

## How to Write a Summary

A summary is a piece of writing that gives the main points from another text. It can be one paragraph, or it can be an essay.

The purpose of summarizing is to give a clear, objective picture of the original text that restates only the main ideas and not all the details or examples.

Learning to write summaries helps us to better understand what we're reading & is especially useful when applied to articles & educational texts. It also helps us in our own writing when we need to respond to what we read.

### A Summary:

- States the main ideas of the text.
- Gives the most important details to support the main ideas.
- Should be written in your own words. Sentences and parts of sentences should not be copied unless they are used as direct quotations.
- Conveys the main themes and meaning of the text
- Does not include opinions –it has facts only
- Is approximately about 1/3 the original text in length.

### A Summary includes:

- **A topic sentence** for a single paragraph summary that states the main idea of the text, the name of the text, and the name of the author. (A multi-paragraph summary needs an introduction & a thesis statement & also names the text & author.)
- **A one-paragraph summary** has supporting points in separate sentences with 1 or 2 explanations for each.
- **A multi-paragraph summary** has separate paragraphs that each start with a topic sentence that supports the thesis, & discuss a single idea.
- **Only the main**, most important ideas from the text that is being summarized
- **Ideas that are in your own words**, unless words from the text are used as direct quotations.
- **Use transitional** words & phrases to connect ideas.
- **A concluding sentence** (or paragraph) to sum up the main ideas & understanding of the text.

## **So how do I do it?**

- Read and understand the text: break down longer sentences & check vocabulary
- Make a list of main ideas & key points
- What information is essential? What's not essential?
- What's the main message of the text?
- Write the information in your own words

## **Practice:**

Highlight the most important information in each paragraph & write that as one sentence below it. The first paragraph is done for you:

A human skeleton is made up of many bones—206, to be exact! Bones give your body structure, let you move in different ways, and protect your internal organs. Bones grow and change during your lifetime just like the other parts of your body. When you are a baby some of your bones are made of a flexible material called cartilage. But as you grow and eat foods containing calcium like milk and cheese, the cartilage grows too and is eventually replaced by bone. It takes 25 years for your bones to get as big as they are going to be.

Summary sentence: A human skeleton has 206 bones that give your body structure, let you move, protect your internal organs, and take 25 years to get to their maximum size.

## **OK-your turn!**

The bones in your back are called your spine. Your spine holds your body upright, and it lets you twist and bend. It also protects the bundle of nerves running from your brain down to all the rest of your body called the spinal cord. There are 26 bones, called vertebrae, in your spine. Attached to the back of your spine are your ribs. Most people have twelve sets of ribs, twelve bones on the right side of the body and twelve on the left. Your ribs protect your heart, lungs, and liver.

Summary sentence:

Where two bones meet is called a joint. Joints can be fixed or moveable. Your skull has fixed joints, except for your jaw, which is a moveable hinge joint. Other examples of hinge joints are in your elbows and your knees. Where there are hinge joints, your body can only move back and forth in one direction. The other kind of moveable joint is called a ball-and-socket joint. These kinds of joints are in your shoulders and your hips. A ball-and-socket joint allows movement in every direction. Test it out by swinging your arms all over the place! You probably think of your head, hand and feet as being single things, but each of these things

Summary sentence:

You probably think of your head, hand and feet as being single things, but each of these things is made up of many, many bones. Your skull is a set of twenty-two bones that protect your brain and makes up the structure of your face. Your hands contain fifty-four bones. There are five separate bones in the center part of your hand, and each finger on your hand has three bones (except for your thumb, which has two). Because of these bones and the joints where they meet, you can do amazing things like pick up a glass, type on a computer, or throw a ball for a dog. Each of your feet has twenty-six bones and thirty-three joints.

Summary sentence: