ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Summarizing passages

Difficulty level: Intermediate

English, Literacy, and Communication

This document was made by AI and there may be mistakes. If a question or answer looks wrong, use the Flag a mistake button to let Brett know so he can fix it.

Overview of the concept

This is how you retell a story or an article briefly in your own words, keeping the main idea and leaving out the small details, like telling a friend what a news story was about. A summary is not a copy of the passage, it is the heart of it, told in fewer words. Keeping the main idea and dropping the extras is what makes it short enough to remember and useful enough to share. That is the skill behind telling someone what you read, without making them read the whole thing themselves.



© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q **Summarize in one sentence: Dogs need food, water, exercise, and love. Owners feed them daily, walk them, and play with them.**

SOLUTION

Find the main idea: dogs need care.

Leave out minor details: daily feeding, walks, play are examples of that care.

So a summary is: Dogs need care from their owners.

EXAMPLE 2

Q **Summarize in one sentence: Bees collect nectar, make honey, and pollinate flowers. Without bees, many plants could not grow.**

SOLUTION

Find the main idea: bees help plants.

Leave out minor details: nectar and honey are examples of their work.

So a summary is: Bees do important work that helps plants grow.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Practice questions

1 **Summarize: Cats sleep most of the day, groom themselves, and hunt small animals. (one sentence)**

- **A** Cats sleep all day and do nothing else.
- **B** Cats have daily habits.
- **C** Cats hunt only at night.
- **D** Cats never groom themselves.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

2 **Summarize: Rain fills rivers, waters crops, and fills lakes. (one sentence)**

- **A** Rain falls only on crops.
- **B** Rain fills lakes but never rivers.
- **C** Rain is useful in several ways.
- **D** Rain is useful only for swimming.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

3

Summarize: Sara practised piano daily, learned new songs, and played at a concert. (one sentence)

A Sara worked hard at piano and performed.

B Sara gave up piano after one lesson.

C Sara only listened to piano music.

D Sara played at a concert without practising.

Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

4 A summary says: 'Exercise is bad for your health.' The passage says exercise strengthens the heart, improves sleep, and lifts mood. What is wrong with the summary?

- **A** It is too long
- **B** It says the opposite of the passage
- **C** It uses its own words
- **D** It leaves out a detail

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

5 Which of these copies too much of the original? The passage says: 'Trees give shade, clean air, and provide animal homes.'

- **A** Trees help people and animals.
- **B** Trees give shade, clean air, and provide animal homes.
- **C** Trees are useful.
- **D** Trees grow in forests.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

6 How many sentences should a summary of one short passage have?

- A One
- B Ten
- C As many as the passage
- D None

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

7 What should you check after writing a summary?

- A That it matches the original
- B That it is longer than the original
- C That it adds new facts
- D That it copies the first line

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

8

Summarize: Trains move people and goods quickly over long distances. (one sentence)

A Trains move only people.

B Trains are slow over long distances.

C Trains carry goods but no people.

D Trains move people and goods quickly.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

9

Good friends listen, help, and keep promises. Which summary leaves out a main idea?

A Good friends act in caring ways.

B Good friends only listen.

C Good friends listen, help, and keep promises.

D Good friends are kind.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

10

A passage lists four places water is found. A good summary should...

A Name all four places

B Name the general idea: water is found in many places

C Name only the first place

D Copy the passage exactly

Understand It with Pulse

Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

ANSWER KEY

1. Cats have daily habits.

2. Rain is useful in several ways.

3. Sara worked hard at piano and performed.

4. It says the opposite of the passage

5. Trees give shade, clean air, and provide animal homes.

6. One

7. That it matches the original

8. Trains move people and goods quickly.

9. Good friends only listen.

10. Name the general idea: water is found in many places

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.