

Classroom Strategies

Jigsaw

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that enables each student of a "home" group to specialize in one aspect of a topic (for example, one group studies habitats of rainforest animals, another group studies predators of rainforest animals). Students meet with members from other groups who are assigned the same aspect, and after mastering the material, return to the "home" group and teach the material to their group members. With this strategy, each student in the "home" group serves as a piece of the topic's puzzle and when they work together as a whole, they create the complete jigsaw puzzle.

Why use jigsaw?

- It helps build comprehension.
- It encourages cooperative learning among students.
- It helps improve listening, communication, and problem-solving skills.

When to use:	Before reading	During reading	After reading
How to use:	Individually	With small groups	Whole class setting

How to use jigsaw

1. Introduce the strategy and the topic to be studied.
2. Assign each student to a "home group" of 3-5 students who reflect a range of reading abilities.
3. Determine a set of reading selections and assign one selection to each student.
4. Create "expert groups" that consist of students across "home groups" who will read the same selection.
5. Give all students a framework for managing their time on the various parts of the jigsaw task.
6. Provide key questions to help the "expert groups" gather information in their particular area.
7. Provide materials and resources necessary for all students to learn about their topics and become "experts."

Note: It is important that the reading material assigned is at appropriate instructional levels (90–95% reading accuracy).

8. Discuss the rules for reconvening into "home groups" and provide guidelines as each "expert" reports the information learned.

9. Prepare a summary chart or graphic organizer for each "home group" as a guide for organizing the experts' information report.
10. Remind students that "home group" members are responsible to learn all content from one another.

Differentiated instruction

For second language learners, students of varying reading skill, students with learning disabilities, and younger learners

- Give students experience with small group learning skills before participating in the jigsaw strategy.
- Have students fill out a graphic organizer in the "home group" to gather all the information presented by each "expert."
- "Home groups" can present results to the entire class, or they may participate in some assessment activity.
- Circulate to ensure that groups are on task and managing their work well; ask groups to stop and think about how they are checking for everyone's understanding and ensuring that everyone's voice is heard; and
- Monitor the comprehension of the group members by asking questions and rephrasing information until it is clear that all group members understand the points.

See the research that supports this strategy

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