

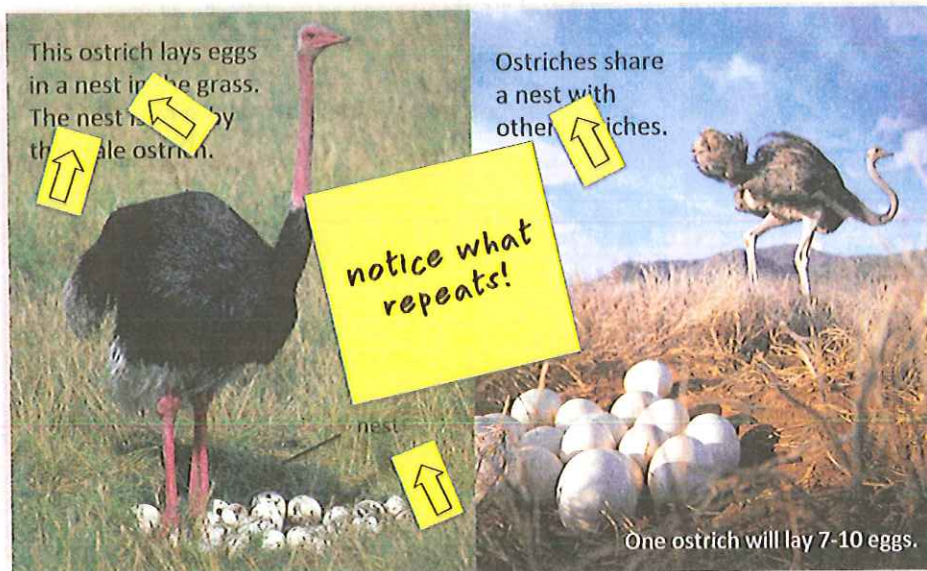
## 8.2 Notice What Repeats

**Strategy** To figure out what a book is mostly about, it's helpful to pay attention to the word or words you see again and again. On each page, notice what repeats. Think, "Does this word tell me what the book is mostly about?"

**Teaching Tip** Up until about level J, books often don't have a main "idea" but rather a "main topic"—it's the difference between saying the book is about "baseball" (topic) and the book is about how "baseball is an important part of American culture" (topic + idea). For younger readers, or children reading at lower levels, asking them to determine a main idea may be too challenging of a task considering the complexity of the text.

### Prompts

- What repeats on each page in the words?
- What repeats on each page in the pictures?
- What is this book mostly about?
- State the main topic.
- Look for what's the same.
- Put a finger on any words that are the same on these couple of pages.
- You found a repeating word! Now, what's the topic?



*Who is this for?*

LEVELS

A-I

GENRE / TEXT TYPE

nonfiction

SKILL

determining  
importance

## 8.5 Boxes and Bullets

### Who is this for?

LEVELS  
J-Z+

GENRE / TEXT TYPE  
expository nonfiction

SKILLS  
synthesizing,  
determining  
importance



**Hat Tip:** *Navigating Nonfiction in Expository Text: Determining Importance and Synthesizing* (Calkins and Tolan 2010c)

**Strategy** Draw a box and several bullets beneath it on a sticky note or in a notebook. As you read, think about the information you just read. Ask yourself, “Does this sentence say what this part is mostly about (box), or is this a detail (bullet)?” Write or mentally place the information you read on the graphic organizer as you learn it.

**Teaching Tip** This is another strategy that you can modify the language to be about topics and details (below level M) or about main idea and details (at around level M-Z+).

**Lesson Language** *Nonfiction expository texts have an architecture—a way they are built. When authors are trying to teach you something new, it’s common that they will have big topics and ideas, and then give you more information by giving you details that fit with those big topics and ideas. Sometimes the main idea comes first, and then they follow it with the details. Other times, you’ll need to read all the details and then you’ll come to the main idea in the conclusion. Sometimes the main idea is stuck somewhere in the middle. As you read, it helps your understanding if you can organize the information, figuring out which of the sentences are “bullets”—or supporting details or facts—and which of the sentences are “boxes”—or main ideas or topics.*

### Prompts

- Say back the information you just read.
- Do you think that information is the main idea, or a detail?
- How do you know if it’s a main idea or detail?
- Check to see if the other information on the page is a part of that sentence.
- Check to see if that sentence supports the other information on the page.

Day of the Dead	
Name <u>Ellie</u>	Date <u>10-8</u>
<b>Boxes and Bullets</b>	
Main Idea: Day of the Dead celebrates the people who have died	
Supporting Details	
. They tell stories about their family history.	
. They wear shells to wake the dead.	
. They visit their family graves	

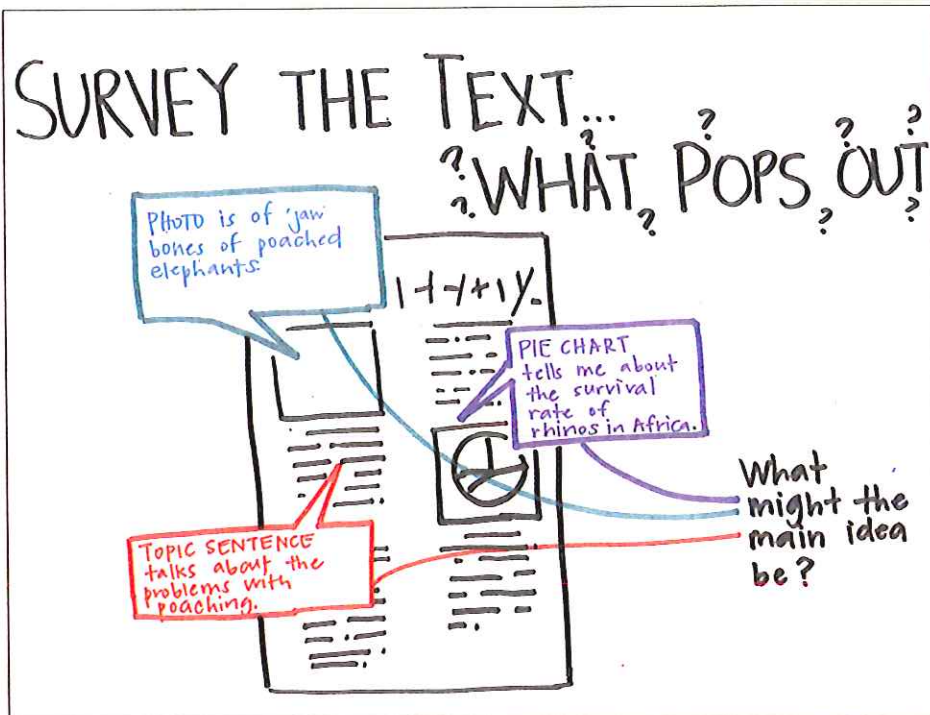
# 8.6 Survey the Text

**Strategy** Survey the text by glancing at the big things that jump out at you visually—the heading(s), title(s), and visual(s). Ask yourself, “What does it seem like this text is mostly about?” Then, go back and read the text with that main idea in mind. Check the facts you learn to see if they really do fit with the main idea statement you’ve already made. When you finish reading, revise the main idea statement based on the new information you have.

**Teaching Tip** You can help students synthesize a larger section of text—a whole book—by teaching them to survey the table of contents before beginning to read. You can also tweak this to focus on either main idea or main topic depending on text level.

### Prompts

- Look across the page. Tell me what you see.
- If you put all the visuals together, what do you think it’s mostly about?
- What do most of the features have in common (topic or idea)?
- Check the facts to make sure that’s the main idea.
- Do you have any changes to make to your main idea statement, after reading the facts?
- Hmm. It seems like that doesn’t quite fit. Revise your thinking.
- You put all the visuals together to figure out what it’s mostly about!



*Who is this for?*

LEVELS

J-Z+

GENRE / TEXT TYPE

expository nonfiction

SKILLS

synthesizing,  
determining  
importance



**Hat Tip:** *The Nonfiction Now Lesson Bank, Grades 4–8: Strategies and Routines for Higher-Level Comprehension in the Content Areas (Akhavan 2014)*

## 8.7 Paraphrase Chunks, Then Put It Together

*Who is this for?*

LEVELS

L-Z+

GENRE / TEXT TYPE

nonfiction (article)

SKILLS

determining importance, paraphrasing, synthesizing



**Hat Tip:** *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*, second edition (Harvey and Goudvis 2007)

**Strategy** Stop after every paragraph or short section. Think, “How can I say what I learned in my own words?” Jot a note in the margin. At the end of the article, read back over your margin notes and think, “So, what’s this whole article mostly about?”

**Teaching Tip** Part of the challenge for many readers as they move to expository nonfiction from reading stories is that the pace of their reading needs to slow down. Strategies like this one that ask readers to stop and chunk the information as they go helps to slow them down and monitor their comprehension before moving on. It also supports their ability to synthesize the information, as they are stopping throughout the text to pull together smaller amounts of information rather than reading the entire text before stopping to think about main ideas.

### Prompts

- Stop there. Jot a note.
- What’s most important in what you just read?
- Say it in your own words.
- Don’t write the same thing the author wrote; think and try to say it on your own.
- Look back across your notes.
- What is the *whole* article about?
- That main idea statement takes into account most of the information you just read!
- It seems like slowing down to think is helping you to think about main ideas as you go.

