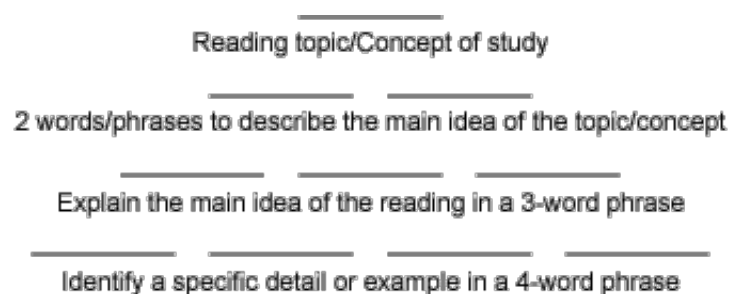


## Create Simple Summaries with Pyramids

I've shared the idea of Information Pyramids previously. It's one of my favorite strategies for getting students to summarize a main idea and to include some specific supporting details. Since sharing it, many teachers have told me of their successes with it. So I am referencing it again to encourage those of you struggling to teach main idea to try it.

Main idea asks students to step back from the reading and to identify the gist of what something was about. *What's the point? What's the big picture topic?* Using the Information Pyramid, students are forced to think more inferentially and not to look for literal answers in the text.

Here's the template:



Here are some of the Information Pyramid examples teachers have shared in the past:

Early Americans  
 risk takers, independence seekers  
 seeking religious freedom  
 formed the Jamestown Colony  
 (example by fifth graders)

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
 leader, shot  
 gave big speech  
 I have a dream  
 (example by second graders)

But it can also work for language arts and fiction. Use the original pyramid template to summarize each chapter in a novel. Or, revise the categories of each tier to incorporate story elements. For example:

