

Save the Last Word for Me

Focus: Response

Text: Narrative and Informational

When: During and After Reading

Why: Connecting, Questioning, Synthesizing and Inferring

How: Individual and Small Group

Description:

Save the Last Word for Me is a useful strategy in all content areas. With this strategy, students are encouraged to take an active role in selecting and responding to sections of a text that they find interesting or about which they have a reaction. They then have an opportunity to discuss their choices with other students. One of the advantages of Save the Last Word for Me is that everyone has an opportunity to comment before the student who shares the quote comments about it. This procedure allows the student to consider additional ideas and to add to or delete ideas from his or her original response prior to sharing it with others.

Procedure:

1. Distribute three 3x5-inch cards to each student or make copies of the Save the Last Word for Me reproducible master and distribute one to each student.
2. Have each student read the selected text independently.
3. As students read, have them lightly mark with pencil sentences or small sections of the text about which they have a reaction, question, or connection.
4. After reading, have students select three of the sentences or sections of text they have marked and write each on an index card or on their copy of the Save the Last Word for Me reproducible.

5. Students then need to write their comments and thoughts about each of the text segments on the back of the cards or on the Save the Last Word for Me reproducible. When this task is completed, place students in groups of 4 or 5 students. You may want to make an overhead transparency and use it to highlight the procedures that follow. The Discussion Guide can also be referred to as students share.
6. Choose one student in each group to begin. That student reads one of the text segments he or she has selected. Only the text segment is shared at this time.
7. Each member of the group is then invited to comment on the first student's text segment or quote.
8. When all students in the group have commented, then the student who shared the quote offers his or her comments about it. The comments may or may not be the same as the original thoughts or ideas that were written.
9. The process continues by having another student share a quote from one of the cards or the Save the Last Word for Me reproducible.
10. At the conclusion of the lesson, ask students if selecting the sentences and discussing them helped them understand the text. Stress that making connections, asking questions, and reacting during reading can aid students' understanding of the selection.