

THE 10

# Summarize

## Build Awareness of the Strategy

Help students hone their *Summarizing* skills in order to grasp and remember what they read. When we summarize, we make decisions about what is most important in the text. Summarizing involves questioning, evaluating, rethinking, and ultimately drawing conclusions about the essence of what we read to arrive at a meaning that is larger than the sum of its parts. Summarizing not only helps us to recall, but also it enables us to communicate our reading to others.

Explain that in summarizing we draw upon the text as well as our own experience, knowledge, and beliefs. A good summary is more than a compilation of the main idea and key details; it's also a connection between the text and what is important to your life. Suppose you are reading a book about the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, and you have a strong conviction about hard work. The sacrifice of the Roebling family and the workers who built the bridge resonates with your personal perspective to shape your summary.

## Talk Through the Strategy

Model the strategy for the selection your students are reading. Use think-alouds and invite discussion as you model what active readers do to build and deepen comprehension. You might model marking important parts with sticky notes you write on, or jotting down ideas in a notebook as you read. You can also record your thoughts in an outline or time line, or take notes on chart paper.

## Include as many of these as apply in your modeling:

1. **Set the stage** for *Summarizing* by asking new essential questions before and during reading or referring to previously established questions. Show how these questions set a purpose for reading that helps define what's most important.
2. **Model the strategy** by giving a short summary of the text and explaining how you arrived at your conclusions—any opinions, background knowledge, and the information in the text you synthesized. Use the specific prompts for *Summarizing* on the Teaching Card and add your own.
3. **Review the strategy** going back through the text and modeling how to sift through details and find the main ideas.

## Additional active reading techniques:

- Read aloud and stop at several points to sum up.
- Have students summarize in pairs or groups, discuss what is most important, and present their ideas to others.
- Invite wide discussion and encourage debate about what to include in a summary.
- Have students write abstracts for the text; provide examples.
- Reread and see if your ideas about what is important have changed.

## Independent Practice

Have students work collaboratively or independently to apply *Summarizing* to another text. Suggest the book listed on the Teaching Card in the Read Across Texts section, or another book you or your students choose. Encourage students to summarize what the texts have in common, such as similar themes. Alternatively, students could contrast the texts by summarizing differences.