

## Reading Strategy: Somebody Wanted But So Then

### Purpose of the ‘Somebody Wanted But So’s strategy:

The Somebody-Wanted-But-So strategy (MacOn, Bewell & Vogt, 1991, Beers, 2003) is used during or after reading. It provides a framework to use when summarizing the action of a story or historical event by identifying key elements. The strategy also helps students identify the main ideas, recognize cause and effect relationships, make generalizations, identify differences between characters and look at various points of view. It is more often used with narrative text but can also be used with expository text. For example SWBS can be used to summarize the goal/motivation, conflict, event or barrier of a historic or contemporary character or group of people. SWBST adds ‘Then’ to the strategy to further challenge students or expand the summary.

### Explicitly teaching ‘Somebody Wanted But So Then’:

#### Step 1: I Do

Model the ‘Somebody Wanted But So Then’ strategy by reading a selection of text aloud or retelling an event – this could be a story, film or real life event. Complete the SWBST five column chart. Example:

Somebody (main character)	Wanted (what)	But (problem)	So (solution)	Then (ending)
The Big Bad Wolf	Pigs for dinner	They kept hiding in new homes made of straw, sticks, and brick.	The wolf blew down the houses, except for the one made of brick.	The pigs were safe and the wolf went hungry.

#### Step 2: We Do

Read aloud a second text selection or retell an event. Ask students to identify the *Somebody* from the event. Write down the name of the person in the first column. Explain that the *Wanted* represents the plot and complete the second column. Explain that the *But* is the conflict or challenge the person/people faced and record the student responses in the third column. Finally, explain that the *So* column is to record how the character solved the problem and the *Then* column is to record the ending or outcome of the story. Then read aloud the summary statement.

#### Step 3: You Do

Assign another selection of text or retell an event and in groups/pairs/individually students complete a SWBST chart. Continue to guide students until they can use the strategy independently.

**Collaboration Idea:** Share SWBST statements in small groups and discuss the similarities and differences in the statements, as well as evidence in the text used to support each statement.

**Extension Idea:** Point out that there can be more than one ‘Somebody Wanted But So Then’ in a text selection/chapter and show how a second SWBST statement can be generated, if applicable.

**Retention Idea:** Until students remember the strategy by heart, create an anchor chart to display in the classroom. See the sample on the next page. Creating it together increases the chances that students will refer back to the chart when they need to use it independently.

I can

# Summarize

**Somebody** Who is the MAIN character?

**wanted** What did the MAIN character want?

**But** What is the problem?

**So** How did the MAIN character try to solve the problem?

**Then** What was the resolution to the story?

## **Somebody**

Who is the main character or person?



## **Wanted**

What did the character or person want?



## **But**

What was the problem?



## **So**

How did the character or person try to solve the problem?



## **Then**

What was the resolution or outcome? How did the story end?

