

Summarization Options and Tips

When we summarize, we want to take a large amount of information, and condense it down to a few key thoughts or sentences. Sometimes, it is easier to create one comprehensive *paragraph* from many. Other times, it makes more sense to create *bullet points* which outline the ideas in the text. In Chapter 1, we essentially used bullet points to summarize, whereas in Chapter 2 we wrote in paragraph form.

Neither is more right or wrong, as long as we are including: the main, most important points in the chapter; including new vocabulary and people who are relevant to the information. It is also important to: keep the spirit (mood) of the text the author intended; condense information (making it much 'smaller' than the original text).

Ask yourself key questions when deciding how to summarize.

Could I create a list of events? Is the author telling a story? Is he using words like, 'there are 3 reasons,' or 'firstly...secondly...' Understanding how the author is delivering his thoughts will help us decide how it will be best to summarize the chapter. If the author is making a list, you may want to as well. If he is telling a story or explaining one big main idea, creating a well thought out paragraph may be more relevant.

Where Do We Begin?

1. Create a Vocabulary and People section to fill as you read
2. Read through the entire chapter (without summarizing)
3. Create a small paragraph that gives a brief overview of everything included in the chapter
3. Create a new heading for each section in the chapter
4. Decide if the section would be best summarized as a list, or paragraph
5. Read the section again
6. Create your summary (condense the big ideas into smaller pieces of information).

Tips

- Use adjoining words to create fuller compound sentences.
- Try to tie common thoughts together into one big thought
- Leave out insignificant details
- Begin with a sentence that encompasses the entire idea of the section, then follow that with relevant details or ideas
- When making lists, try to clarify by using phrases such as, "The author lists 3 reasons why..." or "The author highlights 4 ways this happens..." When you re-read your notes, this will be helpful in understanding