

Using Graphic Organizers with ELLs

I've found that using just a few basic graphic organizers for multiple purposes is very effective with ELLs. Focusing on a limited number of graphic organizers helps ELLs better understand how they can express information and ideas through the organizers and use them independently. Here I provide reproducibles of the main graphic organizers I mention in the book and a list of some of the ways I rely on them when working with ELLs. Of course, the possibilities for each graphic organizer are endless. Most of these graphic organizers are also easy for ELLs to create on their own, so when age appropriate I often have my ELLs draw them in their notebooks or on paper to express their thinking and learning.

Web with Language Structures

- Brainstorm nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or prepositional phrases that are related to a particular word (see the webs in Figure 5–6, page 149). Put sample language structures below the web so ELLs know how to combine the parts of speech into sentences.
- Brainstorm vocabulary words related to a social studies, science, or math topic. Put sample language structures below the web so your ELLs know how to use the vocabulary in a sentence. For example, if you make a web for the topic of community, with the names of people, places, and things found there, you can write language structures such as these:
 - My community has a/an _____.
 - My community doesn't have a/an _____.
 - There is a _____ in my community. (or with a contraction: *There's*)
 - There are _____ in my community.
- Brainstorm synonyms and antonyms for a particular word. You can have synonyms on the top half of the web and antonyms on the bottom half. You can also color-code them so the synonyms are green and the antonyms are red, for example, to make the difference clear for your ELLs. Put sample language structures below the web so your ELLs know how to use those synonyms and antonyms in a sentence. Following are examples for the word *trustworthy*:

- The web of synonyms could include *dependable, reliable, truthful, responsible,* and *honest*.
- The web of antonyms could include *undependable, unreliable, untruthful, irresponsible,* and *dishonest*.
- This particular example also helps ELLs see how adjectives can become negative using prefixes like *un, ir,* and *dis*.
- You can write language structures below the web such as "I am _____ because _____." You can include variations of this structure by starting it with *you are, he is, she is, we are,* or *they are*. You can also show the class how to turn these into contractions: *I'm, you're, he's, she's, we're, they're*.
- Brainstorm examples of a particular expression or idiom. The examples you put in the web should be complete sentences so your ELLs can see exactly how the expression or idiom is used in context. Here are some examples for *once in a blue moon*:
 - I go to the movies once in a blue moon.
 - We visit our family in Florida once in a blue moon.
 - This happens only once in a blue moon!
- Record what the class knows about a particular content-area topic, or record what the class has learned about the topic. The accompanying language structure could be "I already know that _____," "I (we) learned that _____," or "One thing I (we) learned about _____ is _____."

T-Chart

- Sort content-area vocabulary words into two different categories (see Chapter 5 for descriptions of open and closed word sorts).
- Sort words into two different categories based on spelling patterns (such as short *a* versus short *o*) to help ELLs recognize the difference between them (Bear et al. 2007).
- Compare two homonyms (words that have the same pronunciation and spelling but have multiple meanings). You can list multiple examples on each side of the T-chart. This helps ELLs expand their vocabulary base because they may know one of the word meanings but not the other. For example:
 - *bright/bright*: The sun is *bright*. / The students in our class are *bright*.
 - *blue/blue*: My favorite color is *blue*. / I'm feeling *blue* because my best friend moved to another city.
- Compare two homophones (words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings). You can list multiple examples on each side of the T-chart. This makes the different word meanings explicit for ELLs and helps them connect the correct spelling to each word meaning. For example:
 - *buy/by*: I need to *buy* groceries today. / This bilingual book is written *by* Estephani.
 - *know/no*: I *know* a lot about horses. / I have *no* idea what the answer is.

- Compare how a word is used when the part of speech changes. This helps ELLs recognize root words and see how root words can help them understand related words. This expands ELLs' vocabulary base and improves their reading comprehension. For example:
 - *admire/admiration* (verb/noun): I *admire* my mom because she works very hard to support our family. / I feel *admiration* for my mom and her hard work.
- Record thinking about reading (adapted from Harvey and Goudvis 2000). You can model these T-charts in your reading minilessons and, if age appropriate, have your ELLs use them in their reading notebooks to keep track of their thinking as they read. Ultimately I teach my ELLs how to record a combination of these strategies because readers don't use just one comprehension strategy to understand a text, but rather a combination of strategies.
 - Making predictions: what I think will happen / what really happened
 - Making connections: text / what this reminds me of; text / what I think
 - Questioning: questions / facts; what I learned / what I wonder; questions / what I think (see Figures 5-4 and 5-5 for examples from ELLs' notebooks)
 - Determining word meaning: tricky word / its meaning; tricky word / what I think it means
 - Visualizing: text / what I see in my mind
 - Determining importance: main idea / details; important event / details
 - Inferring: text / what the author is trying to say; text / this makes me think that
- Compare two different content-area concepts. For example:
 - Math: concave shapes and convex shapes (can draw examples)
 - Science: objects that conduct electricity and objects that don't (write or draw examples)
 - Social studies: rural and urban (write or draw examples of each area)

Three-Column Chart

- Sort content-area vocabulary words into three different categories (see Chapter 5 for descriptions of open and closed word sorts).
- Sort words into three categories based on spelling patterns (such as long *a*: *ai*, *ay*, *a_e*) to help ELLs recognize the difference between them (Bear et al. 2007).
- Give a list of examples to compare homophones with three different meanings. You can list multiple examples in each column of the chart. This makes the different word meanings explicit for ELLs and helps them connect the correct spelling to each word meaning. For example:
 - *there/their/they're*: Look over *there*! / *Their* prediction was correct. / *They're* working together on the project.
 - *to/two/too*: Please come *to* school on time. / I speak *two* languages. / This book is *too* easy.

- Give examples of how a word is used when the part of speech changes. This helps ELLs see the relationship between words in all of their forms and expands their vocabulary base.
 - *free/freedom/to free* (adjective/noun/verb): Before the Civil War in the United States, slaves were not *free*. / Slaves wanted *freedom*, and many tried to escape on the Underground Railroad. / The Civil War *freed* slaves in the United States.
- K-W-L chart: what I know / what I want to know / what I learned
- Compare three different content-area topics. For example:
 - Math: circles, squares, and triangles (can draw examples)
 - Science: solid, liquid, and gas (can draw or write examples)
 - Social studies: executive branch, legislative branch, and judicial branch (can write or draw examples)

Boxes and Bullets

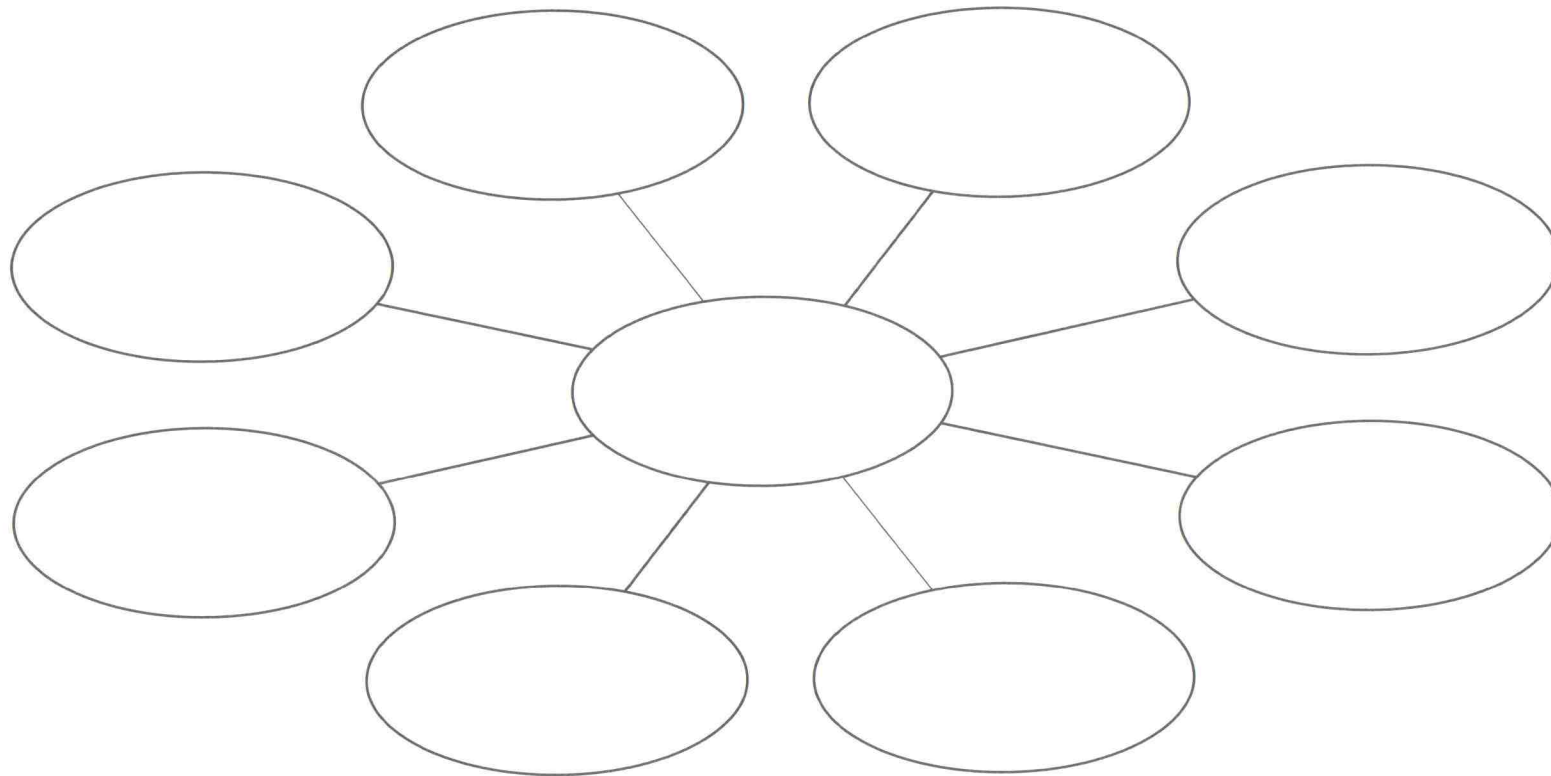
- Record the main idea of a text and supporting details.
- Record the theme of a text and examples of that theme.
- Create an outline of a nonfiction text by keeping track of the key topics and important details.
- Plan expository or persuasive writing by recording the main topic and subtopics, or the subtopic and supporting details (see “Writing Workshop Minilesson” in Chapter 6).

Venn Diagram

- Compare and contrast two content-area concepts.
- Compare and contrast two different characters or people.
- Compare and contrast two different events.
- Compare and contrast two different vocabulary words.

Name:

Date:



Language Structures:

A large empty rectangular box for writing.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Text or topic: _____

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Text or topic: _____

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Text: _____

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Name: _____

Date: _____

