

# Final Word

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## Purpose

This protocol is designed to help students understand the meaning of a text, particularly to see how meaning can be constructed and supported by the ideas of others. This protocol is especially helpful when people struggle to understand their reading; the shared nature of the protocol allows students to not only present their ideas in a nonthreatening oral fashion, but also to benefit from the knowledge acquired by other members of their group. The roles of timekeeper and facilitator are especially important to this protocol and may require some training and practice for students: how to keep time politely but firmly; how to keep people on task respectfully; and so on.

## Materials

- Optional: recording form for purpose of reading text (e.g., main idea and details, “gist,” answering a predetermined prompt)

## Procedure

1. Have each group select a timekeeper and facilitator.
2. Students then number off in the order that they will present.
3. All students may read the same text, or students may read different texts on a common topic for a jigsaw effect. Text selection is a critical step.
4. Students read silently and text-code, or fill out a recording form. They mark passages for discussion clearly so they can quickly locate them later.
5. The presenter shares a designated number of passages and his or her thinking about them. Be sure to indicate how long the presenter should speak so there will be enough time for each group member.
6. Each student comments on what was shared, in less than 1 minute each. Interesting similarities and differences in interpretations will arise as other students share their thinking without judgment or debate.
7. The presenter gets the final word, sharing how his or her thinking evolved after listening to others or re-emphasizing what was originally shared. The presenter may change his or her perspective, add to it, or stick with original ideas without criticism.
8. Follow steps 4-6 with each additional student taking the role of presenter.

## Variations

- Encourage students to write down their thoughts before speaking if needed, so their comments are focused and efficient.
- To promote critical thinking, design prompts for the discussion that ask students to include reasons for selecting a particular passage and evidence that supports a particular point.

## References

Adapted from: Original by Jennifer Fischer-Mueller and Gene Thompson-Grove