

## GIST

This strategy from Project CRISS workshop (2001), is great for drawing conclusions and getting to the big picture, the main idea, in any subject area. With practice, students can learn to focus on the core of what they are reading. Younger students may need many rehearsals before they can collapse ideas into one. Sometimes the teacher may want to use this strategy to summarize chapters in a novel unit in order to give the overall picture.

### **Before Reading**

Introduce the material by previewing all headings, pictures, and questions. The teacher explains that the “gist” of something is the main idea. The teacher shares the twenty word-size blanks on an overhead transparency and explains to the students that after reading, they will try to write a sentence or two using twenty words that captures the “gist”.

### **During Reading**

Students then read the selection and reflect on words to express the main idea. Students may brainstorm ideas as the reading progresses. Read a page or section, then relate the main idea using only 20 words. Students continue the process, redoing the 20 word summary to include new information.

### **After Reading**

Occasionally, teachers may prefer students consider their thoughts upon completion of the reading. Students can take turns stating their thoughts on the main idea as the teacher records the ideas on the overhead transparency. Each student must continually revise in order to maintain the 20 word allotment.

Students work in pairs to complete the Gist, and then share product with another pair. Revisions and collaboration on main idea may be shared, then presented to the entire class. The class can then agree on a main idea summary for the selection.

## **Writing to Learn**

Model of Reading Strategy

## GIST

Example 1:

**What is Static Electricity?**

Gaining or losing negative charges causes  
electric charge or electric field. Charged  
objects interact. Like charges repel, unlike  
charges attract.

Example 2:

### **What is Electric Current?**

Electric current, a flow of charges  
through a circuit. One path for  
current is series circuit, more than  
one, parallel.

## Writing to Learn

### Template of Reading Strategy

## GIST

### A Summary of Twenty Words or Less

After reading the passage, write a sentence or two of no more than twenty words that captures the “gist” of what you read. Use the twenty word-size blanks.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

With the people at your table, or your partner, consolidate your ideas on what the “gist” of the passage is, and then record the agreed upon consensus in a one or two sentence summary of no more than twenty words. Use the twenty word-size blanks.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____