

## Fill-in-the-Blank Summaries

This is an active learning technique designed to help students retain more information through the act of summarizing.

**Changing Charts Kinesthetic Version** (works well in smaller classes with some open space):

1. Place large Post-it notes or flip charts that you have prepopulated with some of the key information from the class session around the room. Leave some information missing for students to fill in.
2. Put students in small groups with one group for each flip chart/Post-it. An ideal group size is three or four students. Give each group a different color marker.
3. Each group starts at a different chart and has 3 minutes to fill in as much information as possible. After 3 minutes, you can ring a bell, use an alarm from your phone, or announce that students should move to the next chart.
4. Have each group travel clockwise around the room, filling in the missing items or adding to/correcting information that other groups have filled in.
5. Then do a large-group recap of the accurate information, making sure that students have a chance to see what was added or changed on the charts, so that they leave with accurate information.

**Seated Pairing Version** (works well in small *and* large classes and in rooms without a lot of space):

1. Create a handout that includes some of the key information from the class session. Leave some information missing for students to fill in. Because you can create the handout on the computer and can have multiple pages, the fill-in-the-blank strategy can be more elaborate. You can create the handout (or an online version) that has a variety of blank spaces, including missing single words in sentences, whole missing sentences, and missing items in lists.
2. Have students work individually for 5 minutes, then pair up to work for 5 minutes, and then pair with another pair of students (four total students) for the last 5 minutes. At each stage, the students work to fill in, add to, and correct the missing information.
3. Once the time is up, ask each group to circle any missing information or information they are unsure of. Have them pose those questions to the whole class and have other groups answer. You can provide clarification when needed and share answers to items that have stumped the whole class.