



Eyewitness Testimony

Engaging in eyewitness testimony to strengthen comprehension

Suggested Time: 20 minutes

Student Tasks:

- Reflect on their reading.
- Complete the three-column graphic organizer.
- Exchange accounts with a partner.
- Identify omitted details in their partner's testimony.
- Engage in a discussion to clarify and enhance their understanding of the text.

Online ThinkCERCA Resources

- Complex texts
- Tools for scaffolding reading (focus mode, translation, picture dictionary, online glossary, audio support, syllabication, part of speech, etc.)

Strategy

The Eyewitness Testimony strategy allows students to visualize scenes from their reading as if they were present. By using a three-column graphic organizer, they reflect on the narrative, analyze details, and imagine personal experiences related to the text. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of character interactions, settings, and key moments within the story.

Optimal Application Notes

This strategy can be used to support a deeper analysis of the text. It requires students to analyze details and engage in reflective thinking about the text. Teachers should model the process several times, using excerpts that highlight essential elements of the story.

Before:

- Select a piece of text that offers rich details for analysis (setting, characters, interactions).
- Prepare three-column graphic organizers for each student.
- Ensure students have access to the text to refer back to during the activity.

During:

- Distribute the graphic organizers to students after they finish reading.
- Instruct students to fill in the first column with the main elements of their eyewitness account (e.g., setting, characters, key interactions).
- Guide them to record factual details in the middle column, emphasizing the importance of citing page or paragraph numbers. Encourage attention to descriptive language and significant events to maintain fidelity to the author's narrative.
- In the third column, ask students to add personal details as if they had experienced the events themselves.
- Pair students to share their accounts silently, prompting them to look for details that might have been omitted. Emphasize that discrepancies with the text can render their accounts “unreliable,” similar to a courtroom setting.
- Allow time for partners to discuss and clarify their accounts after reading.

After:

- Facilitate a class discussion where students share insights from their conversations, focusing on any inconsistencies or new details discovered.
- Reinforce the value of eyewitness testimony in understanding narratives and the importance of accuracy in recounting events.

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Reflecting on Events as an Eyewitness

Instructions: Read the Text: After reading the assigned text, reflect on the events as if you were present. After completing your organizer, exchange accounts with a partner and take notes on what details were included or omitted in each version. Discuss your findings together.

I was there and can describe..	The author's words...	My version (I saw, I heard, felt, experienced)..
Focus: In the first column, note the key elements of your eyewitness account (e.g., setting, characters, interactions).	Facts: In the middle column, write down the specific details from the text that support your account. Include page or paragraph numbers and pay attention to descriptive language.	Imagination: In the third column, describe how you imagine the events, adding personal details as if you experienced them firsthand.