

# The Shrinking Paragraph Strategy



# Shrink the Paragraph to Summarize It

- Shrinking the Paragraph is a reading strategy useful for helping you to summarize what you read.
- First, learn to identify and state the main idea:
  1. Name the **who** or **what** (the main person, animal, place, or thing the passage is about)
  2. Tell the most **important thing** about who or what
  3. Write the **main idea** in 10 words or less

- The following slides offer a model for “shrinking” the paragraph.

## Read This Paragraph

First, the plane's engine caught on fire and continued to burn. When Amelia Earhart flew to a higher altitude trying to put out the fire, ice began to build up on the plane's wings. From start to finish, Amelia Earhart's first solo transatlantic flight was filled with near disasters. The weight of the ice on the plane's wings finally forced her to come down. Because the clouds were so low and thick during her descent, she almost crashed in the ocean. By the time Amelia finally spotted the coast of Ireland, she was so far off course that her plane was nearly out of fuel.

To analyze, ask questions such as who, what, where, when, how, and why:

WHO?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHEN?

WHY?

HOW?

First, the plane's engine caught on fire and continued to burn. When Amelia Earhart flew to a higher altitude trying to put out the fire, ice began to build up on the plane's wings. From start to finish, Amelia Earhart's first solo transatlantic flight was filled with near disasters. The weight of the ice on the plane's wings finally forced her to come down. Because the clouds were so low and thick during her descent, she almost crashed in the ocean. By the time Amelia finally spotted the coast of Ireland, she was so far off course that her plane was nearly out of fuel.

To analyze, ask questions such as who, what, where, when, how, and why:

WHO? Amelia Earhart

WHAT? First solo flight

WHERE? In an airplane

WHEN? From start to finish

HOW? Filled with near disasters

WHY?

First, the plane's engine caught on fire and continued to burn. When Amelia Earhart flew to a higher altitude trying to put out the fire, ice began to build up on the plane's wings. From start to finish, Amelia Earhart's first solo transatlantic flight was filled with near disasters. The weight of the ice on the plane's wings finally forced her to come down. Because the clouds were so low and thick during her descent, she almost crashed in the ocean. By the time Amelia finally spotted the coast of Ireland, she was so far off course that her plane was nearly out of fuel.

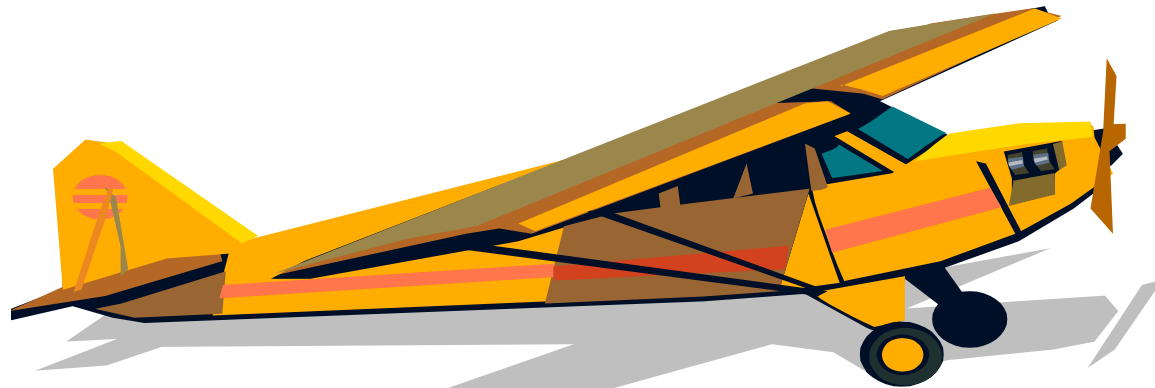
# Put it all together

Who?

What about her?

Stated Main Idea: Amelia Earhart's first solo transatlantic flight was filled with near disasters.

How?



# Topic/Question/Answer Model

Directions: Identify the topic and decide what the author wants the reader to know about the topic. The summary should emerge when these are combined.

**Topic:** Amelia Earhart's first solo transatlantic flight

**Question:** What about it?

**Answer:** filled with near disasters

**Summary:** Amelia Earhart's first solo transatlantic flight was filled with near disasters.





Reading • to • Learn  
Northwest Florida State College  
Quality Enhancement Plan