GPB News reporter Stephen Fowler is covering the legislative session and lawmaking process for the first time, and he needs your help learning the ins and outs of state government! Each week during the session, Stephen will be answering your questions about what goes on at the Georgia Capitol.

Below are a series of instructional strategies from Discovery Education’s Spotlight on Strategies (series) that teachers can use to help their students develop vocabulary, focus on key ideas and details, and build summarizing and synthesizing skills. Before watching an episode, challenge your students to write one sentence answering the question posed in the episode title.

321 PYRAMID

Create a graphic organizer like the one to the right. Students should use this design as a guide to better understand the videos.

In the bottom sections, students will write three facts they learned. In the middle sections, students will write two ways in which the topic is significant or important. In the top section, students will write one sentence to summarize the topic. This can also be done as a six word story.

XO LET’S GO

Pair students and assign one to be X and the other to be O. Have each pair draw a Tic Tac Toe board. Explain to your students that they will be shown a one-minute video clip. Afterward, each will be given 30 seconds to share something they learned. But they should listen very carefully to the video and to each other so as not to repeat information already shared by their partner!

Student X begins by summarizing what he learned in 30 seconds or less. If all of his facts from the video are summarized correctly, he places an X on the board. Student O then has 30 seconds to summarize what she learned. If student O is correct and does not repeat anything student X said, she can place an O on the board. Students should take turns going first and should understand that if they repeat anything, their partner is allowed to place their mark instead. Continue showing clips of the video, possibly shortening the length of summarizing time, until a student wins the game.

SIX WORD STORY

Ask students to summarize ideas using just six words. Then, put students in pairs and allow them to combine their stories into one synthesized six word summary.
ABC SUMMARY

In this simple strategy, assign every student a letter of the alphabet. Tell students that they will first watch the video clip. Afterward, they will summarize something they learned or will answer the question posed in a sentence starting with the letter they were given. Show the video once and do not allow students to take notes. Show the clip a second time, stopping periodically for students to write down their thoughts. Offer time for students to craft their summaries and invite them to share in small groups or pairs.

QUICK WRITES

This strategy will help students develop the ability to reflect upon their learning. After the video clip is over, set a timer for 60 seconds. Ask students to write as many facts as they can recall during this time period. Afterward, pair students and have them compare their lists, highlighting any similar facts. Provide another 60 seconds for students to add details to their lists. Now ask students to write a short summary paragraph answering the key question that Stephen explored in the episode.

PAPER SLIDE

This strategy is intended as a culminating activity to help students work collaboratively and retell what they have learned in their own words. Put students into groups of about four. Explain that they will watch a video and then complete a final project. Their project should answer the question posed by Stephen at the beginning of the clip.

After watching the video, students will be given sheets of paper and will need to draw or make a collage of images to explain their answer. One student will be in charge of design. Another student will write script for the explanation that follows each sheet. Another group member will read that script aloud. A final student will be the videographer who is in charge of recording the entire production.

To complete the project, have students place the sheets of paper in sequence with the first on top. As the “host” reads the script and covers each illustrated concept, the designer will pull that sheet away to reveal the next. The videographer will record the entire paper slide show in one take.