

Using Graphic Organizers to Develop Reading and Thinking Skills

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OBJECTIVES

You should be able to...

- articulate the reasons for using graphic organizers to develop reading and thinking skills.
- match the appropriate graphic organizer to particular reading and thinking skills.
- infuse lessons with a variety of graphic organizers.

Two burning questions you have:

Critical Reading and Thinking Skills

Strategies for Effective Reading	Skills that Promote Critical Thinking	Related Academic and Work Readiness Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate content • Make and confirm predictions • Identify main ideas or themes • Scan for specific information and details • Read for details • Make inferences • Transfer information to other contexts • Interpret table, graphs and charts • Recognize the purpose of a text • Find evidence to support a claim • Find meaning of new words from context • Use context clues (visuals, gestures, etc.) • Summarize and synthesize information from multiple courses • Analyze relationships within a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying assumptions • Organizing information • Categorizing information • Interpreting • Inquiring • Analyzing and evaluating • Challenging assumptions • Decision-making • Problem-solving • What else? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to take and use notes • Strategies for planning and organizing learning • Working with real-world data • What else?

(Ferrit, 2011; Johnson and Parrish, 2010; Parrish, 2015; Parrish and Johnson, 2010; Zwiars, 2014)

Sample 1 Beginning to high beginning

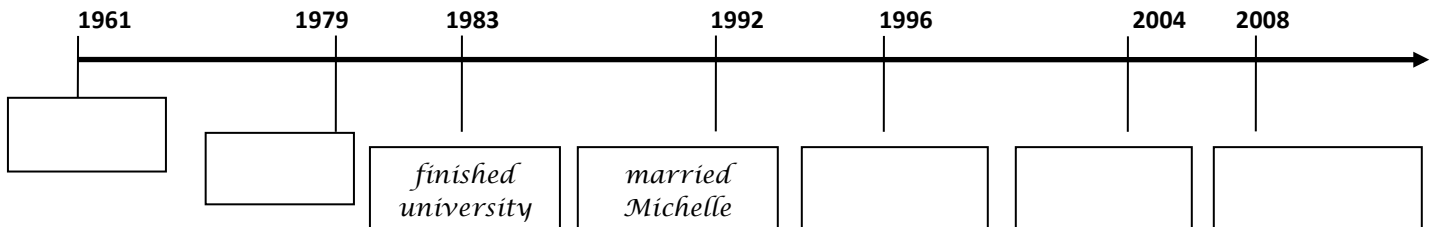


Barack Obama

K What do you know?	W What do you want to learn?	L What did you learn?

Read the story of President Barack Obama. Work with a partner to put the missing information in the boxes on the timeline below.

Barack Hussein Obama was born August 4, 1961. He finished high school in 1979. He finished university in 1983. He met Michelle in 1989. He married Michelle in 1992. He became a State Senator in Illinois in 1996. His first daughter, Malia, was born in 1998 and Sasha was born in 2001. He became a United States Senator in 2004 and became President of the United States in 2008.



Ask the right questions: The right questions allow learners to find evidence to support a claim:

1. True or False: President Obama started a family right after getting married.

Why: _____

2. True or False: He met Michelle when he was still a student.

Why: _____

3. True or False: He and Michelle started a family before he worked in state politics.

Why: _____

Sample 2 Intermediate

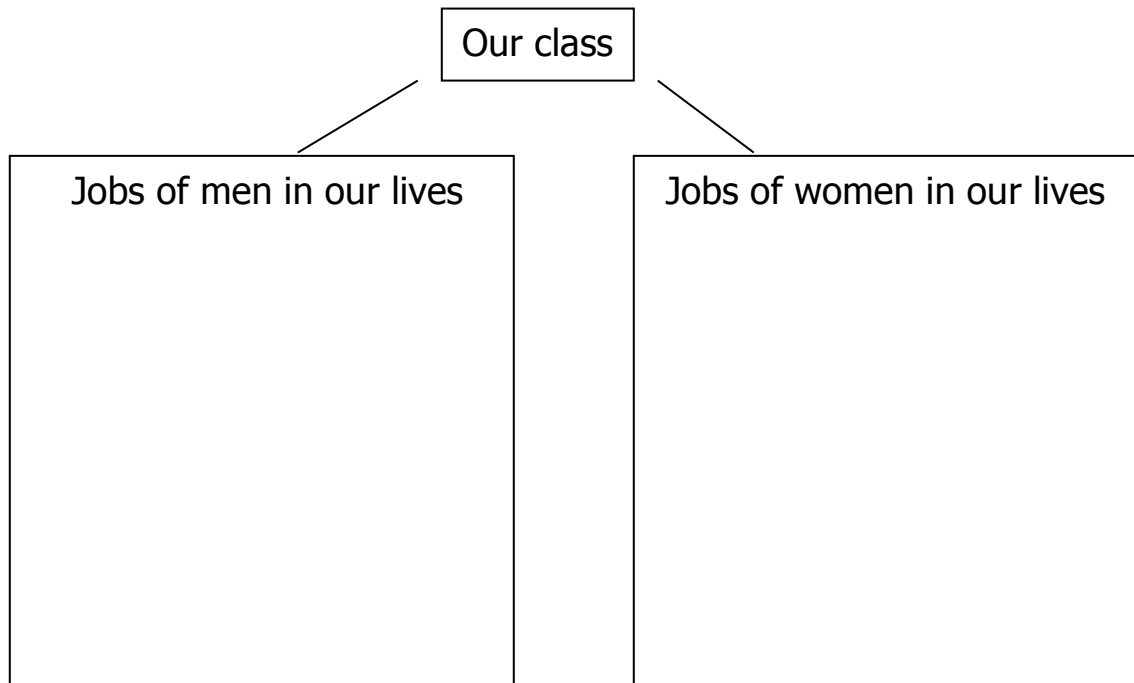
Collect and Analyze Class Data: Women's and Men's Jobs

Talk to others in class and record the jobs people and family members have.

Questions you can ask:

What do you do?

What does your partner/wife/husband/brother/sister do?



Paragraph Frame for Comparing

_____ and _____ in our lives are the same in some ways. They both _____. They also _____.

_____ and _____ are different in some ways, too. First, many woman work as _____, but men _____. Many men _____, but women _____.

Sample 3 Intermediate

George Washington: An American Hero

Washington's Boyhood

George Washington was born in 1732 in the English colony of Virginia. His father owned a large plantation. The Washington family was wealthy, but they worked hard for their money.

Young George went to school for about eight years. He especially liked mathematics. He also learned about other parts of the world as he studied history and geography.

Washington Chooses an Occupation

George decided to become a surveyor, a person who measures land and makes maps of it. Surveyors use mathematics, which George liked. At the time, surveyors also traveled a lot. George thought that surveying would let him see other parts of the thirteen colonies. He started work as a surveyor in 1747, when he was fifteen.

At first, George Washington helped older surveyors, but by the time he was 17, in 1749, he worked alone. He made quite a lot of money and began to buy land for himself.

Soldier and Farmer

In 1753, George Washington joined the Virginia militia, or army, and fought in the French and Indian war. After the war, Washington got married. He spent most of his time running Mount Vernon, a large farm that belonged to his family.

Commander of the Continental Army

When the thirteen colonies decided to fight the British in 1775, they chose George Washington to be the commander of the "Continental Army." The colonists trusted him because they knew that he was brave, truthful, and a good military leader.

Washington led the American army in many battles during the War for Independence. The British won many of the battles, but Washington kept his army fighting. In the winter of 1777-1778, Washington's army was camped at Valley Forge, in

Pennsylvania. They were cold, hungry, and sick. Washington stayed with his men. He trained and encouraged them. He even used his own money to pay them.

Finally, in 1781, at Yorktown, Virginia, Washington's army, with the French army and navy, surrounded a large British army. Lord Cornwallis, commander of the British army, surrendered, and the British stopped fighting. The War for Independence was over.

Farmer and Citizen

After the war, George Washington went back to Mount Vernon. He was an excellent farmer, and he did many things to make his land better. In 1787, however, his country needed him again. He went to a meeting in Philadelphia to set up a better government. We call this meeting the Constitutional Convention, because the Constitution, the most important law in the U.S., was written there. Americans still live under the Constitution. Washington was made president of the Convention.

President of the United States

After the Constitution had been approved by the states, Washington was chosen to be President of the country. George Washington was the first person to be called President of the United States. Until 1789, the country was governed by a congress, with a set of rules called the Articles of Confederation.

Washington was President from 1789 to 1797. He worked hard to make the new country strong. To help him, he chose a group of advisors, which people called his Cabinet. We still use the word Cabinet to describe the heads of the different government departments.

Retirement to Mount Vernon

After eight years as President, Washington was glad to go home to Mount Vernon. He died there two years later, in 1799. People all over the United States were sad that they had lost such a good leader. A year later, the capital city of the United States was established. George Washington had helped to plan it, and it was called Washington after him. George Washington was very much loved and looked up to by Americans of his time. One of them summed up the way they felt: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Now read and fill in 8 important dates in George Washington's life.

Timeline

Date

A vertical timeline graphic organizer consisting of a central vertical line with a downward-pointing arrow at the bottom. Eight horizontal lines cross the vertical line, creating eight rectangular boxes for writing dates.

Sample 4: High intermediate to advanced

Birth Order Theory

In your birth-order group, brainstorm the benefits and drawbacks of your birth order for 5 minutes. For example, does a last born have more freedom? Does the first born get more attention?

Benefits	Drawbacks

These experiences, both positive and negative, can shape personalities, according to the Birth Order Theory. Now make three predictions about what you think the theory will say about your birth order, for example: *Youngest children are very independent.*

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Personality and Birth-order Theory

What are some traits of your birth order? Read your assigned section of the article and fill in at least 4 traits given in the article and 2 sample professions under your birth order below.

First Born Traits	Middle Child Traits	Last Born Traits	Only Child Traits
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Typical Professions	Typical Professions	Typical Professions	Typical Professions
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Personality and Birth-Order Theory

Birth-order theory is a sociological and psychological concept that describes the tendency for people born into a particular birth order in a family (oldest, youngest, middle, or only child) to have certain personality traits. It is believed that because parents treat children in each birth order differently, children develop distinctively different personalities. It is found that children from within each group often share some common characteristics.

First-Born Children

First-borns are oriented toward their parents and often share their parents' sense of values. As a result, they may be more conservative or traditional than other children. First-borns especially strive to please their parents and often have high expectations for themselves and others. As children, they may be given responsibility over younger siblings, further developing a strong sense of responsibility and ethic.

When they grow up, first-born children often become high-achievers. They perform well in the academic, corporate, and professional fields. They often choose careers that require a high degree of precision such as law, medicine, or architecture. Interestingly, more than half of all American presidents have been first-born sons. (They may have had an older sister.) Two-thirds of entrepreneurs are first-borns.

Middle Children

Middle children generally look outside the family for approval and acceptance. As a result, they are less like the members of their own family. They may be less traditional and more independent. They often have improved social skills since they interact frequently with members outside their family. Middle children are quite often the most difficult children to both read and to raise. Middle children are quite often referred to as the "Mysterious Middle Child." While the personality traits of middle born children are more difficult to pin down, they tend to be the opposite of their older sibling. Middle children can listen well to others and diplomatically manage social situations. They tend to be peacemakers and get along well with others. Not surprisingly, middle children frequently assume managerial or leadership positions. They may choose careers that allow them to be creative such as sales, art, advertising, or a career that requires negotiating because of level headedness, and the ability to be unbiased.

Youngest Children

The "babies" of the family often develop strategies to gain attention. They may act out in negative ways, behaving immature or acting self-centered, or in positive ways, being affectionate, empathetic and caring. Last-borns can be playful, charming, or manipulative. Last-borns frequently experience the most independence from family pressures. They tend to be creative and carefree. This may be due to their parents' increasingly relaxed attitudes toward family rules. With each successive child, parents worry less about rearing children "perfectly." Careers in the arts, entertainment, or sales are good matches for the free spirits of last-born personalities. They see no limits, like Microsoft's Bill Gates, a famous last born!

Only Children

Only children are extreme versions of first-born children. They receive undivided attention from parents throughout their lifetime, and can become selfish and dependent if their parents are over-indulgent. Like first-borns, only children also seek approval from their parents. However, fear of disappointing their parents can turn them into perfectionists who are well-organized but anxious. On the other hand, only children are mature and sensitive to adult needs. They are generally self-sufficient, appreciate their privacy, and enjoy high self-esteem. They tend toward the same professions as first-born children, for example, law or medicine.

Sample 5: Advanced

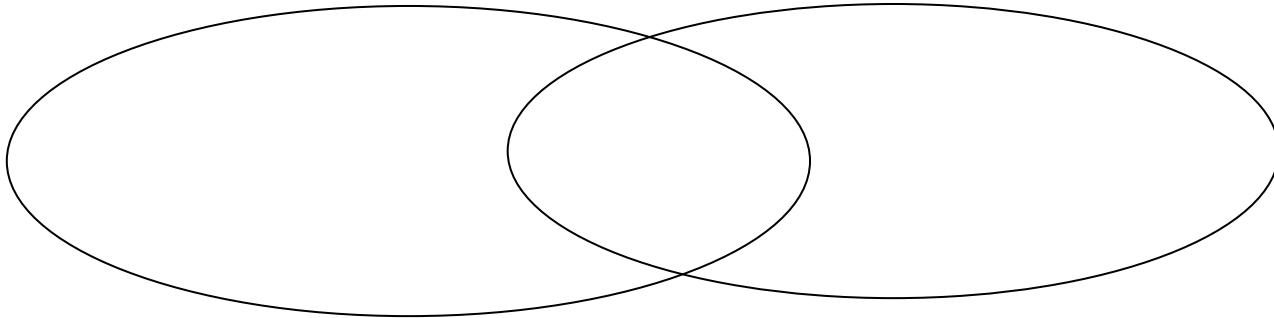
The Science of Happiness

Talk to a partner and compare your definitions of happiness. Write anything that is similar in the center of this Venn diagram. Write what is unique for each of you on either side:

My definition

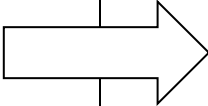
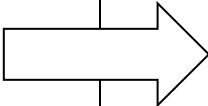
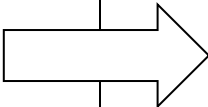
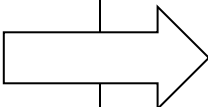
Both of us

My partner's definition



Reading

What can we do to boost our happiness? Read about your assigned happiness technique and complete your row of the chart.

Technique	Results
Technique A Gratitude Journal	
Technique B Acts of Kindness	
Technique C Gratitude Visit	
Technique D Three Blessings	

This lesson and materials are adapted from Parrish, B. (2009) *Four Point: Listening and Speaking Advanced*. University of Michigan Press.

Group A

University of California at Riverside, psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky suggests different kinds of happiness enhancers. One is what she calls the gratitude journal--a diary in which people write down things for which they are thankful. In her study she found that taking the time to conscientiously count their blessings once a week significantly increased subjects' overall satisfaction with life over a period of six weeks, whereas a control group that did not keep journals had no such gain.

Group B

Another way to boost happiness is to perform acts of altruism or kindness—playing music at a nursing home, helping a friend with childcare, doing yard work for an aging neighbor, writing a letter to an aging relative. As with the gratitude diary, doing five kind acts a week, especially when they were all in a single day, gave subjects in Lyubomirsky's study a measurable boost in satisfaction.

Group C

Seligman has experimented with similar techniques in controlled trials at Penn State University and in large experiments conducted over the Internet. He found that the single most effective way to boost your feeling of joy is to make a "gratitude visit." A gratitude visit means writing a testimonial thanking a relative, teacher, mentor, friend--anyone to whom you owe a debt of gratitude--and then visiting that person to read him or her the letter of appreciation.

Group D

The last technique, which Seligman says is less powerful but more lasting than a gratitude visit is an exercise he calls 'three blessings.' For this technique, write down three things that went well that day and why. He found that people who do that each day are less depressed three months later and continued to be six months later.

Graphic Organizers and Reading/Writing Genres

ESL reading/writing tasks/genres	Possible Graphic Organizer (you will find templates for these at the websites listed on the last page)
Lower-levels of ABE/ESL	
Write a letter to school	Letter scaffold Flow chart (describing reasons)
Write a short narrative	Time lines Linear string
Write a short description Describe a holiday Typical Day	Word Webs Charts
Intermediate-Advanced	
Compare cultures	Venn diagram, comparison matrix
Write a resume	Word webs, time lines, continua
Personal stories	Time lines; Linear string; tree diagram
Biographies	KWL; time lines
Transition to college level:	
Narration	Linear String; Time lines
Description	KWL charts, Tree Diagrams, Cornell Notes; Main idea web; Circle Diagram
Process Analysis	Linear String; Flow chart
Division and Classification	Hierarchy Diagram
Compare and Contrast	Venn Diagram, compare/contrast charts, T-charts Comparison Matrix
Cause effect	Flow Charts, Cause/effect charts

Some things to remember:

- Use a graphic organizer as learners prepare for reading, writing, or speaking.
- Use a graphic organizer as learners read a text type (compare/contrast; description).
- Use graphic organizers for note taking while listening or reading.

Graphic Organizers as Scaffolds for Critical thinking

- Understanding genres means understanding the organization of a text, both as a reader and as a writer.
- Most students need to record and represent information in more than one way to understand it.
- The way learners' organization knowledge affects their academic performance (Di Tommaso, 2005).
- Representing similarities and differences in graphic or symbolic form enhances students' understanding and ability to use knowledge (Bransford et al, 1999)

References

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- Di Tommaso, K. (2005). *Strategies to facilitate reading comprehension in college transition students*. Research to Practice Brief (5), National College Transition Network. Available on the Web at: <http://www.collegetransition.org/promising/rp5.html>
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- Pimentel, S. (2013). *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

Visit these websites for ready-made organizers and more ideas on how to use them:

<http://www.graphic.org/goindex.html>
<http://www.graphicorganizers.com/resources.html>
http://edhelper.com/teachers/graphic_organizers.htm
<http://www.writedesigonline.com/organizers/>
http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_go.

Visit these sites for ideas and resources for promoting the higher order thinking and reading skills we have discussed today:

Academic Language and Literacy website: www.jeffzwiers.org

ATLAS Academic Career and Employability Skills (ACES) and Transitions Integration Framework:
<http://atlasabe.org/professional/transitions>

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Academic Language Development Network: <http://aldnetwork.org>

Breaking News English: A resource with leveled readings and plans using current event topics:
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>

International Reading Association's Readwritethink website: <http://www.readwritethink.org/>

New American Horizons Foundation's Teaching ESL to Adults: Classroom Approaches in Action video series:
<http://www.newamericanhorizons.org>

Understanding Language: <http://ell.stanford.edu/about>