KWL Plus, a reading-thinking strategy, focuses on the student as a learner who asks questions and thinks about ideas while reading. The title derives from the three principal components of KWL--recalling what is known; determining what students want to learn, and identifying what is learned--plus mapping text and summarizing information.

Mapping and summarization were added to the original KWL strategy because writing and restructuring of text are powerful tools in helping student’s process information. The expanded strategy engages readers in constructing meaning from text and fosters student independence by developing their transfer skills. Students develop the ability to transfer, and thus to become independent learners, through instruction that gradually shifts the responsibility for initiating the strategy from the teacher to the student. After learning KWL Plus under teacher direction, students implement it on their own while receiving corrective feedback until they can complete the task independently.

**Procedure**

Step 1: Distribute copies of the KWL worksheet (sample included) to the class. Activate background knowledge. Guide students in brainstorming ideas and discussing what they know about the topic. As unanswered questions about specific points emerge, students can save them and refer to them later as information they want resolved when they read.

Step 2: After brainstorming and discussing, ask students to note on the KWL worksheets their knowledge of the topic. This forms the K (what is known) of the KWL technique.

Step 3: Guide students in categorizing their information. Help them to anticipate categories of information they may find in the article. By inducing a sense of expectation at the outset, KWL enhances student awareness of content and how it may be structured. Additionally, the categories enable them to anticipate and to relate information from other texts. Model the categorization process by thinking aloud while identifying categories and combining and classifying information. Students may then complete the “Categories of Information We Expect to Use” section on the worksheet.

Step 4: Guide students in generating questions as they read. Those questions become the basis for the W (what students want to learn). Questions can be developed from information gleaned in the preceding discussion and from thinking of the major categories of anticipated information. By developing questions in this manner, students learn to define independently their purpose for reading, which allows them to focus on the text and to monitor their learning.

Step 5: The students should divide the text into manageable segments, at first by the teacher, then as they become familiar with the technique. Depending upon an individual student’s needs and abilities, one or two paragraphs may be all that a student can handle before he or she interrupts his or her reading and pauses to
monitor comprehension by referring to the questions listed in column W. In this way, before the students read the entire passage, they become aware of what they have learned as well as what they have not comprehended.

Step 6: As students read and encounter new information, they can add questions to the W column. Thus, as students proceed through the material, they constantly think about what they read, monitor their learning, and perhaps generate additional questions to guide their reading. As they read, they also should note new information in the L (what students learn) column of the worksheet. This helps students select important information from each paragraph, and it provides a basis for future reference and review.

Step 7: Help students categorize the information listed under column L. Have students ask themselves what each statement describes. In doing so, they often discover more categories that can be used in future reading.

Step 8: Guide students in creating a map of the information. Through listing and categorizing, the most difficult tasks of constructing a map—i.e., selecting and relating important information from text—are already completed. Instruct students to use the article title as the center of their map. Categories developed with the KWL Plus worksheet become the map’s major concepts, with explanatory details subsumed under each. Lines show the relationship of the main topic to the categories. All information categorized on the worksheet acts as supporting data on the map.

Step 9: Guide students in writing a summary of the material. The most difficult part of summarizing—selecting information and organizing it—has already been completed. Instruct students to use the map as an outline for their summary. Because the map depicts the organization of the information, a summary is comparatively easy to construct. The map’s center becomes the title of the summary. Then students should number the categories on the map in the sequence they prefer. Each category forms the topic for a new paragraph. Finally, supporting details in each category are used to expand the paragraph or explain the main idea.