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Lesson in Action

AT A GLANCE

Before Reading

- Discuss why summarizing is useful when discussing and recommending books.
- Show the class's private Goodreads group and discuss the value of book summaries.
- Explain the goal: to write summaries to post on Goodreads.

During Reading

- Have students find good summaries written by reading buddies on Goodreads.
- Students will then copy and paste the best peer summaries into a shared Google Doc.
- Have students share the best summaries they find and discuss why they are good.
- Collaboratively draft a list of what belongs in a good summary.

After Reading

- Engage students' knowledge of story sequence.
- Have students highlight the events in their reading journals for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* according to whether they are part of the beginning, middle, or end of the story.
- Distribute and display a graphic organizer for students to record the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- Model how to write a summary from these notes, referring to the "what's in a summary?" list created earlier.
- Have students write their own summaries from these collaborative notes and share them on Goodreads.

Summarizing: Capture Main Idea and Details

Context

Ms. Shirley's Grade 2 class is concluding a unit on *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, a Common Core State Standards (CCSS) exemplar text. Her students are members of a private group on Goodreads, where they share book summaries and recommendations with other "reading buddies" in their district. During the unit, students have been keeping an online journal, answering basic questions, and noting memorable events chapter by chapter. Today, they will be collaborating on writing summaries of the book that will ultimately be posted on Goodreads. They will also review summaries written by peers to determine the elements of a good summary.

Common Core State Standards

- ▶ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/2/5) (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/2/5>) Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
- ▶ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/2/2) (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/2/2>) Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Lesson Objective

Students will learn how to craft summaries of narrative fiction using sequencing skills.

Technology

- ▶ Goodreads (www.goodreads.com) accessed via laptops, to communicate with long-distance book buddies in other schools
- ▶ Interactive whiteboard, to demonstrate and model summarizing practice
- ▶ Google Docs, for completing a story sequence template and collaboratively crafting summaries
- ▶ Tablets and laptops, for crafting summaries
- ▶ Online student journals, for keeping notes about the novel over the course of the unit

Assessment

- ▶ Peer critique of book summaries by long-distance book buddies
- ▶ Teacher assessment of written summaries

Ms. Shirley's Class in Action

Before Reading

Ms. Shirley helps her students understand the value of summarizing when discussing books and deciding which one to read next. She opens the private Goodreads group her students share with their peers in neighboring schools and shows them summaries of *Charlotte's Web* written by Ms. Hill's class.

"We've enjoyed connecting with Ms. Hill's class on Goodreads and seeing what books they read and enjoy," Ms. Shirley says. "How do their summaries help you decide if you want to read a book?"

"I like knowing what the story is about from beginning to end," says Allie.

"My book buddy told me what happens in *Charlotte's Web*," explains Sam. "Now, I really want to find out what else happens by myself."

"I like when my buddy describes a very exciting part of the story," added Jake.

Ms. Shirley explains that the students are going to post summaries of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* on Goodreads later to explain to their book buddies what the book is about and help them decide if they want to read it themselves. First, they are going to examine the summaries written by their book buddies to determine what makes a summary useful.

During Reading

The students open their Goodreads group on the class laptops and, with partners, they reread the summaries posted by their reading buddies and other students. Some students plug in headphones so that they can read and listen at the same time, and other students pair up to read aloud to one another. When they find a summary or part of a summary that they think is really good, students copy and paste the summary into a Google Doc shared by the whole class. Ms. Shirley circulates around the room, noting the summaries students are saving.

After every group has contributed at least two summaries or excerpts to the Google Doc, Ms. Shirley opens the document on the interactive whiteboard. She adds a section, headed "What's in a summary?"

As a whole class, the students discuss the summaries they chose and share what they thought was good about them. Based on these examples, students share their ideas about what belongs in a summary.

"They have important details," Olive offers.

"It tells us what happened," says Marcy.

"It explains the most exciting part of the book but doesn't tell you every little thing that happens," adds Leif.

As the first ideas emerge, Ms. Shirley captures them on her whiteboard. "Even though the summary only focuses on one part of the story, is there still a beginning, middle, and end?" Ms. Shirley asks. When the students answer "Yes," Ms. Shirley asks a few students to read their excerpts to give examples.

She goes back to the whiteboard to add to her list.

What's in a Summary

- ▶ Has important details
- ▶ Tells us what happened
- ▶ Tells us what happened at the beginning, middle, and end
- ▶ Mentions the exciting part

After Reading

Ms. Shirley now shifts back to summarizing *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.

To begin the summary as a whole-class collaborative task, Ms. Shirley engages the students' understanding of story sequence. "What parts of a story are the most important?" she asks the class. The students respond that the beginning, the middle, and the end are the most important parts of a story.

She then asks students to review their online reading journals, where they keep notes on what happened in the novel. She displays the following directions on her whiteboard:

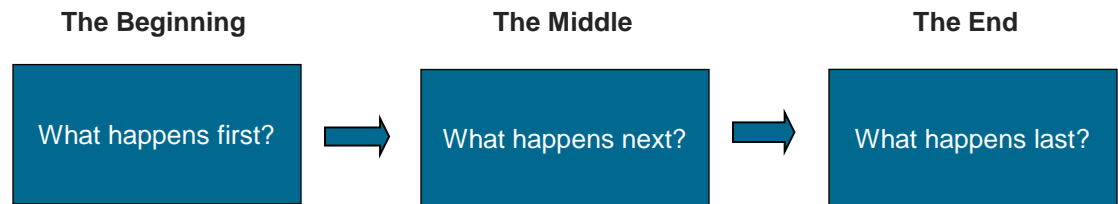
Highlight in yellow the main events that happened at the beginning of the story.

Highlight in blue the main events that happened in the middle of the story.

Highlight in green the main events that happened at the end of the story.

Students work independently to review their notes and highlight them accordingly. When they have finished, Ms. Shirley has students open a document with a three-part graphic organizer, which she also displays on her whiteboard.

Summarizing *Sarah, Plain and Tall*



First, she has students copy and paste the highlighted texts into the three sections on this graphic. Next, student volunteers come up to the whiteboard to put in their notes. Ms. Shirley talks through the students' notes and models how she would summarize this content, referring back to the list of "what's in a summary." She thinks aloud as she drafts:

- ▶ I want to show something important that happened at the beginning, middle, and end.
- ▶ I want to include important details.
- ▶ I want to include the exciting part.

Ms. Shirley translates the students' ideas into sentences on the interactive whiteboard. Little by little, with input from the students, she crafts a short paragraph. She asks one student to volunteer to read the summary aloud. As he does so, she records his oral reading. Later, she sends the written summary and the audio recording to each student in the class.

Later, students will craft their own summaries from these shared notes and add them to their Goodreads account with their recommendation.

Reflection

Ms. Shirley recognizes how motivating it is to share summaries online within Goodreads. She is pleased with the collaborative summary writing. It was a good start, but she knows that a bit more work is needed before the class's summaries can be posted. She also liked how the students responded to finding other students' summaries and using them as models. She thinks ahead about how to help students with their individual writing. She plans to work with small groups, offering needed supports. She will ask the reading coach about online templates that might be helpful. In fact, she thinks to herself, "I am going to ask her to come to the class and work with one group to demonstrate how she would scaffold instruction."