Categorizing Information

Learning the Skill

Categorizing information is a good way to handle an abundance of facts or a great deal of new information. First, however, you have to figure out how the facts relate to one another. A geographer, for example, might want to categorize statistics about a country’s workers. One category could be Agricultural Workers. Another could be Industrial Workers, and a third could be Service Workers. One of the best ways to categorize information is to place it in a chart or graph.

Follow these steps to categorize information:

• Read the information carefully.
• Study the information, and note how items are similar and different.
• Look for facts about the same subject.
• Decide which categories will best include all the information.
• Enter the information into a chart labeled with the categories.

Practicing the Skill

Directions: Read the information below, and then answer the questions that follow.

Nearly 80 percent of the people of Russia are of Russian heritage. Russia is also home to a variety of other ethnic groups, however. As of 2002, about 3.8 percent of the people were Tatar, 2 percent were Ukrainian, 1.2 percent were Bashkiri, and 1.1 percent were Chuvash. The percentages may not seem large. But the total population of Russia is more than 140 million people, which means that 1 percent equals about 1.4 million people.

1. Listing What facts are presented in this information?

2. Categorizing How would you categorize the information?
**Critical Thinking Skills Activity**

3. **Displaying** Fill in the chart below with information from the reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups in Russia</th>
<th>Percentage of People in Each Group</th>
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**✓ Applying the Skill**

**Directions:** Read the information below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Russian people have a long tradition of playing the music of folk songs. Many stringed instruments are native to Russian folk music. Perhaps the best known is the *balalaika*. Similar to a guitar, the body of the *balalaika* is shaped like a triangle and has three strings. The left hand frets the notes, and the right hand plucks or strums the strings.

Another instrument is the *gusli*, which has 5, 9, 10, or 13 strings. It is similar to a simple harp. The strings are plucked or strummed. They are not pushed down as on the frets of a guitar.

The *lira* comes in different forms. Essentially a type of hurdy-gurdy, it is also a stringed instrument but different from the other two. The *lira* has a crank that turns a wheel that rubs against the strings like a violin bow. Most *lira* have three strings.

Another stringed instrument is called the *gudok*. Like the other instruments mentioned above, the *gudok* is made from wood. It has three strings, is closer in style to a violin, and is played with a bow. The player holds the *gudok* upright in the lap and plays it like a cello instead of holding it under the chin.

1. **Identifying** What is the main category of the information above?

2. **Categorizing** What elements about each instrument could be categorized?

3. **Displaying** On a separate sheet of paper, make a chart that categorizes the information.