

Make Generalizations

A generalization is a specific kind of conclusion. All generalizations are conclusions, but not all conclusions are generalizations. A generalization is a broad statement that applies to many examples. A generalization is formed from a number of examples or facts and what they have in common. **Example:** All animals that have feathers are birds.

Readers recognize and evaluate generalizations made by an author. Readers make and support their own generalizations based on reading a selection. Clue words that support instruction for generalizations: all, none, most, many, always, everyone, never, sometimes, some, usually, seldom, few, generally, in general, and overall.

Generalizations are statements that may include or imply ideas. **Example:** The climate in Mexico is generally warmer than that of the northern United States. Thoughtful readers are able to recognize generalizations. They are able to evaluate if a generalization is adequately supported by specific facts. Instruction for this strategy may include helping students evaluate, make judgments and form opinions. A judgment is an opinion about the value of an action, a character, a situation, an author's assertions, elements of the text, etc. Thoughtful readers use their own experiences and details from the text to make judgments, form opinions, evaluate, or generalize.

Questions that help students explore generalizations:

- Which sentences in the selection are like "big umbrella" statements: A conclusion presented by the author followed by many examples?
- How many examples did the author provide for the statement...?
- Based on the number of examples described in the article, do you think the author made a valid generalization when he/she stated that...?
- What words and phrases did you find in the selection that signal generalization statements? (All, none, most, many, always, often, everyone, never, sometimes, some, usually, seldom, few, generally, in general, overall, as a general rule)
- The article includes the phrase, "Some of the research reveals...." What research was included to support the statement? What research was missing?
- Is this statement...a valid generalization? How do you know?
- Why do you think authors write generalizations?
- Based on the information in the selection, what generalizations can be made?