K-W-L Charts

* Teachers use K-W-L charts to find the background knowledge about a certain topic and to scaffold them as they ask questions and organize the information they are learning.
* The “K” stands for What We Know
* The “W” stands for What We Wonder
* The “L” stands for What we Learned
* A K-W-L chart can take several weeks to complete. At the beginning of the unit you find out what the students already know and what they wonder about the topic. Towards the end of the unit students complete the “L” section stating what they have learned.
* Students become curious and more engaged in the learning process, and teachers can introduce complex ideas and technical vocabulary in a non-threatening way.
* Teachers direct, scribe, and monitor the development of the K-W-L chart, but it is the students engaging with one another that makes this a powerful instructional procedure.
* Follow these steps:
  + Post a large chart on the classroom wall. Divide it into three columns and label them “K”, “W”, “L”
  + At the beginning of the unit ask the students to think about what they already know about the topic and write this information in the “K” column.
  + Write down the questions the students suggest about what they want to know in the “W” column.
  + At the end of the unit, students will reflect on what they have learned from the unit. Record this information in the “L” column.
* The K-W-L Plus chart is the teacher highlights the big ideas and helps students remember more of what they’re learning. The teacher will provide three to six big-idea categories when they introduce the chart, or they ask students to decide on categories after they brainstorm information about the topic for the “K” column. Students will then focus on these categories as they complete the “L” column. This is an easier way to make sure students learn about each of the big ideas being presented.
* Students can also have their own individual K-W-L charts. This way the can brainstorm about what they know about the topic, identify questions, and list what they’ve learned.
* You can also have students make a K-W-L flip book. The students will use the flaps to write in each column.
* Checking how students complete their “L” columns is a good way to monitor their learning.

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| **K** | **W** | **L** |