

Herringbone*

Purpose:

To provide students with a framework for making decisions about main ideas and important supporting details in material that they read.

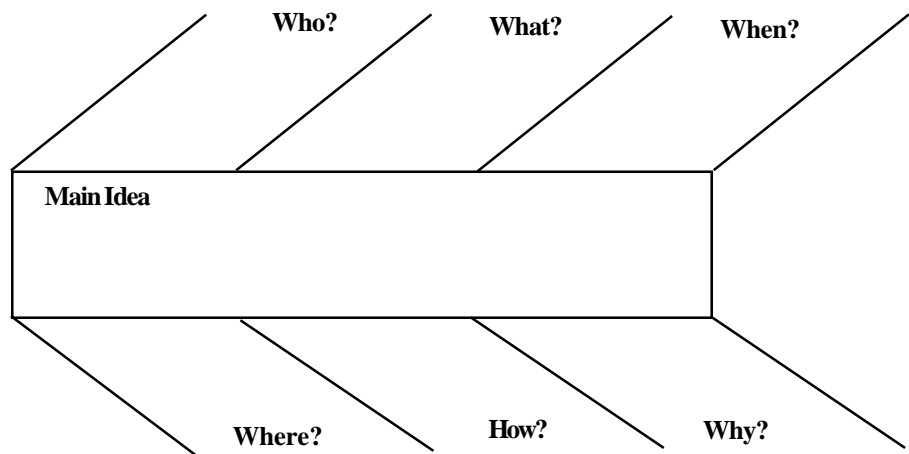
Procedure:

1. Students work in pairs or triads.
2. Students read a selection from a content textbook or another piece of reading material. Any appropriate prereading activity may be used.
3. After reading, groups complete the herringbone (see diagram below) by discussing the text, considering possible answers to the questions on the herringbone, and deciding cooperatively upon the answer that seems best to them.
4. When groups have completed their tasks, the teacher convenes the entire class so that groups can share their decisions, and the reasons for them, with each other. The focus of this discussion should be on decisions and reasons rather than “right” answers.

Notes:

Teachers should feel free to alter the “detail” questions on the herring-bone to fit the specifics of the text or to fit curricular goals.

The herringbone, used in reverse, works well as a prewriting strategy.



*Adapted from a strategy shared by Barb Johnson, National College of Education.