

Jigsaw

The **Jigsaw** strategy (Aronson, 1978) is a collaborative team learning approach and is analogous to a jigsaw puzzle. The strategy helps students process informational or expository texts and is effective with middle and high school students as well as adult learners.

Students are divided into heterogeneous groups of four to six members. Each group member is charged with becoming an “expert” on one “piece” of the assigned material. Students charged with the same piece come together to read and discuss the information in their section of the text and identify the most important information or key details. They decide how they will “teach” the information to the rest of their original group. The students then leave their “expert” groups to join the original group. Each group member then takes turns teaching each other what they have learned. Each student listens and takes notes because each is accountable for the information shared.

Note: *Teacher preparation and planning are key factors for the success of this strategy. Selecting an appropriate text to use is vitally important. The text should lend itself to being divided into “pieces” and should require no more than thirty minutes for students to read. This strategy can be extended to include students conducting collaborative research on a given topic and becoming an expert on a certain “piece” that they share with the rest of their Jigsaw group.*

How to implement the strategy:

1. Divide students into 4 to 6 person Jigsaw groups. (The groups should be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, and ability.)
2. Divide the informational or expository text into 4 to 6 “pieces”. (Each reading passages should be about the same length and should require no more than fifteen to thirty minutes for students to read.)
3. Assign each student in the group one “piece” of the informational text that they will be responsible for learning and teaching the rest of the group.
4. Have students form “expert groups” by having one student from each Jigsaw group join other students that are assigned with the same “piece” of the puzzle.
5. Give students time to read over their “piece” at least twice and become familiar with it. Ensure students they do not have to memorize the text.
6. Have students in the “expert groups” discuss the main points of their “piece” of the text and plan and rehearse how they will present the information to their Jigsaw group. (Give students an adequate amount of time to complete the task.)
7. Have students return to their Jigsaw groups to present her or his “piece” of the information to the Jigsaw group.
8. Remind the rest of the students to listen carefully, take notes of important information, and ask questions as needed for clarification and understanding.

9. Rotate from group to group to observe the process and make sure students are engaged and getting the information they need.
10. Bring the whole class together again to discuss what they have learned from the text.
(An alternative idea is to end with a quiz on the information so students know they are responsible for understanding all of the information in the text.)