

# Piecing Together Ideas

## **Levels**

Intermediate +

## **Aims**

Practice reading for  
main ideas

Develop skill in reading  
for details

## **Class Time**

20–30 minutes

## **Preparation Time**

No set time

## **Resources**

Any reading material

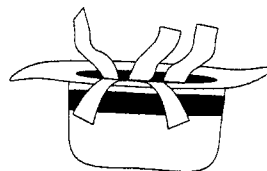
Paper

Hat

**M**aking distinctions between general ideas and supporting details is an important part of reading comprehension. Strip stories are an enjoyable way for students to see the relationship between the bigger and smaller pieces of a text.

## **Procedure**

1. Select appropriate reading material for the class.
2. Select sentences or paraphrase portions of the reading passage and write them on strips of paper. Prepare a set of corresponding strips that say either “main idea” or “supporting detail.” The two sets of strips must correspond exactly. The total number of strips should equal the number of students in the class.
3. As the students read the material, devote class time to enhancing comprehension until the material is well understood.
4. Have students
  - draw a strip from a hat.
  - work together to match the strips with the quotations to the strips with the labels.
  - stand in a line (with a strip) in the order that the sentences appeared in the reading passage.
  - read out loud, in sequence, what is written on the individual strip.



## Caveats and Options

1. For a large class, use two sets of strips and have two groups form two different lines simultaneously.
2. Make the activity more difficult by requiring any reading material to be put away before the strips are drawn from the hat so students may not refer to it during the exercise.
3. It is important to have covered the material well before attempting this activity, but it is a nice way to conclude work on a reading passage.

## Contributor

*Caroline Crolley is a candidate for an MA in ESL at the University of Hawaii, where she also teaches.*