

Headlines

A routine for capturing essence.

- Write a headline that captures the most important aspect of this topic/issue.
- How does your headline differ from what you would have said yesterday?

PURPOSE

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students identify the essence, or the core idea, of the topic/issue being discussed and reinforces taking notice of central themes as an essential tool in cultivating understanding.

APPLICATION

When and where can I use it?

This routine works especially well at the end of a class discussion or session when you want many or all students to succinctly summarize their thoughts. You can ask everyone for a headline that captures their impressions and key ideas about the topic/issue being explored. The routine helps students practice forming a concise synthesis and offers them an opportunity to listen to fellow students' thinking about the topic/issue. As you support students in developing their headlines, explain that this is not about creating the best headline; rather, the goal is for students to hear different perspectives and surface nuances.

LAUNCH

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

After students have had some learning experiences, ask the students to reflect individually about the core ideas of the topic/issue. For example, at the end of a class, you might say, "Think about all that we have been talking about today in class. If you were to write a headline for [topic/issue] right now that captured the most important aspect that should be remembered, what would it be?" Give them individual time to form their headlines. Then, invite the students to "Share your headline with your neighbor." You might close the class by asking, "Who heard a headline from someone else that they thought was particularly good at getting to the core of things?" (Note: The steps in this example are similar to those in the Think, Pair, Share routine.)

You may want to document students' headlines in order to revisit them at a later time or so that they can be updated periodically as students learn more about the topic/issue. In subsequent class sessions, referencing this documentation, you could ask a follow-up question to help students recognize or reflect on the changes in their thinking: "Compare your prior headlines with your current headlines: How has your headline changed? What new thoughts or ideas do you have now that you didn't have then?"

This thinking routine was developed as part of the Visible Thinking project at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Explore the full PZ Thinking Routine Toolbox at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines.

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