

Informational Text

21. What I Know; Want to Learn; Learned (K-W-L)

What is it?

Another strategy that helps children predict and connect new information with prior knowledge is K-W-L (Ogle, 1986, 1989). K-W-L can be used in class to brainstorm prior knowledge, to preview vocabulary and concepts, and to help students recall what they have read. The strategy also focuses students on assigned text and allows the teacher to model what effective readers do with reading assignments in the content areas.

How to use it:

1. The teacher draws three columns on the board or chart paper. These chart paper examples can be kept and referred to throughout the reading. If students complete the task individually, they can use a prepared form with the three column labels, or they can make their own.
2. During the first phase of the strategy, students brainstorm about what they *Know*, or think they know, about the main topic. For example, before reading a chapter describing toads, students would list the facts they already know about this topic in the *Know* column. As the teacher records the children's contributions, he shows how to organize the ideas into categories.
3. Next, students list what they *Want* to know about the topic. Students list interesting questions that come to mind as a result of identifying what they think they know. For the topic of toads, students might ask: How long do toads live and what do they contribute to nature? What exactly is the process? How do toads protect themselves?

4. Students then read the chapter purposefully because they want to discover answers for the questions they have posed. The last step in the K-W-L process is for students to identify what they have *Learned*. Here, students record the answers to their questions as well as any other important information they have learned. Sometimes students find out that what they thought they knew was inaccurate.
5. A variation of K-W-L is K-W-L-W-H. After students complete the L column, they record *What* else they want to learn about the topic and *How* they will find that information. Using this variation reinforces that learning does not end when class ends, but is a lifelong process.

Examples of Visual Representations: **K-W-L Worksheets**

K What I know	W What I want to find out	L What I learned

Adapted from Ogle, D. (1986, February). The K-W-L: A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text. *The Reading Teacher*, 39, 564-570.