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*Sincerely,*  
*Karen Haag*

## Who + Did What? Headline Summaries

**Learning Target:** I can write headline summaries for parts of texts.

Work with a small group of about 6 children when you begin to teach summarizing. In the beginning, kids find writing short summaries is very difficult. With practice, they become quite competent. However, it is helpful if the teacher is close by to help students think through their ideas at first.

Successful summarizing will lead to independent reciprocal teaching groups, Socratic Seminars, synthesis, test-taking, and writing so it is best that writing summaries is learned well. Plus, headline summarizing is like solving a puzzle. Children enjoy summarizing and comparing. When approached in this way, students build their generalizing and vocabulary skills which leads to better articulation of main ideas and themes and thinking.

### MATERIALS

1. Cut out newspaper articles that stick to a “who + did what” headline summary. i.e.: Dog rescues boy from burning building.
2. OR – Mark headlines in the newspaper you would like students to analyze that stick to this pattern.
3. Grandma poem included in this packet

### ENGAGE

- Ask students to work in pairs with several articles that have “who + did what” headline summaries you have pre-selected.
- Ask children to read as many headlines as they can to look for a pattern as to how they are written.

**EXPLAIN Learning Target:** I can write headline summaries for parts of texts.

- In discussion, see if students understand that a headline is a summary of sorts; it can be 2-6 words and often includes "who" + "did what."
- Tell readers that they are going to practice writing summaries, like headlines, as a strategy to improve their comprehension.
- Explain that when writing summaries for each part of text, students will need to stop every so often to think. A natural stopping place for a poem is at the end of each stanza.

*For your information: A natural stopping point for picture books is before the reader turns a page; for novels – at the end of each page; in nonfiction – the text is already chunked with a subtitle.*

### EXPLORE

- Use the “Grandma” poem or a selection you enjoy to model headline summarizing.
- Reveal one stanza at a time and ask children to try summarizing the part in 2-6 words starting with the “who” and then adding the “did what”. At first, children will want to retell the whole section. If that happens, stop and explain again:  
*When retelling, we tell the main points of the story in our own words. When summarizing, we express the main idea in as few words as possible. When writing headline summaries, we take the game one step farther: 2-6 words only. Writing shorter requires the ability to determine what is most important to include. In addition, the most successful summarizers pull from their extensive vocabularies.*
- Read section-by-section. Students share summaries. Their summaries will be worded differently than each other's, but the gist of the writing, the main ideas, should match. i.e.: The first stanza will be something like, *Grandma tells stories.*

## EXTEND

When finished read and summarizing the whole poem, reread the summaries to determine the main idea of the poem. For example, one could generalize from all the summaries that grandma is a thoughtful grandma. *The main idea is a reading term. It is the gist of what happens in the selection. Students should be able to agree on the main idea even though the wording may be different.*

*Grandma tells stories.  
Grandma sends cards.  
Grandma cooks.  
Grandma compliments us.  
Grandma is sweet.*



Grandma is sweet.  
Grandma is thoughtful.  
Grandma is kind.

Any one of these statements  
could be the main idea.

## EVALUATE

- Discuss. Find out whether slowing down and writing a summary for each stanza helped the students understand the poem better.
- Ask students to think about their thinking to explain how they determined each 2-6-word summary. Let them share in order to model different ways of solving the problem for one another.
- Take anecdotal notes on what the students say as formative assessment.
- **EXIT SLIP** → What strategy did you learn today? How can you apply it to your reading life?

### Possible Follow Up:

Repeat this lesson plan using other texts until students master summary.

Once children understand how to write summaries, they don't continue to jot them down.

- Instead, I ask them to try Stop and Summarize in their heads when reading or Stop and Summarize aloud when reading with a partner.
- When reading nonfiction texts, I teach students to pay attention to subheadings because subheadings ARE summaries.
- When reading picture books, I encourage readers to stop before they turn the page to think about whether they understand the text and take action when they don't.
- In book clubs, students summarize before starting the day's discussion. They assess whether comprehension needs fixing up and take action before they discuss the reading for the day.

Well-designed assignments move students to higher levels of thinking. With practice, students work from the lowest levels of synthesis, retelling and summarizing, to higher levels, determining characterization, main ideas, and theme.

True synthesis will come when students internalize the information gained from texts to form opinions, cite evidence to support their conclusions, change perspectives, develop new ideas, and, in general, enhance a personal understanding of the concepts presented in a text.

Name:	
Poem	Headline Summary
<p><b>Grandma</b> By Karen Haag</p> <p>“Let me tell you this story,” you’d say. And soon, we’d be laughing at your stories. Laughter came easily around you.</p>	
<p>“Have you seen this cartoon, cut from the paper?” you’d write. We’d pull out the rumpled cartoons and the dollar you sent. We laugh, for the joke and because ... what were we going to do with a dollar?</p>	
<p>“Let’s make hot crossed cinnamon buns!” you demanded! We’d all get to work, rolling pin and floured board spread on the counter. The smell of your baking reached deep into our hearts.</p>	
<p>“You do that very well,” you kindly offered. You noticed when we did our best; it didn’t matter if our efforts were perfect. Your kind words cuddled us safely like one of your handmade quilts.</p>	
<p>Many years have passed but the memories linger. “A little something sweet would be nice,” you’d say after every evening meal. And so you were, too - a sweet treasure to us all.</p>	

**Main Idea:**

CUT-----

Name:	
Poem	Headline Summary
<p><b>Grandma</b> By Karen Haag</p> <p>“Let me tell you this story,” you’d say. And soon, we’d be laughing at your stories. Laughter came easily around you.</p>	
<p>“Have you seen this cartoon, cut from the paper?” you’d write. We’d pull out the rumpled cartoons and the dollar you sent. We laugh, for the joke and because ... what were we going to do with a dollar?</p>	
<p>“Let’s make hot crossed cinnamon buns!” you demanded! We’d all get to work, rolling pin and floured board spread on the counter. The smell of your baking reached deep into our hearts.</p>	
<p>“You do that very well,” you kindly offered. You noticed when we did our best; it didn’t matter if our efforts were perfect. Your kind words cuddled us safely like one of your handmade quilts.</p>	
<p>Many years have passed but the memories linger. “A little something sweet would be nice,” you’d say after every evening meal. And so you were, too - a sweet treasure to us all.</p>	

**Main Idea:**

## KEY

Name:

Poem	Headline Summary
<b>Grandma</b> By Karen Haag "Let me tell you this story," you'd say. And soon, we'd be laughing at your stories. Laughter came easily around you.	Grandma tells stories
"Have you seen this cartoon, cut from the paper?" you'd write. We'd pull out the rumpled cartoons and the dollar you sent. We laugh, for the joke and because ... what were we going to do with a dollar?	Grandma sends cards
"Let's make hot crossed cinnamon buns!" you demanded! We'd all get to work, rolling pin and floured board spread on the counter. The smell of your baking reached deep into our hearts.	Grandma bakes
"You do that very well," you kindly offered. You noticed when we did our best; it didn't matter if our efforts were perfect. Your kind words cuddled us safely like one of your handmade quilts.	Grandma compliments us.
Many years have passed but the memories linger. "A little something sweet would be nice," you'd say after every evening meal. And so you were, too - a sweet treasure to us all.	Grandma is sweet

**Main Idea:** Grandma is Kind.

### **Relate reading to writing**

General statement: Grandma is Kind.

Details to support the main idea:

Laughs

Sends cards

Bakes for us

Compliments us

Sweet