

Using Tables & Charts in the Content Areas

Within many state assessments, students are asked to organize information from the reading into chart, formally referred to as a semantic map. If they are never given experience to work with this type of question, it's not a mystery why so many struggle to accurately and confidently answer these questions.

So here's the big question—When's the last time you asked students to put information into a chart or table?

Consider utilizing tables and charts when students are learning new terms and concepts in your content areas. Provide a simple table, and ask students to complete it.

Geometric Shapes	Number of Sides	Number of Angles	Number of Vertices
Square			
Rhombus			
Rectangle			
Equilateral Triangle			

Consider including tables and charts as part of class assessments. As part of a chapter test, consider replacing the typical short-answer response written in sentences and paragraphs with a semantic map. Rather than asking students to write a paragraph and explain the different body systems, just give them a table to complete.

Body Systems	System's Function	Relevant Organs	Common Diseases

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Consider including tables and charts as part of class assessments. As part of a chapter test, consider replacing the typical short-answer response written in sentences and paragraphs with a semantic map. Rather than asking students to write a paragraph and explain the different planets, just give them a table to complete.

Planets	Distance from the sun	Number of days to orbit the sun	Number of moons
Uranus			
Saturn			
Venus			
Neptune			

For the reluctant writer, completing a chart is a welcomed alternative to always writing sentences and paragraphs. And for the overwhelmed teacher, semantic mapping is fast to grade.

To increase the challenge and differentiate the tables and charts for your higher-level students, provide them a partially filled out chart to complete.

Planets	Distance from the sun	Number of days to orbit the sun	Number of moons
	7th farthest		
			30 moons
		approx. 225	
Neptune			