K-W-L Lesson Plan

Note: This lesson plan can be used with any Natural Inquirer or Investigator journal.

Materials
• Natural Inquirer or Investigator journal (one per student)
• 1 unlined piece of paper per student
• 1 lined piece of paper per student
• Pencils

Day 1: ~30 minutes
1. Briefly introduce the article you have chosen, emphasizing the topic and the particular research question being addressed in the article. Give students two pieces of paper each. Have the students label the unlined sheet of paper with K-W-L and draw three columns—Column 1 K (What do you Know?), Column 2 W (What do you think you will learn?), Column 3 L (What did you Learn?). Label the lined sheet of paper “Reflection Questions.” Have student divide the sheet of paper in four sections. Label the sections “Introduction,” “Methods,” “Findings,” and “Discussion.”

2. Place students into groups of 3 to 5. Have students fill in the “K” column with words, terms, or phrases from their background or prior knowledge regarding the topic of the article. If you are having them draw on a topic previously learned, then the K column may be topic-related. But if the topic is something brand new, and they don’t know anything (or much) about it, you should use the K column to have them bring to mind a similar, analogous, or broader idea.

3. Hand each student a journal. Have students predict what they might learn about the topic and complete the “W” column. Students may look through the article to glance at headings, pictures, and charts. This technique helps focus their attention on key ideas and allows them to practice making observations. Students may add ideas about what they want to learn about the topic in the middle column too.

4. For homework, ask students to read the article that you have chosen. Students should read the entire article, but they do not need to read the FACTivity or the Reflection Questions.

Day 2: Entire class period
1. Within each group, have students read the article aloud. Have students alternate reading paragraphs. At the end of each section have students discuss and answer the reflection questions on the piece of paper labeled “Reflection Questions.” After reading, students should fill in their new knowledge gained from reading the content. The student’s misconceptions about the topic from the Know column before reading the article may be addressed from the knowledge gained from actually reading the article. Hold a class discussion about misconceptions, predictions, and new knowledge.

Use these questions to get you started:
1. What misconceptions did you have? Where did those misconceptions come from?
2. What did you see in the pictures/figures, and what did you infer about the pictures? What did these pictures tell you about the article you read?
3. What clues did you use to predict what you might learn from the article? Were your predictions accurate? Why or why not?
4. What did you learn from the article that cleared up a misconception?