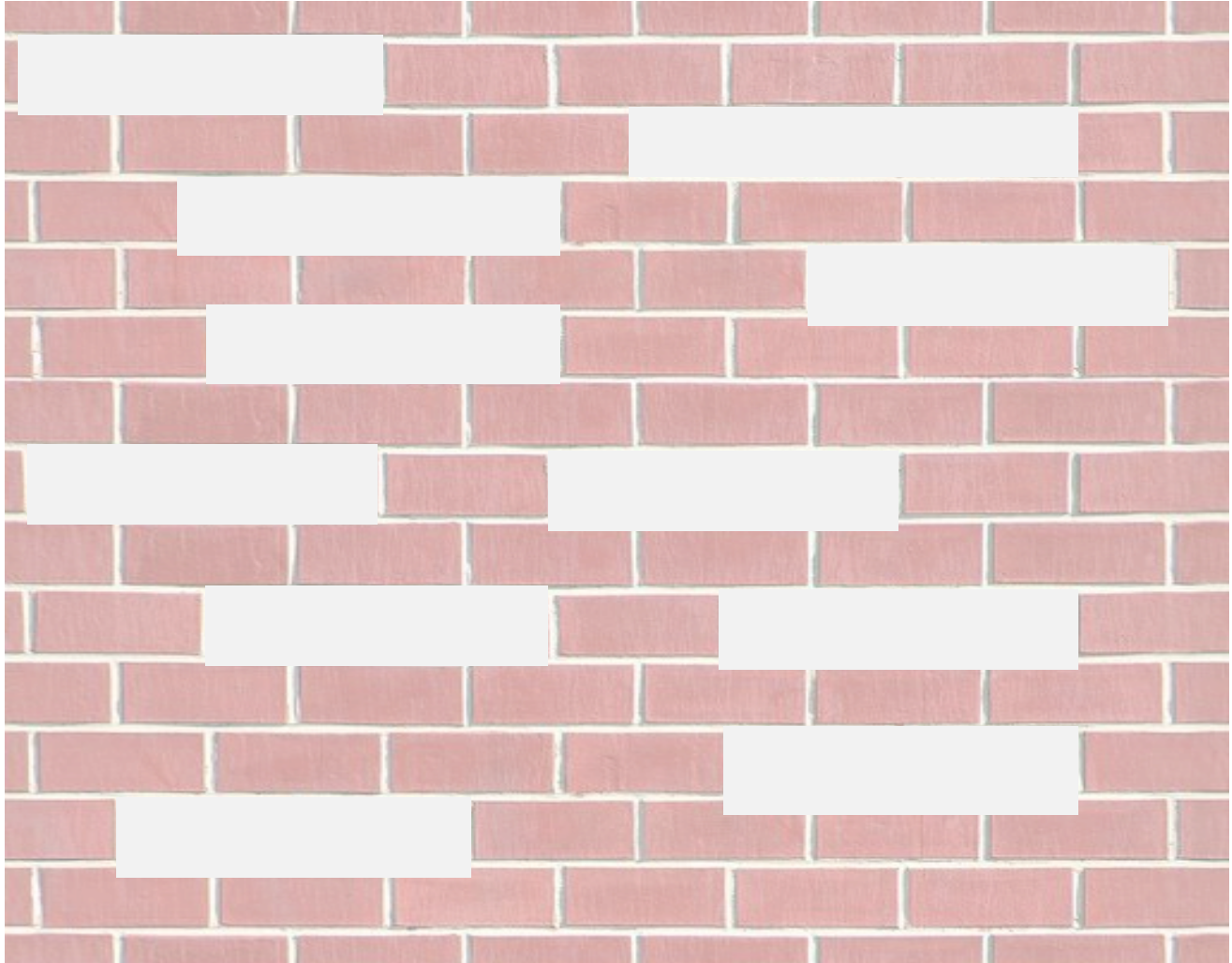
2. Now write a one sentence summary of what you have read, using as many main idea words as you can. Imagine you have €2.00 and that each word you use is worth ten cent. So...you must 'Sum It Up' in 20 words.

Sum It Up:

# Word Wall Gist

Write a summary of what you have read using as many main idea words /phrases as you can from the word wall below.

Topic:



**My main ideas summary:**



# Sum it UP!

1. Create an A+B+C topic sentence by combining the information from the three boxes below.

A Title/Heading	B Strong Verb	C Big Idea

2. Write down 4-5 main ideas from what you read that support the big idea in your topic sentence.

Fact Outline (important information)	Verb Bank	
•	identify	(re)present
•	explore	show
•	express	suggest
•	support	capture
•	demonstrate	tell
•	illustrate	defend
•	highlight	recommend
•	feature	explain
•	describe	produce
•	proves	agree
<p><i>(Avoid using is/was. You can find more strong verbs by using the thesaurus in Word to look up the verbs above.)</i></p>		

3. Write your summary paragraph below. Start by copying your A+B+C topic sentence. Then turn each fact from the box above into a sentence. If helpful, add on *explain* sentences.

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# The DAILY GIST

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GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

- SINCE 1882-

YOUR HEADLINE/HEADING HERE

Summary picture here



Write a 20/30 word summary of today's topic/lesson.

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# The DAILY GIST

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GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER

- SINCE 1882-

# Use 'Get the Gist' to Summarise a Chapter or Story

Gist for first paragraph/section

Gist for second paragraph/section

Gist for third paragraph/section

Gist for fourth paragraph/section

Summary

# Summary Bookmarks

Copy, back and laminate the bookmarks below.

## Sum It Up

1. Preview the text by looking at headings, subheading, **skim the text** pictures, etc. Then read the selection carefully.



2. **Highlight** VIPs (very important points).

3. Create an A+ B + C topic sentence.

*A = identify the title or main heading*  
*B = select a strong verb (do not use is or was)*  
*C = finish your thought with the big idea.*

○ The Italian Renaissance produced many great artists and sculptors.

4. Now add on your VIPs. Be sure to write them as complete sentences.

○ The Italian Renaissance produced many great artists and sculptors. The most famous artists were Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo de Vinci. Michelangelo created the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican and the famous marble sculpture of David. Raphael created paintings for the Pope. Leonardo de Vinci painted the Mona Lisa, one of the most famous paintings of all times.

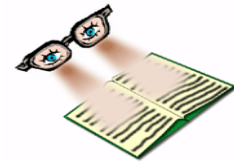
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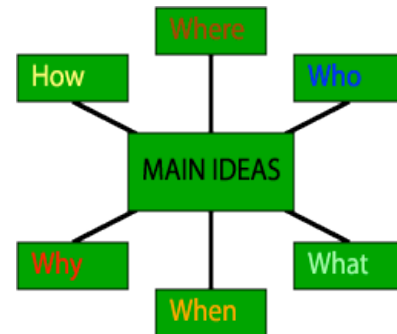
**skim the text**



2. Then read the selection carefully.



3. **Highlight** the who, what, when, where, why and how of the text.



4. Write a 20 word 'gist' summary using the information you have highlighted.

THE GIST

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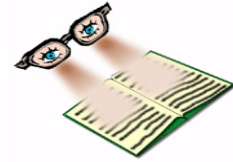
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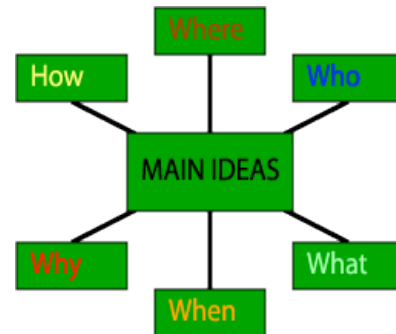
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THE GIST

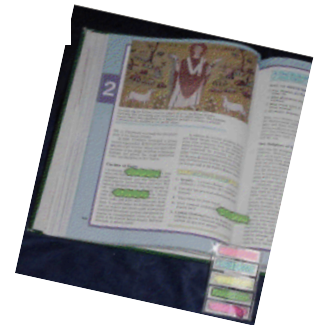
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skim the text



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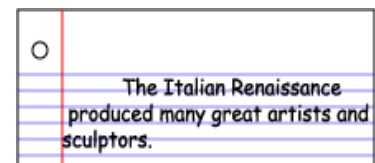


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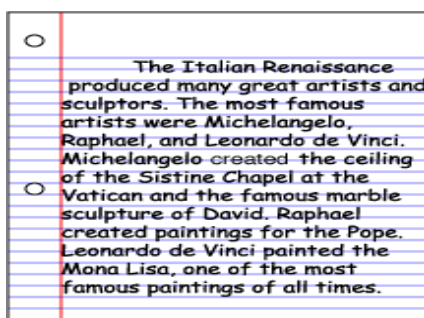
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B=Select a strong verb (don't use *is* or *was*)

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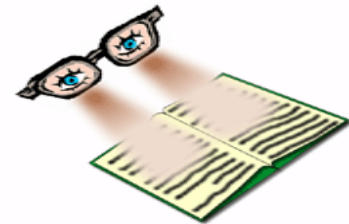
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THE GIST



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