

RETELLING



Retelling is a powerful technique for checking understanding. Unlike answering specific questions after reading, retelling requires reprocessing large segments of text thinking about the sequence of ideas/events and their importance. Retelling is a versatile tool for both the student and teacher.

For the student

- it provides an opportunity to share what has been read
- it provides practice in reviewing the story or body of information and retelling it in sequence
- it also helps develop oral language skills

For the teacher

- it is an important type of informal assessment
- retelling can determine the degree of understanding a student had of a text

Helping Students Develop Their Retelling Skills

1. Explain that the purpose of retelling is to recreate, as close as possible to the original, something that has been read (or heard, or viewed). Remind students how they engage in retelling when they talk about a favorite book, movie, or event.
2. Model a retelling with a short selection. If the selection is familiar to the students, they will be able to make comparisons between the original and retold version.

3. After the retelling, discuss what they heard. Talk about and list the elements of a retelling. Record these on chalkboard, chart, or overhead.
4. Guide students in a retelling by providing them with a short selection to read. After reading, have them prepare for their retelling by referring to the recorded information. Students can be paired for practice. The listener cues in to the recorded elements that were listed. The listener then provides the re-teller with feedback. Students then switch roles.

Variations to Retelling

Although most retellings are verbal reproductions of what has been read, the chart below shows all the possibilities.

MODE	THE STUDENT....
Oral to Oral	listens to a selection and retells it orally
Oral to Written	listens to a selection and retells it in writing
Reading to Oral	reads a selection and retells it orally
Reading to Written	reads a selection and retells it in writing
Viewing to Oral	views a film and retells it orally
Viewing to Written	views a film and retells it in writing

Other instructional variations include:

- using a video camera or tape recorder
- comparing student's retellings of the same selection
- group retellings where each student retells a portion of the selection

To provide additional support, students can use a retelling checklist.