



Five Word Summaries

When to use: introducing a new concept or big idea, when whole class must engage with a brief source.

Why to use: productive talk with a clear goal maintains a focus and structure for the task. Working together to determine just five words that represent the resource moves the learning toward concept attainment and emphasizes the use of precise and concise language.

Directions

Begin by having students read, view, or listen to a source that presents a new idea. You may have them annotate when reading or note when viewing or listening to identify key phrases, content specific vocabulary, or new ideas.

1. Provide a prompt that begins with “describe” or “define” or some other verb that focuses the analysis. Ex. *Define what it means to be literate in the modern era according to Dunton.* Students write their response.
2. With a partner, compare responses and select just five words that represent the ideas you recorded. These words do not have to be a sentence. In fact, it could be a bulleted list.
3. With another pair, compare lists and write just five words that represent the ideas from all four in the new group.
4. Each group shares their words with the whole class and discuss the process of getting to the five words.

Debrief

Connect this protocol and thinking process to analyzing resources and presenting ideas. What is the benefit of narrowing to only five words?