

Summarizing

"Keep What's Essential"

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

Lyric: The reason it's helpful to summarize a text is to tell someone the gist, and so you don't forget.

Notes

SUMMARY

A summary helps you remember important details about a text.

When you summarize a book, you find its essentials. You think about what you've read and decide what matters most. That's why summarizing builds critical-thinking skills. Summarizing can help you focus on the most important parts of a text and keep them organized in your head. It makes it easier to

understand and remember what you're reading.

Lyric: But don't make your summary too short,

Notes

SUMMARY

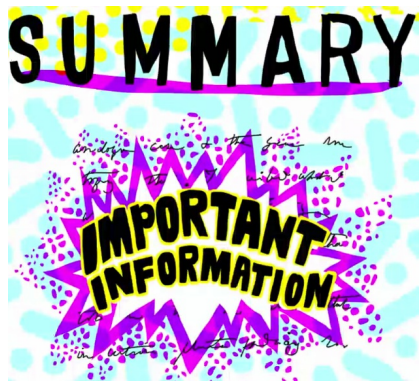
A summary that is too short won't answer key questions about a text.

Your summary shouldn't be too short or too long. Look for irrelevant or unimportant details that may make your summary too long, and cut them. Be sure you still answer key questions about the text though! If you don't, your summary might be too short, and you'll need to add more details when you

revise.

Lyric: But you didn't mention anything about the plot!

Notes



Plot is important information in a summary.

No matter what you're reading, you have to find the main ideas to summarize it. If you're reading a novel or story, you might organize your summary with five words: "Somebody wanted but so then." As you're reading, focus on the main character. That's the **somebody**. What do they **want**? **But** what stands in their way? **So** what do they do? **Then** what is the outcome?

Lyric: You said you liked it, we don't need to know that.

Notes



Summaries should not include your opinions about a text.

Opinions don't belong in a summary. You shouldn't mention if you liked a text or not. Stick to facts and what the text is mostly about, or the main ideas.

Lyric: When summarizing, five things will get you by: Who, what, when, where and why!

Notes



Newspaper articles answer the five W's right away.

In a newspaper article, the first paragraph functions like a summary of the event. After answering the five W's, a reporter can give more details about what happened in the remainder of the article. This structure is called an inverted pyramid. It starts out general—with the main ideas—and gets more specific—with details.

Lyric: Once you write the summary, review and revise.

Notes

Be sure your summary includes the relevant facts and is the right length.



Relevant Facts



Right Length

After you've read, underlined, coded and taken notes, it's time to write your summary. Like all writing, it's a process. Your first draft probably won't be perfect, so review and revise it. Make sure it's the right length, that it's organized in a logical way and that it answers the five W's. Be sure it's written in complete sentences and in your own words.