

Outline It!

Purpose

Students will learn to use the organization of informational presentations and text to strengthen comprehension.

Materials

For the teacher: colored chalk, chalkboard

For each pair of students: set of 3 different colored highlighters (same colors in each set), selection of magazines and journals, photocopies of articles that students choose

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Explain to students how breaking down information into smaller parts helps people to retain more and understand better. To illustrate, discuss phone numbers. Why are there parentheses and a dash? Ask students to try to memorize a phone number without the break and then with it.
2. Explain how taking notes in outline form is also a way of breaking down information that allows one to remember and to better understand the subject matter.
3. Explain outline form to students.
4. Write all or part of your lesson plan notes in outline form on the chalkboard and have students copy the notes in their notebooks. Use different colors of chalk for your thesis statement, for supporting points, and for questions/issues to think about.

B. Outlining for Organization

1. Divide the class into groups of two.
2. Tell students that they will be using their outlining skills to find the main ideas in articles of their choice.
3. Have each pair find an article that interests them from the selection of magazines and journals.
4. Make photocopies of the article chosen for each member of the pair.
5. Give each pair of students three different colored highlighters for different parts of the outline and write the color key on the chalkboard (e.g., pink = thesis statement, blue = supporting points, yellow = questions raised for further discussion).

(continued)

EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY



Invite a speaker of the students' choice to come to the class. Have students take notes in outline form and refer to them when asking questions of the speaker.

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS



For students who are performing this activity with ease, have a "You Are the Teacher Day." Let students write their outlines on the board, tell the class about the article, and take questions from the class afterward.

Standards Links
4.2.2, 4.7.6

Activity (continued)

6. Have the members of each group take turns reading paragraphs of the articles aloud, with both members highlighting the appropriate parts on the photocopies in the correct color.
7. Move around the room, helping the students to choose the correct parts to highlight.
8. Allow students to discuss their answers.
9. When they are finished, have students explain their articles to their partners, using the highlighted portions to guide them.

C. Closing the Activity

1. Discuss how outlining articles might help someone to understand or remember them better.
2. During the following week, continue to write your lesson plan notes in outline form on the chalkboard and have students copy them into their notebooks.

Questions for Review

Basic Concepts and Processes

When the students are finished with their outlines, assess students' knowledge by asking the following questions:



How do you put something into outline form?



Why make an outline of an article or a book?



When would you use an outline?



How does making an outline help you to understand something better?
