



Reduce it!

The Reduce it! strategy in a social studies classroom is designed to help students condense and restate the essential information from a text, lecture, or discussion in their own words. The primary goal of summarizing is to ensure that students can identify and articulate the main ideas, key details, and broader significance of the content they are learning. Summarizing requires students to engage with the material on a deeper level by processing information, distinguishing between important and less important details, and organizing their thoughts in a clear and concise manner.

The "Reduce It!" strategy encourages students to narrow down complex ideas into the most essential points. This strategy pushes students to focus on the core of the information and develop the ability to distill complex concepts into their simplest form, promoting both critical thinking and communication skills.

How the "Reduce It!" Strategy Works

- **Teach the Concept or Topic:** Start by teaching a specific concept or topic to the class.
- **Initial Summary:** After the lesson, give students 4–5 minutes to write a summary of what they have learned. Encourage them to focus on the most important facts, ideas, and connections, while avoiding unnecessary details.
- **Group Work and Peer Review:** Next, have the students get into groups of three. Each student will pass their written summary to the person on their left (or right). The new reader will then read the summary and condense it further into 2–3 sentences. Give students about 4 minutes for this step.
- **Final Reduction:** After this round, have students switch papers one more time within their group. The new reader will now summarize both previous summaries into just three key words. This final step challenges students to critically assess the content and determine the absolute core of the information. Choosing three words requires students to think deeply about the central meaning of the topic and communicate it as efficiently as possible.