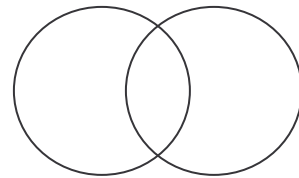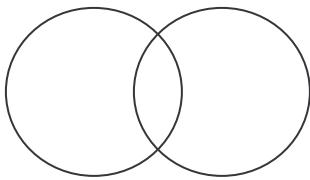# Graphic Organizers to Support Active Reading Strategy Instruction

Resources for Grades 2-5

by Tracey Harding-Stricker, M.Ed.

Using Graphic Organizers to Support Active Reading Strategy Instruction

Years of research have provided teachers with information on what skills and strategies proficient readers use. We have learned that proficient readers are active readers, engaging with the text in a variety of ways before, during and after reading. In contrast, struggling readers focus on words rather than ideas. They fail to apply the reading strategies. Fortunately, research has also shown that these reading strategies can be taught. Noted researchers Duke and Pearson (2002) found that "comprehension improves when teachers provide explicit instruction in the use of comprehension strategies."

How do we implement the effective teaching of these strategies? Since reading is an "invisible" act, as is strategy application, we have to find ways to make the thinking and strategy application students are doing while reading visible. Graphic organizers are the key. When using graphic organizers, students must think about what they are reading and record their thoughts. They must analyze and organize information, identify important details and summarize content. Correlating the organizer to the specific reading strategy being taught will help students focus on what they are doing as readers. It will also help them organize and recall information, as well as think about what they are doing to build comprehension. This **metacognition** is a necessary aspect of reading strategy instruction. Eventually, students will be able to make their own organizers to match their purpose for reading. When students are able to do this, they are demonstrating understanding of active reading strategies.

Graphic organizers done while reading provide students with a reference for thinking and writing about reading. When students are asked questions about the text, they can refer to their organizers. Organizers hold students' thinking and help them recall information, thoughts and questions they had while reading. Graphic organizers aid students in the writing process as they plan, support and record ideas and processes. They serve as a prewriting piece when students are asked to develop responses to text.

Graphic organizers are drawings or formats used to represent information visually, show relationships between ideas and help students think critically. As students convert information and ideas into a graphic map they gain increased understanding and insight to the focus topic or strategy. They are simple to create and can be differentiated based on student need. They meet the needs of various learners and encourage all students to think at the higher end of the taxonomy. Students who use graphic organizers are actively engaged in the text or lessons as

they complete the organizer and consider the information they are recording. Graphic organizers can be used by the teacher to monitor and evaluate student progress, serve as written assessment data and provide information about students' learning needs.

With careful planning, you can use organizers to enhance and deepen reading strategy instruction and learning throughout the year.

The "Eight Great" Reading Strategies

As proficient readers actively engage with text, they think and process information continually. These eight reading strategies are what readers use to develop understanding, deepen comprehension and extend meaning of text. "Good reader" strategies, as identified by research, include making connections to schema, questioning, creating sensory images, predicting/inferring, determining importance, setting purpose, monitoring, summarizing/synthesizing and evaluating. Students can be taught to use these reading strategies through direct, specific, scaffolded instruction.

The most effective lessons are those in which the teacher explains and models the strategy clearly, provides time for guided practice, collaborative practice and finally, independent use of the strategy. During each step of the process, students should be asked to reflect on their use of the strategy, how it helped them deepen comprehension and how it can be applied to other learning situations. This metacognition is an important aspect of learning to read and monitor understanding. Using graphic organizers is an ideal way to connect strategy instruction and metacognition.

 Each strategy is explained in detail and graphic organizers to support the strategy instruction are provided. The organizers can be used with lessons and resources that are currently available, as well as with structured reading programs.

Activating Schema and Setting Purpose

It is vitally important that we set purpose, activate schema and building background knowledge in our students prior to reading. Schema provides a frame of reference for readers, so the words on the page can be made into a meaningful translation. Schema is what allows students to scaffold new information into existing "files" or knowledge. Once schema is activated, students are ready to engage in reading, assimilate information from text into existing knowledge and extend understanding. As students read, the connect information, experiences and ideas to their own schema, scaffolding learning and deepening comprehension. Setting purpose determines how students approach text, what the look for as they read, and reading rate. Understanding the "why" of reading helps students focus on what is important when reading.

The following organizers are designed to help students prepare for reading by activating schema, making connections and set purpose for reading.

K-W-L Chart

Know what I know about the topic	Want to Know what I want to know about the topic	Learned what I learned about the topic

Notes:

K-W-L-S Chart

| Know what I **know** about the topic	Want to Know what I want to know about the topic	Source where I learned about the topic-my **s**ource	Learned what I **learned** about the topic

Notes:

Building and Revising Schema Chart (BRS Chart)
An Organizer for Non-Fiction Topic Studies

| What I Think I Know	Confirmed by my Source	Revised by my Source	New Learning From my Source	What I Still Want to Learn

Notes:

Concept Web

The concept web is ideal for brainstorming, which helps you activate schema on a topic you are reading about. Write the topic of your book (or a vocabulary word from the book) in the center circle. Use the web extensions to show what you know about it. Add more extension circles as needed.
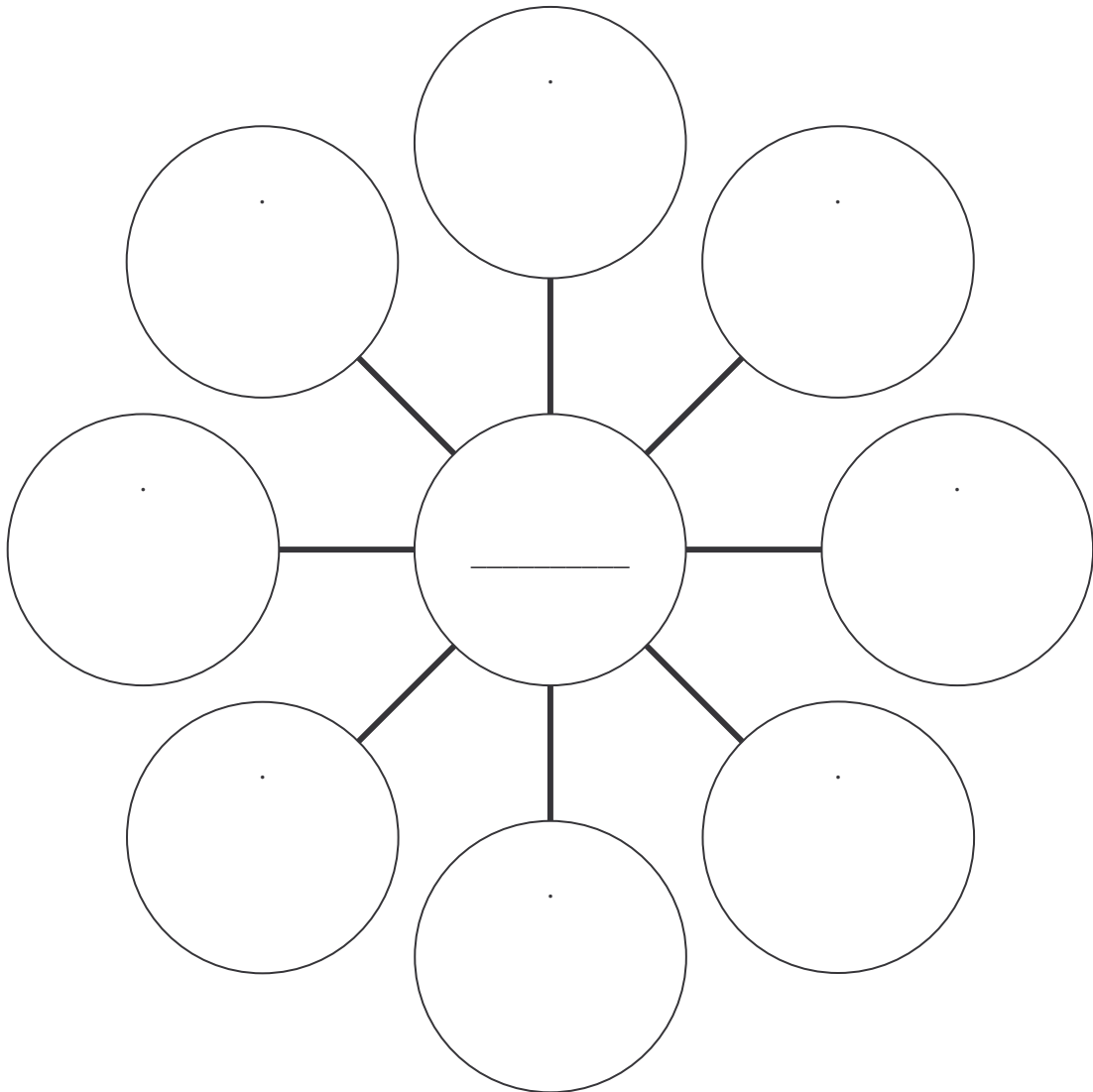
Cluster Web

Use a cluster web as you would a concept web-to activate schema on a topic. The Cluster Web organizes information in a more detailed manner than the Concept Web. Write the topic in the center of the web. Add extension circles as needed.
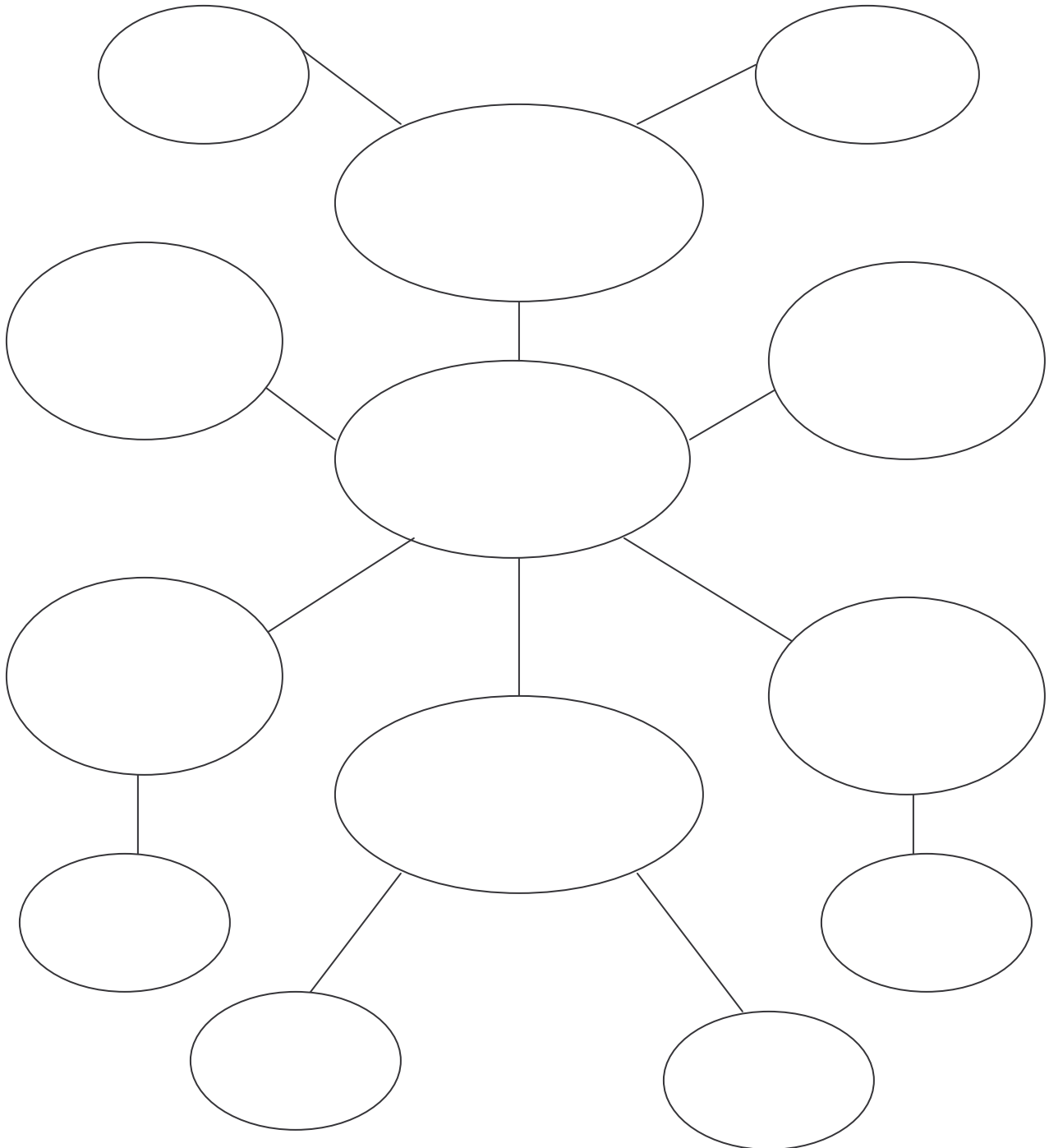
Schema Development Organizer

What you know is your "schema," or mental files. When you learn something new, it gets filed into your existing schema in an organized way that makes sense. Write your "new learning" on the clipboards and then "file" it away in the proper place.

What I know about

_____

Pre-Reading T-Chart

Browsing through text prior to reading it can help you activate schema and set purpose. Examining the content and format of the text helps you understand what you're reading, become aware of the text layout and activates any schema you may have on the topic.

Title _____

Author _____

Text Feature	My Response
Read the title and look at the picture on the cover. What do you think this book will be about?	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Flip through the pages. What do you notice? Is this fiction or nonfiction text?	_____ _____ _____
If this is fiction, can you tell anything about the characters, setting or plot? If so, what do you notice? If this is nonfiction, what is the central topic? What do you think you will learn reading this book?	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Does this book remind you of any other books/text you've read? If so, what? What is it that reminds you of it?	_____ _____
Does this book grab your interest? Why or why not?	_____ _____ _____
What is your purpose for reading this book?	_____ _____

Sixty Second Skim and Scan

Skimming and scanning text prior to reading can help you activate schema and set purpose. Examining the content and format of the text helps you understand what you're reading, become aware of the text layout and activates any schema you may have on the topic. Complete the "Sixty Second Skim and Scan" prior to reading.

Book Title: _____

Author:_____

Read the cover of the book. Note the title and the name of the author. Are you familiar with this author? _____ If yes, what are you thinking as you look at the book?	Think about the title. What do you think the book will be about based on the title?	What do you already know about this topic/theme?
Flip through the book and skim the pages for one minute. What did skimming through the book make you think about?	Predictions for this text:	My hopes for this book:

Alphabet Brainstorm

Write the topic you'll be reading about in the "topic" box. Write words that connect to the topic under each letter of the alphabet. Be prepared to explain what you know about the topic and the words you write.

Topic: _____

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

My thoughts: _____
_____
_____
_____

Alphabet Brainstorm

Write the topic you'll be reading about on the "topic" line. Write words that connect to the topic next to each letter of the alphabet. Be prepared to explain what you know about the topic and the words you write.

Topic: _____

A_____   N_____

B_____   O_____

C_____   P_____

D_____   Q_____

E_____   R_____

F_____   S_____

G_____   T_____

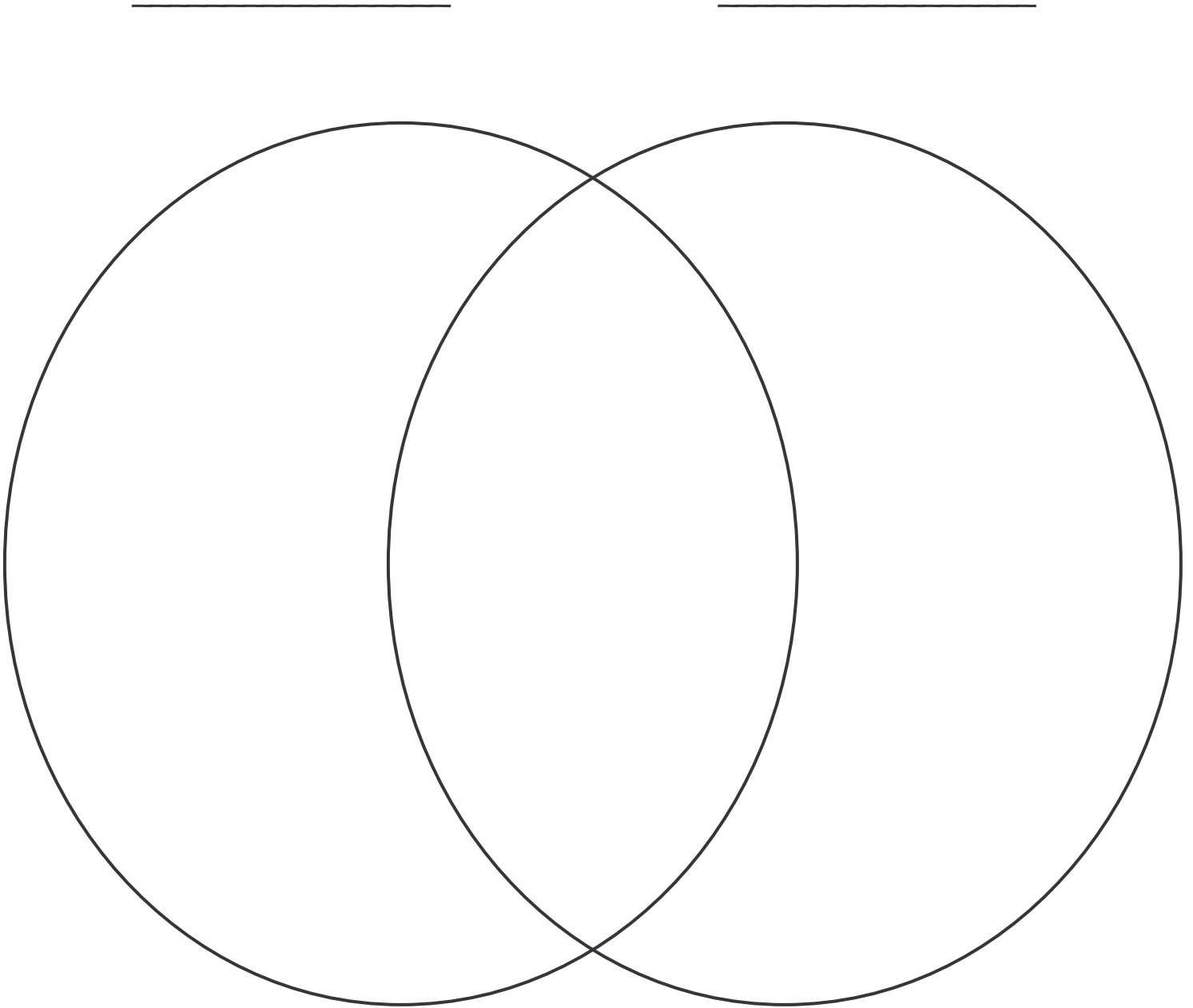H_____   U_____

I_____   V_____

J_____   W_____

K_____   X_____

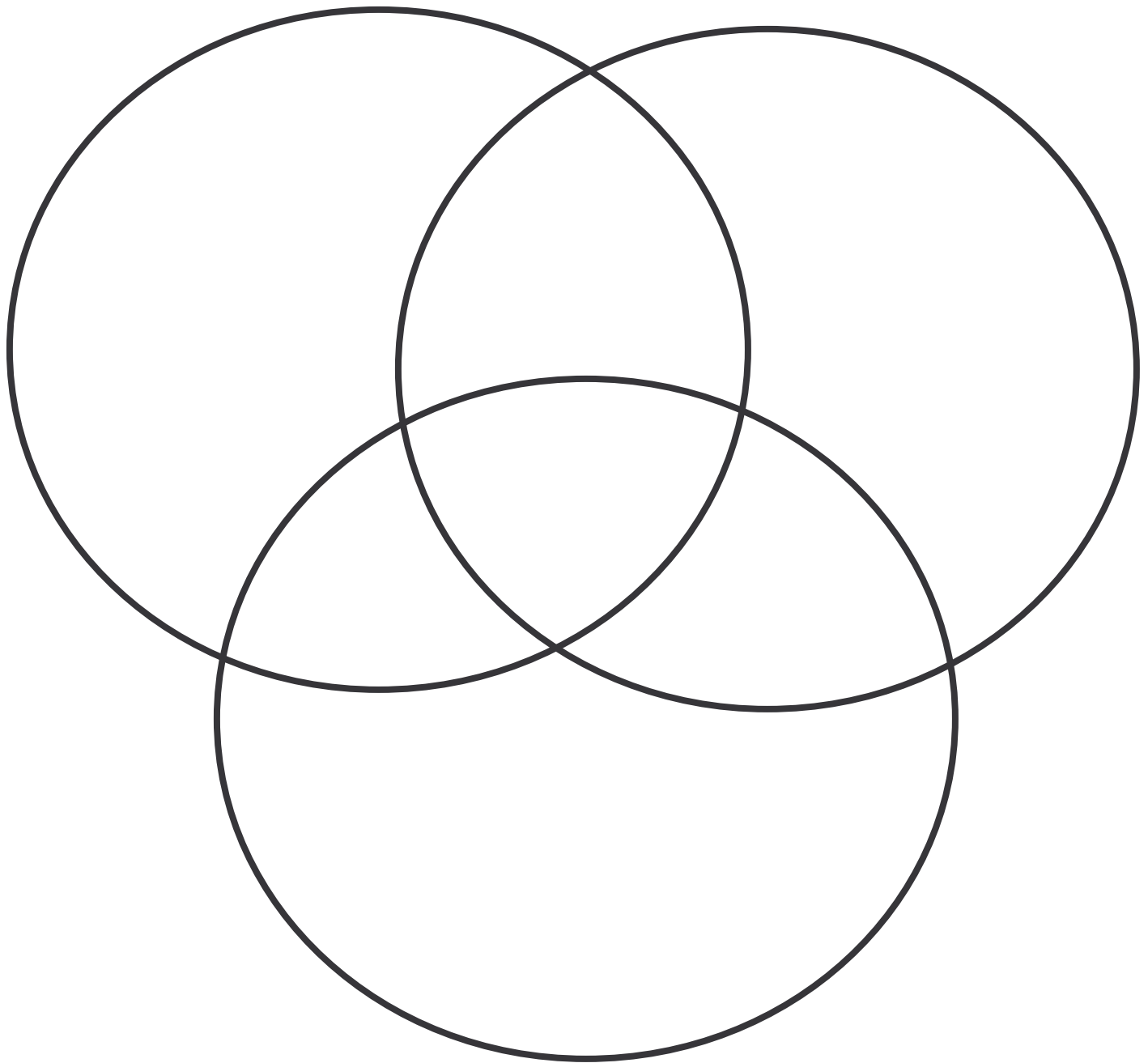L_____   Y_____

M_____   Z_____

Venn Diagram

Use the Venn Diagram to compare two texts. This works well in author's studies, topic studies and when reading two different versions of the same text.
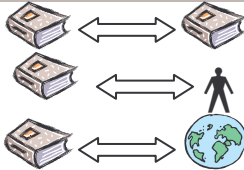
_____   _____

Complex Venn Diagram-Comparing Three Texts
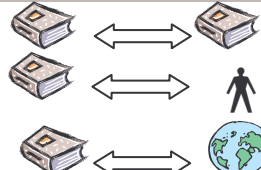
Notes:

Connections Thinkmarks

Connections Thinkmark

As you read, notice when you make connections to the text. Connections will help you understand what you read more deeply. We make text-self, text-text and text-world connections as we read.

My Connections…

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Connections...Helped Me... T-Chart

Connection	Helped me understand the text because...

Reminds Me Of…Chart

When I read….	It reminded me of…

Text-to-Self Connections Chart

My text-to-self connection…	Helped me understand because…	Now I know…

Text-to-Text Connections Chart

My text-to-text connection…	Helped me understand because…	Now I know…

Text-to-World Connections Chart

My text-to-world connection…	Helped me understand because…	Now I know…

B-D-A Connections Chart

Good readers make connections to the text as they read. Record the connections you make before, during and after reading. Consider how these connections deepened your comprehension of the text.

Connections I made **before** reading	Connections I made **during** reading	Connections I made **after** reading
Helped me understand because	Helped me understand because…	Helped me understand because…

Word Theatre Planning Chart

Find words in your text that are meaningful and are important to know for comprehension of the text. Make a plan for "acting out" the word.

Word	Pg. #	Definition	Plan for Dramatizing

Word Map

You must understand the words in a text in order to comprehend what you read. Studying words from the text prior to reading can help you develop schema for the topic. Find key words in the text and use them to complete the "Word Map" organizer.
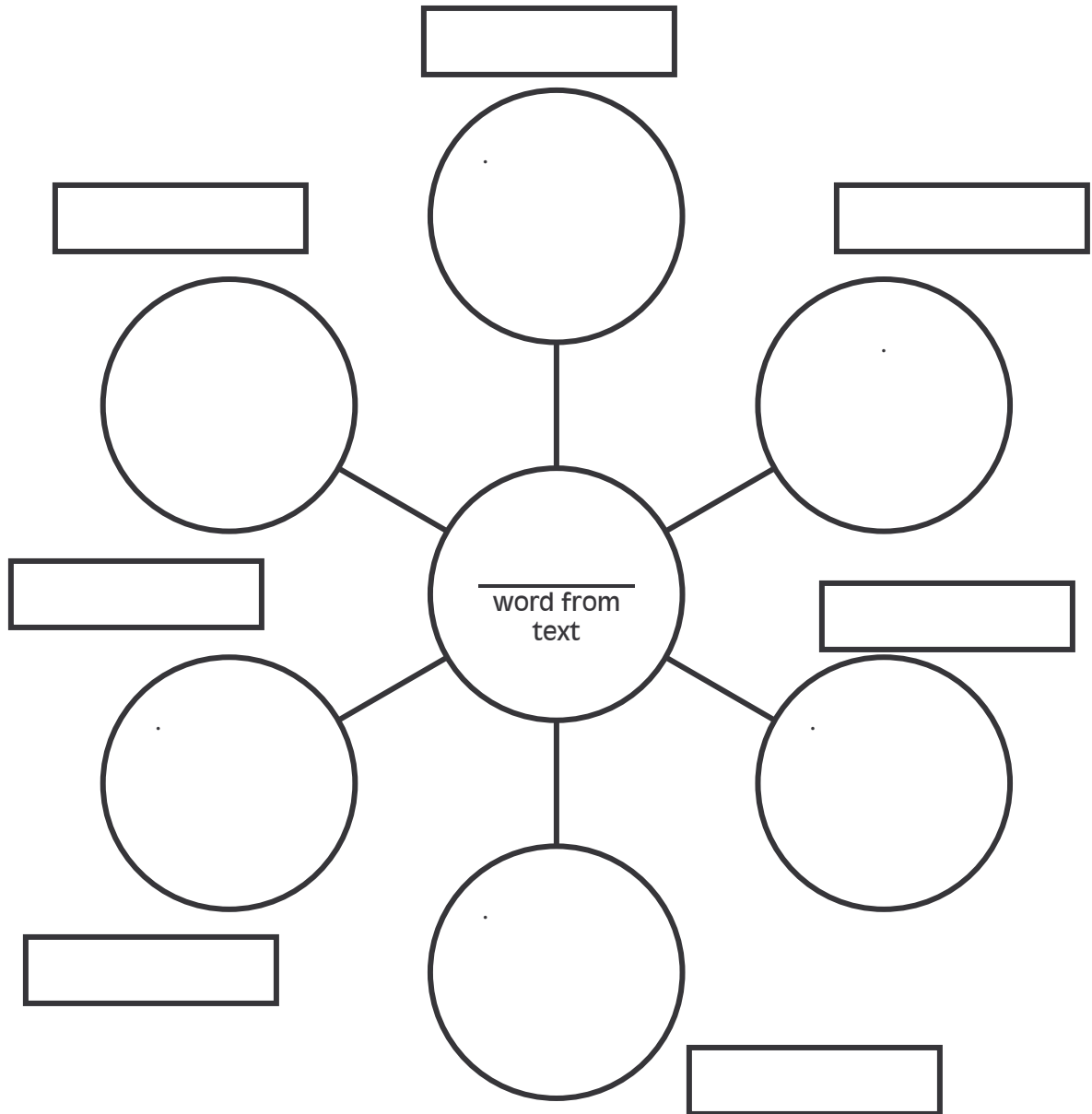
Definition and Synonym:	Antonym:
Word: _____	
Use it:	Sketch it:

Definition and Synonym:	Antonym:
Word: _____	
Use it:	Sketch it:

Vocabulary Graphic Organizer
Word Map

Name:_____

Find words that are meaningful to the text you are reading or that relate to the topic. Complete the organizer. Use the outer boxes to label the topics/words.

word from text

Vocabulary Organizer
Mini Dictionary

Name:_____

| synonym |

| antonym |

| illustration |

Word Meaning:_____

_____

Sentence:_____

_____

| synonym |

| antonym |

| illustration |

Word Meaning:_____

_____

Sentence:_____

_____

Vocabulary Organizer   Name:_____

Word Chart

Examples of:

Definition of the word:

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
word

Non-examples:

Characteristics/Description:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Vocabulary Organizer   Name:_____

Word Connections

Definition:

Examples of:

Word:

Reminds me of:

My Word Connections: I'll remember this word by connecting it to:

Vocabulary Organizer   Name:_____

Word Descriptions
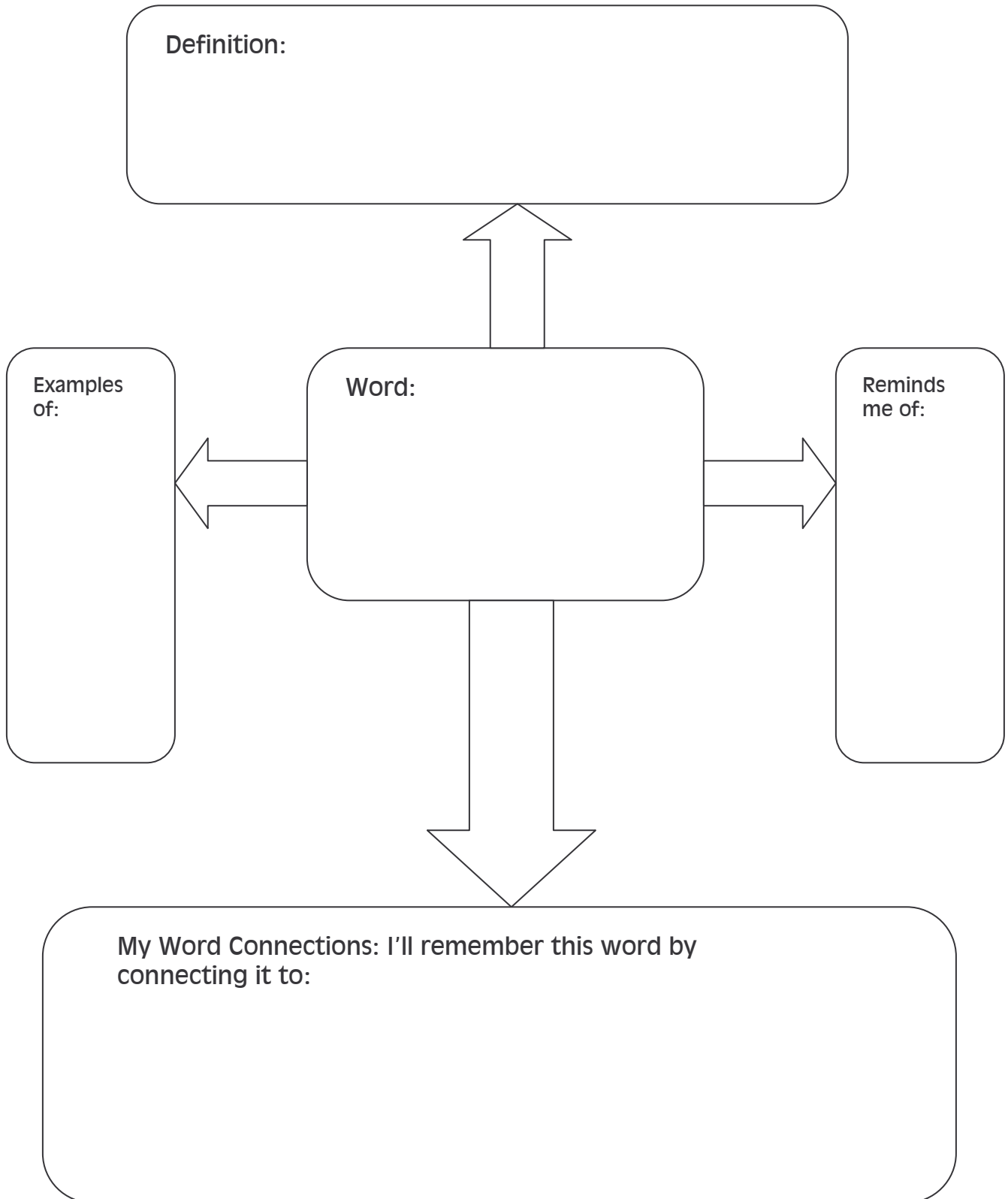
WORD:

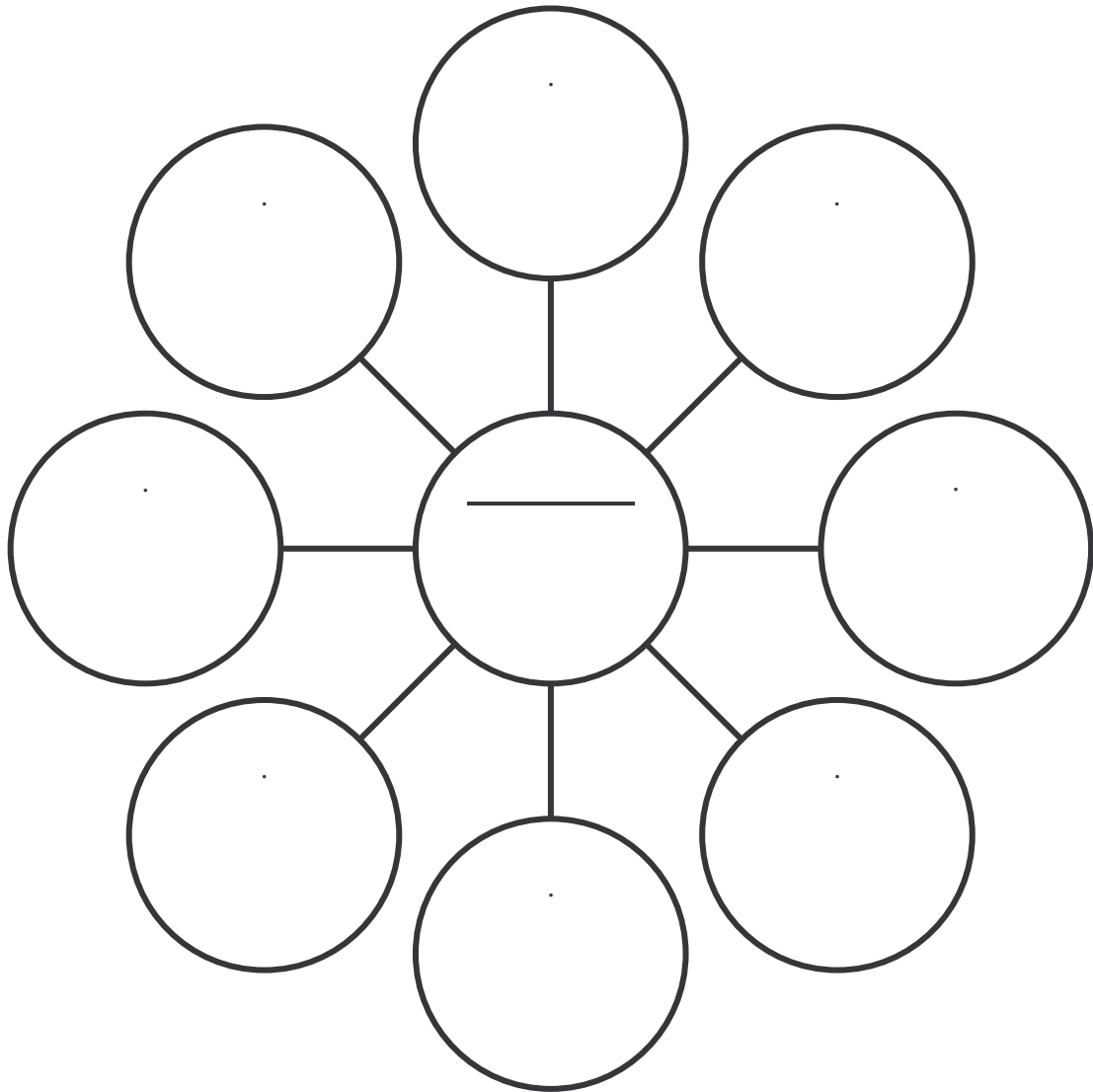Definition:

Description:
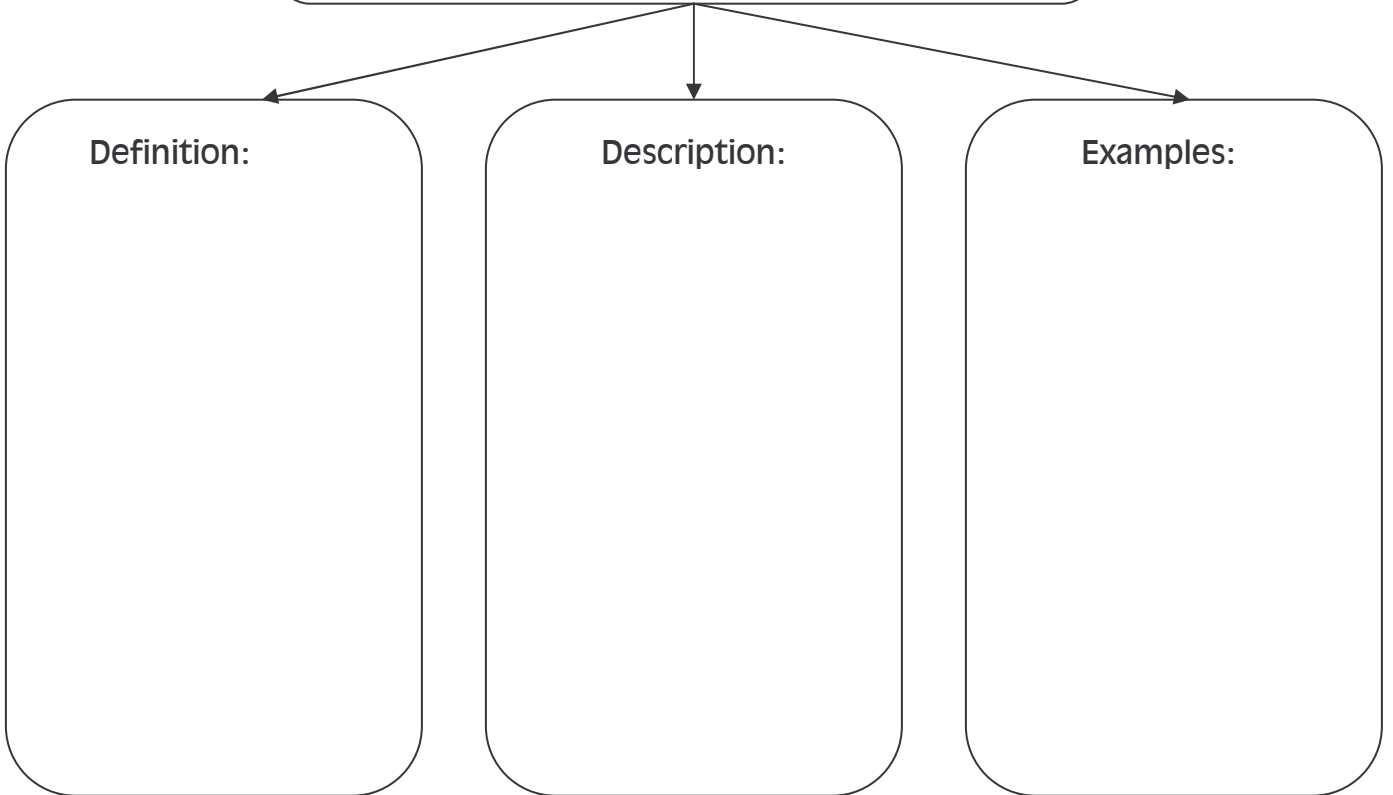
Examples:

ILLUSTRATION:

Word Pyramid
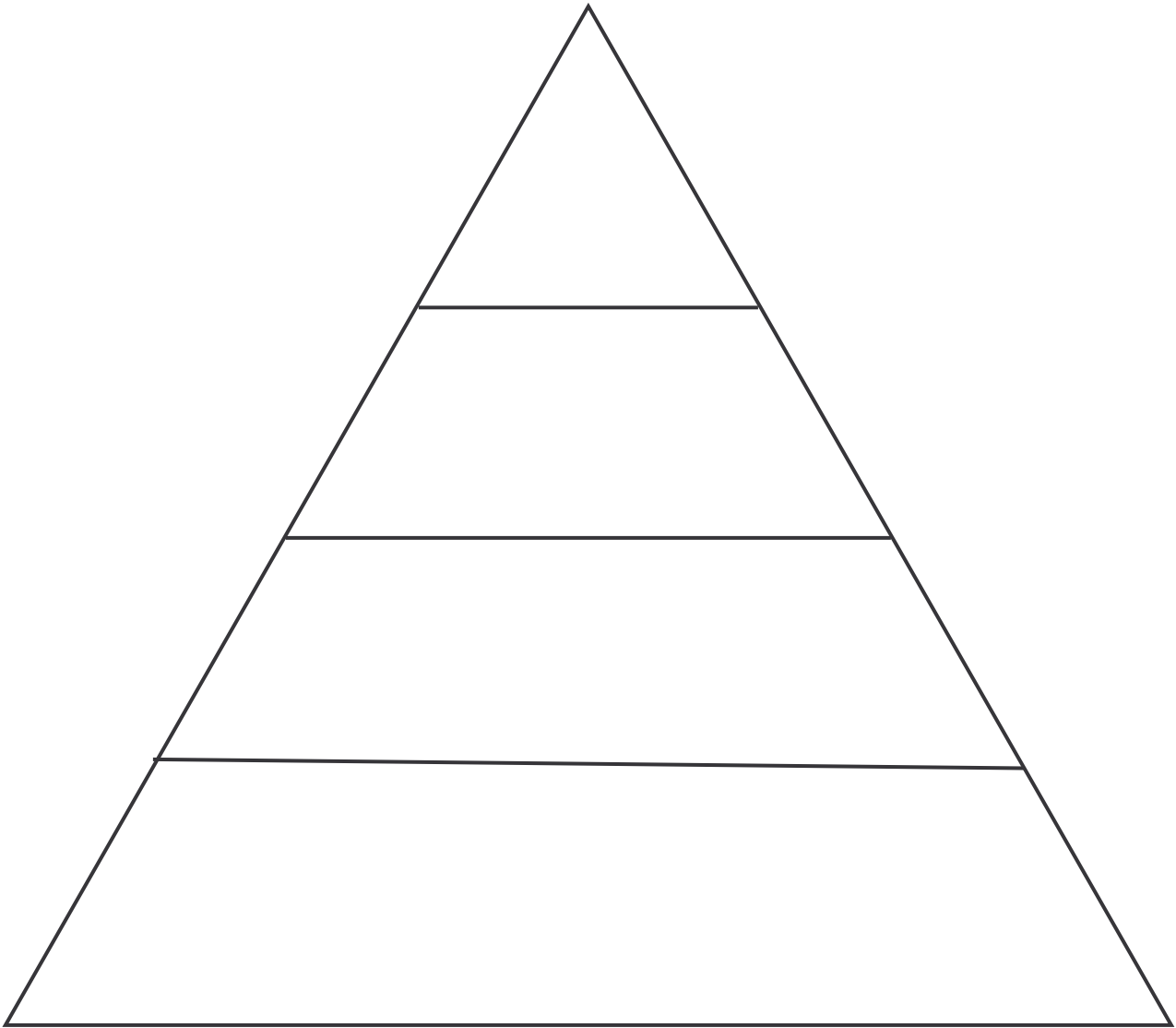
- Put the word in the top.
- Put the definition below the word.
- Put synonyms or examples in the next section.
- Put a sentence in the bottom.

<u>Basic Web</u>

This basic web can be used for a variety of vocabulary and concept building activities.

Questioning

Curiosity is the greatest asset we bring to learning. The mind's desire to know more guides us to ask questions, and determine ways to find answers to those questions.

Good questions stem from background knowledge-we can only ask a substantive question if we have knowledge of the subject matter at hand. Questioning guides the purpose for reading and helps us hone in on what's important.

Questions moves us deeper into reading. They stimulate thought, provide clarity, expand on ideas, and lead us to further questions. Questioning is the hallmark of thinking.

When instructing students in the reading strategy of questioning, we must teach them that "reading is thinking." What does this mean? Our students often don't realize that proficient readers ask questions before, during, and after they read.

When a reader asks questions during the reading process, he is interacting with the text, searching for answers. To do this, the reader must self-monitor for comprehension, clarify information, and constructing meaning.

The following organizers will help your students ask questions about text before, during and after reading.

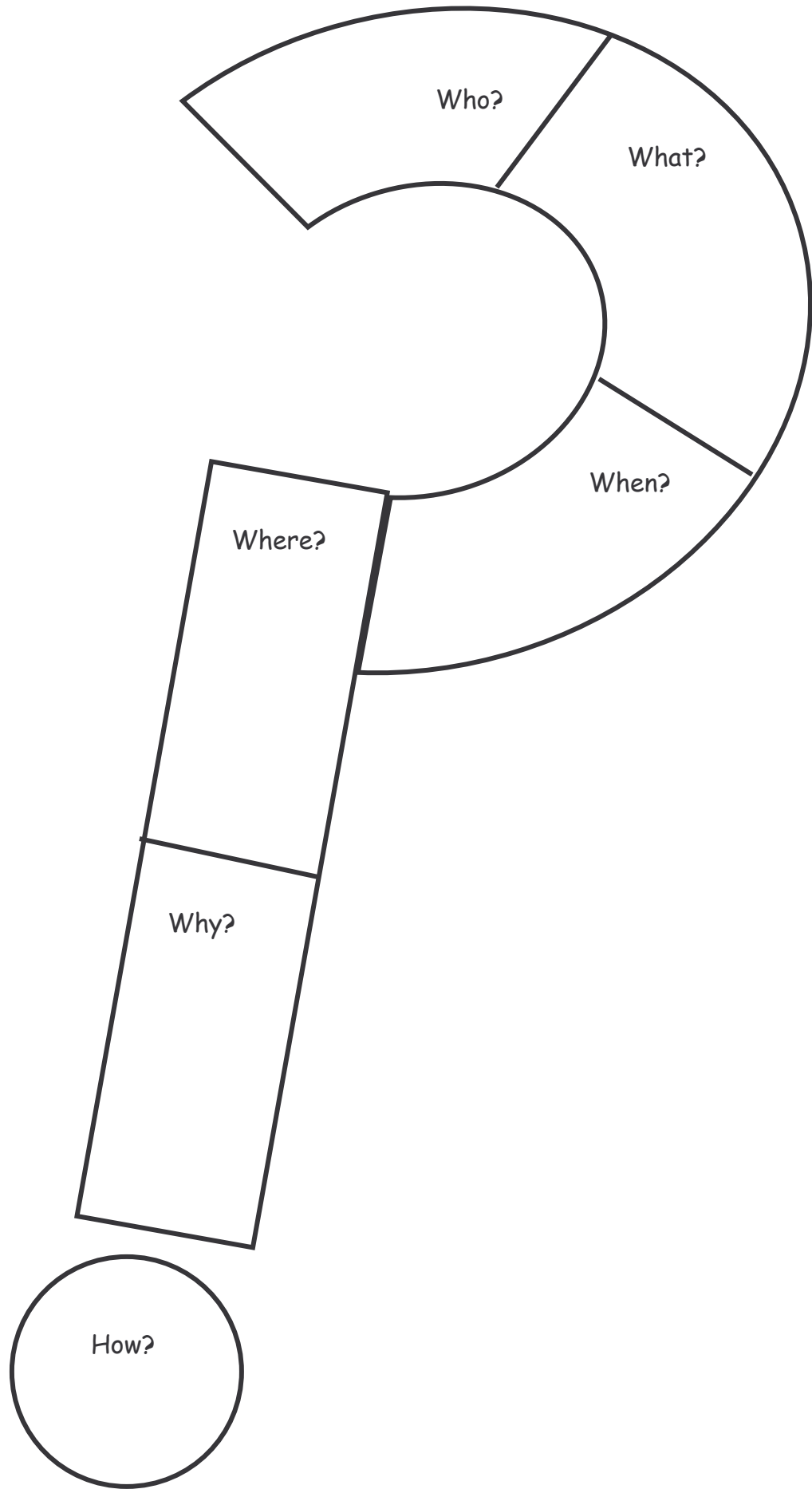# B-D-A Questioning

Title:_____

Author:_____

Proficient readers ask questions about the text before, during and after reading. Questioning helps readers clarify information, monitor for understanding and construct meaning. Record your questions on the chart below.
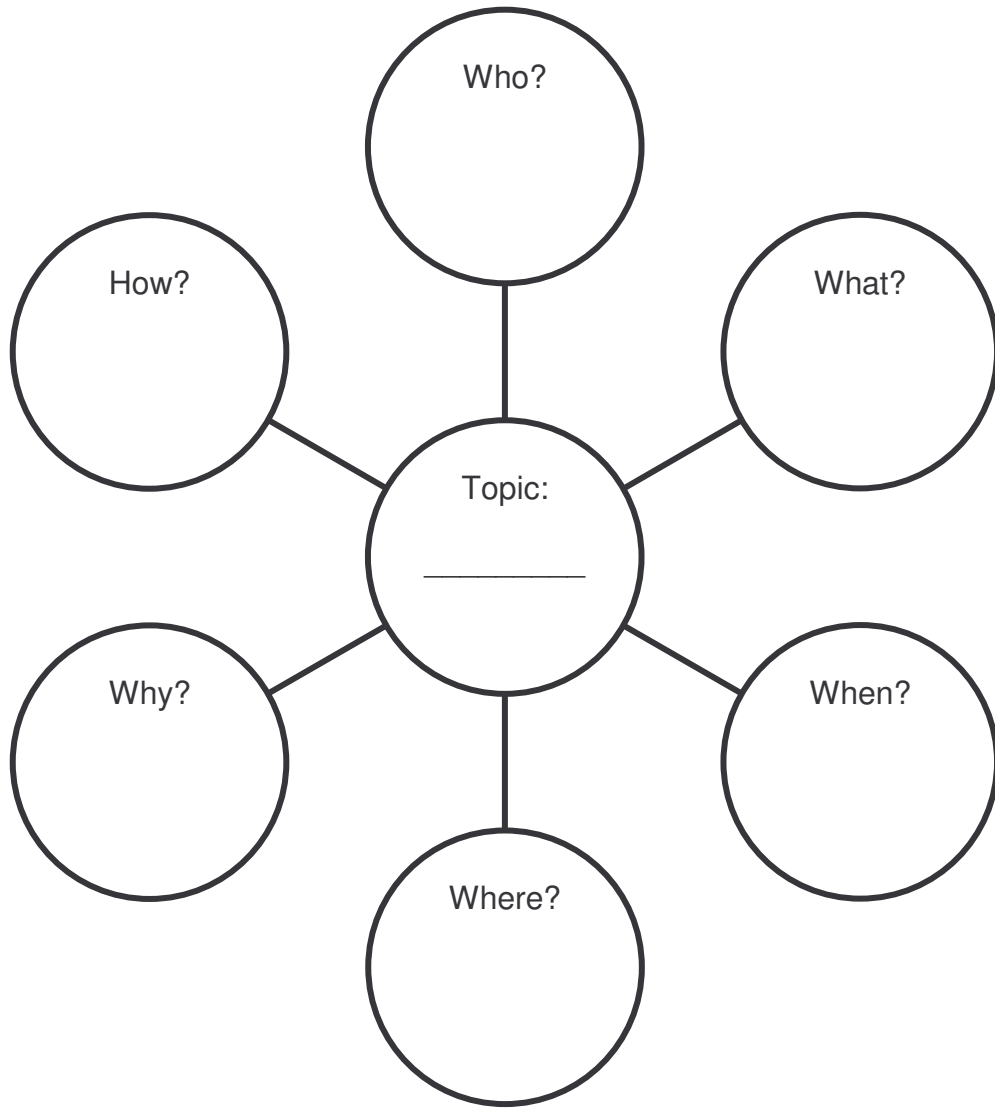
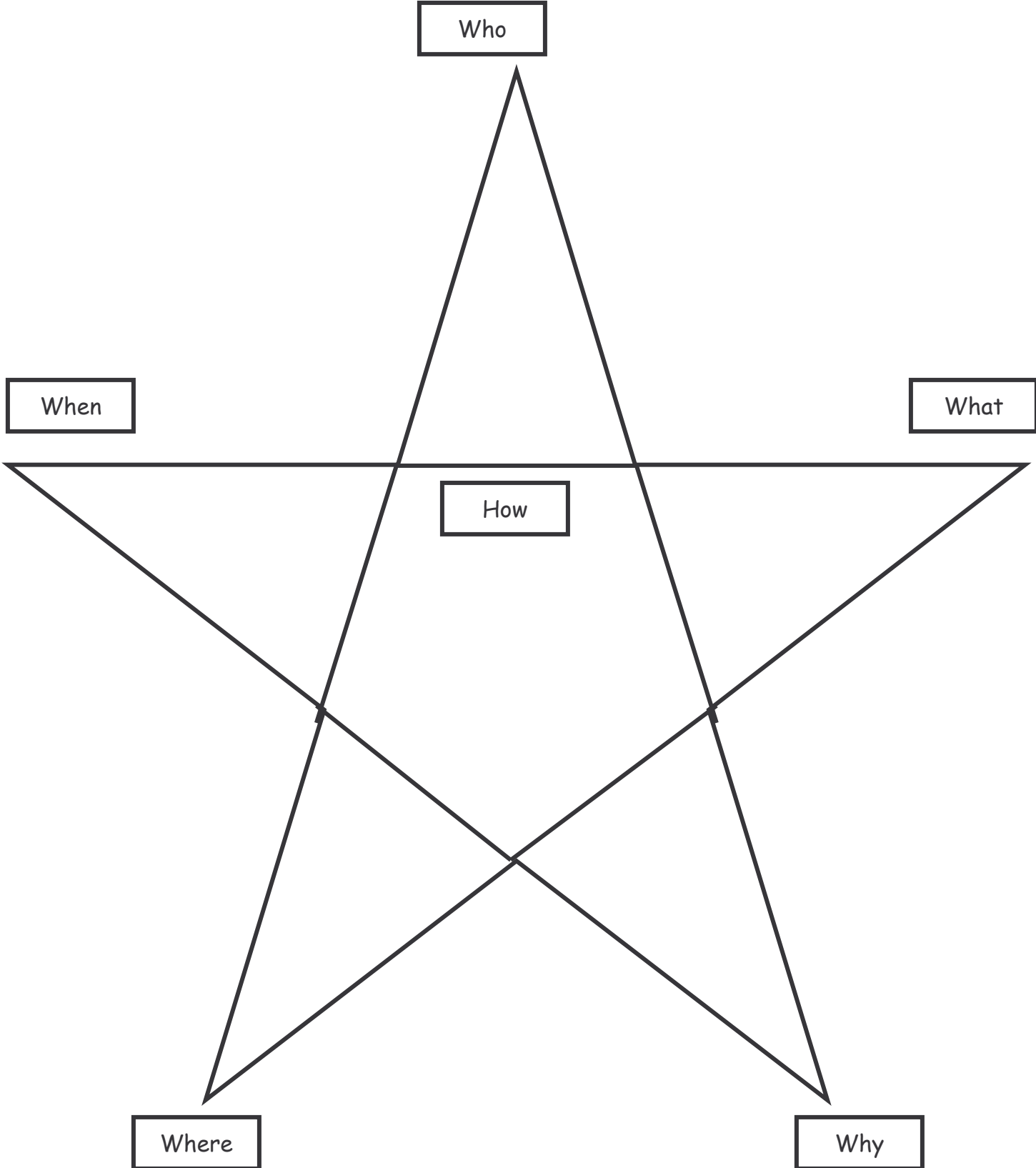| Questions I have... |
| --- |
| Before reading: |
| During reading: |
| After reading: |

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

<u>Questioning Cluster</u>

Who?

How?

What?

Topic:

_____

Why?

When?

Where?

Notes: _____

_____

_____

Questioning Star

Who

When

What

How

Where

Why

QAR

If we want to fully comprehend what we are reading, we must answer the questions that come to mind. Sometimes the answers are in the text-they are "right there." Other times, we must "think and search" and put together different parts of one or more texts to find the answer. Some answers will be in your head-you'll make a connection and find the answer "on your own." Sometimes you and the author will have the answer. This happens when you combine your viewpoints with that of the author.

Use the chart below to record the types of questions you asked and answered about the text.

"Right There"	"Think &Search"
"On My Own"	"Author & You"

Q-A 3-Column Chart

Question	Answer	Helps me understand the text better because…

Question-Answer T-Chart

My Questions	Answers From the Text

<u>Questioning Chart</u>

Title_____ Author_____

As I read, I'm questioning. My question is _____
_____

How I find the answer:

Text Clues and Information	My Schema

Using this information, I can infer that _____
_____
_____

I know this because _____
_____

****

Title_____ Author_____

As I read, I'm questioning. My question is _____
_____

How I find the answer:

Text Clues and Information	My Schema

Using this information, I can infer that _____
_____

I know this because _____
_____

Types of Questions T Chart

"Beefy questions" have a lot of meat to them-they're open-ended and can be answered in many different ways.

"Bony questions" do not have much meat to them-they usually require simple, one-word responses.

Beefy Questions	Bony Questions

<u>QAS</u>

You ask yourself different kinds of questions as you read. You will need to use different strategies to answer the questions, depending upon the type of question being asked. Complete the chart below to show your questions, answers and the strategies you used to find the answers.

Questions	Answers	Strategies Used to Answer Questions

SQ3R

The SQ3R chart will help you use a variety of good reader strategies. You must first **s**urvey the text, noticing and recording any important information. This includes titles, subtitles, key words and information from pictures or illustrations. Next, you will ask **q**uestions about the topic and record them on the chart. Then, you'll **r**ead. As you read, write the answers to any questions you've asked. When you're done, **r**ecite key ideas and facts from the text. This will help you remember what you read. Finally, you will **r**eview the text and write a summary of it.

SQ3R	
Name_____	
Title_____	
Topic_____	
Survey	
Question	
Read	
Recite	
Review/Retell	

I Wonder Thinkmarks

My Questioning Thinkmark

?

I wonder..._____
_____
_____
_____

I'm confused about... _____
_____
_____
_____

 Lingering questions _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR:_____

GENRE: _____

??????????????????????????????????????

NAME:_____

Creating Sensory Images

Sensory images bring reading to life. Strong sensory images draw the reader into the text, so much so that he becomes part of it. Our visualizations make the reading our own-it personalizes it, and through these images we forge attachments to characters, places, and events. Our sensory images can help us remember and recall what we read with ease.

When we create sensory images as we read, we personalize the text and feel a connection to it. Visualizations and other sensory images create a sense of ownership in the reader.

We use sensory images to do the following:

- Visualizations fill in missing information.
- Using schema and text clues we create sensory images (this is a form of inference, only with images rather than words).
- Visualizing in nonfiction to deepen understanding: visualizing size, shape, space, or time.
- Visualizing in nonfiction text to develop understanding of people, places, and activities, as well as to compare the known to the unknown.
- Sensory images also include: smells, sounds, tastes, and touches

The sensory images we create stem from our own personal experiences. We use sensory images to deepen understanding before, during and after reading.
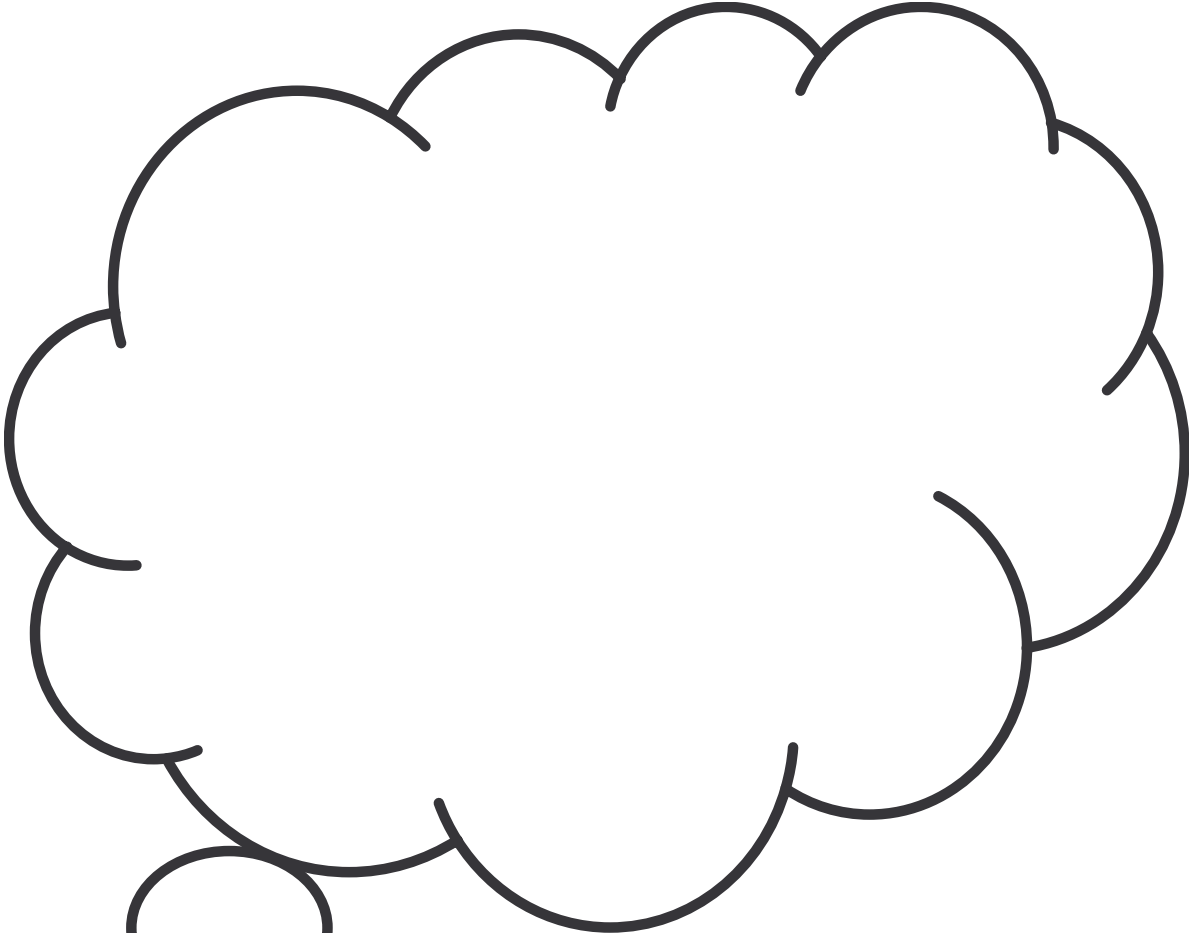
Visualizations and other sensory images bring out the pleasure of reading. When visualizing, we create "mind movies" and can *see* the action, the characters, the setting. This type of personal involvement draws us in as readers.

The following organizers are designed to help students create visualizations and other sensory images as they read.

Visualizing Three-Column Chart

Word or Phrase	I visualize…	Deepened my understanding because…

In My Mind's Eye

This visualization helped me understand_____

_____

_____

"Step Into the Story" Five Senses Chart

I see	I hear	I smell
I touch/it feels	I taste	New Understandings

How did "stepping into the story" help you understand what you read?

The Movie in my Mind

Draw what you "see" happening in the book/story. Record your visualizations in order.

Did the "movie in your mind" help you fill in any information missing in the book? How?

Makes Me See…

Text Clue:	Makes Me Visualize:

My visualizations help me understand the story because _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Senses All Around

As you write, complete the chart.

I see…	I touch…	I hear…	I taste…	I smell…

Sensing these helps me understand the story because..

"I Sense" Organizer

I see…

I taste…

I hear…

Title:

_____

I smell…

I touch…
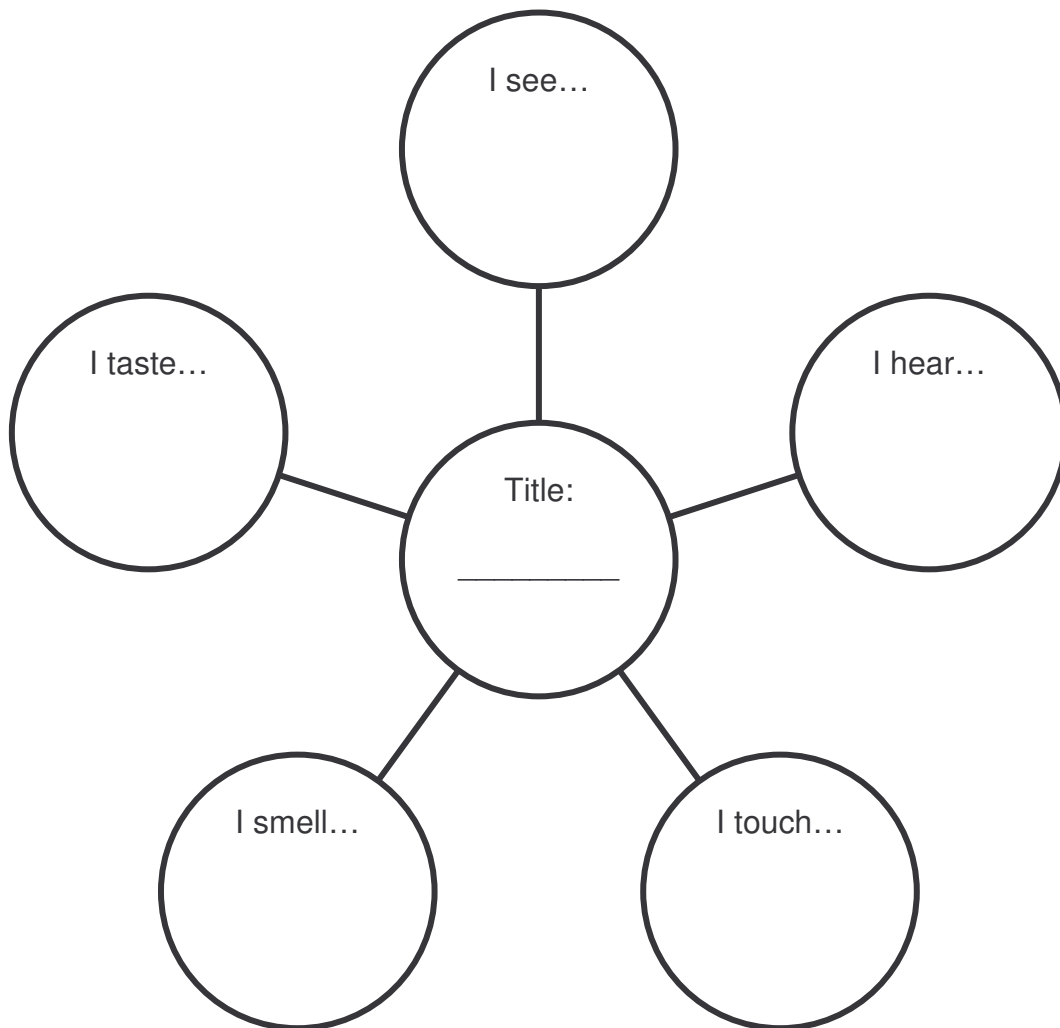
My sensory images helped me understand the story because…

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

A Captured Image

Proficient readers create visualizations as they read. This enables them to remember information, fill in "missing" pieces, create inferences and develop understanding. As you read, note the most vivid visualization you create. Sketch it in the frame below. Write about it.

_____
_____
_____
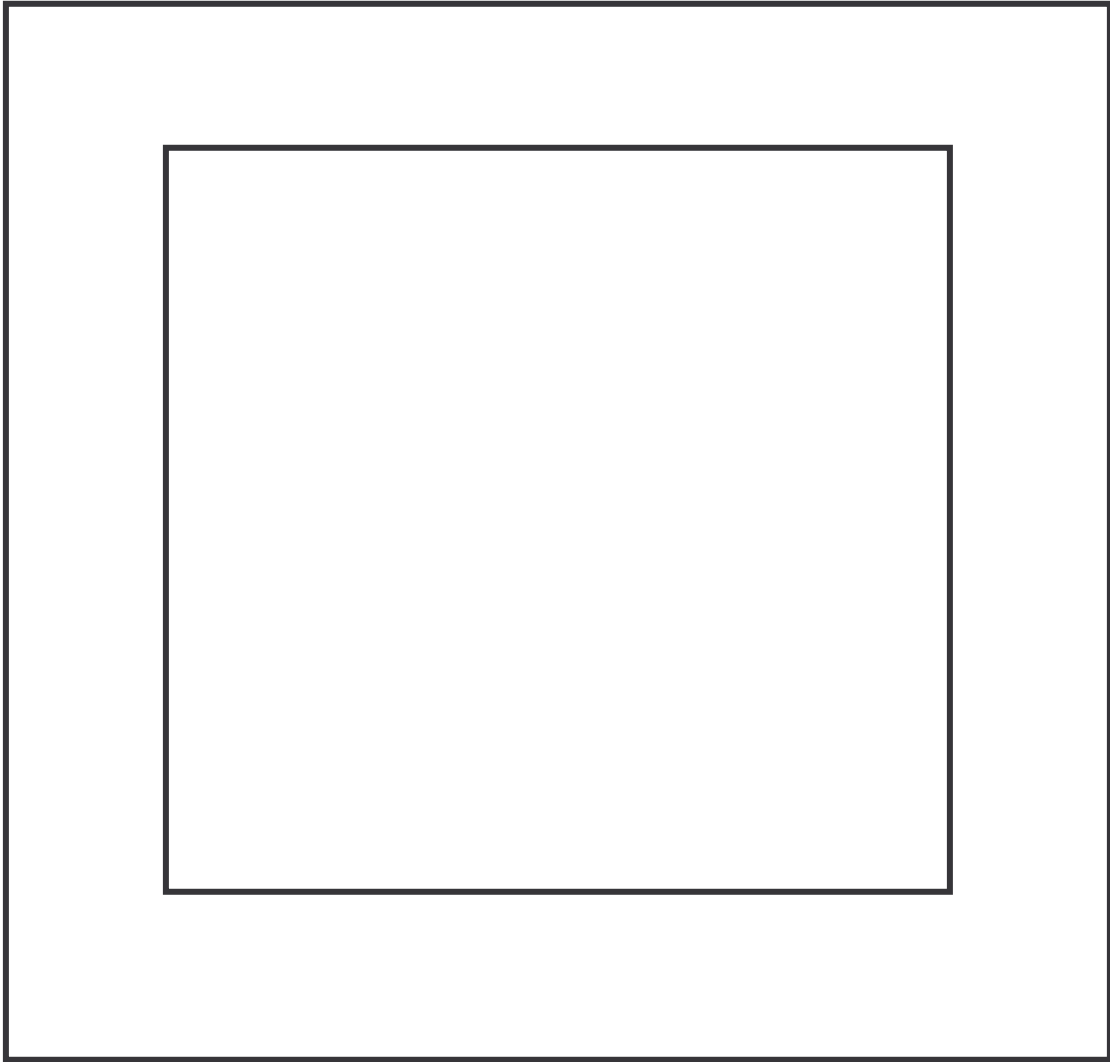
Between the Scenes

Good readers create "mind pictures" or images that go beyond the text and fill in missing information. In the boxes below, sketch to fill in the missing information from the text you read today. What do your visualizations help you understand more deeply?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Nonfiction Comparisons-Visualizing to Clarify Information

Nonfictions writers often use comparisons to illustrate information and make it easy for the reader to understand. Comparing size, shape and purpose allows the reader to connect the known to the unknown.
As you read, note any comparisons made by the author. Draw a picture to show what the author was comparing and write how it helped you understand the text.

A _____ is like	a _____.	Explain how this comparison helped you understand the text.

Sensory Images Thinkmark

My Sensory Images Thinkmark

As I was reading, I visualized…

_____
_____
_____

Other sensory images I had while reading…

_____
_____
_____

These helped me understand the text because… _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR:_____

GENRE: _____

NAME:_____