

The Ten Percent Summary

Summarizing Informative Text

Subject _____ Class _____ Date _____

Assignment Summary

A landmark study (*Writing Next*) examined all research on what activities help students improve their writing skills. Second from the top of the list was a surprising result: Write summaries. As it turns out, writing a summary helps students read better, study more effectively, remember the information longer, and practice the skills needed to write a research paper. The skills needed to write a summary will help when looking for main ideas, and every reading test includes questions about the main ideas. While there are many opinions about what makes a good summary, most people agree on the following characteristics:

- Summaries are significantly shorter than the original.
- Summaries follow the organizational pattern of the original.
- Summaries include the main ideas.
- Summaries do not include the opinion of the person who wrote the summary.
- Summaries paraphrase the original author’s words.

This assignment is a specific type of summary, called the Ten Percent Summary; that is, a summary of an article that is only 10% of the original length. A Ten Percent Summary is best used to condense nonfiction or expository writing that is between 500 and 2,000 words long—the length of most passages on reading tests and many articles in magazines, newspapers, and online sources. For students who are new to summarizing, we suggest starting with shorter articles (about 500–750 words) or chunking longer articles into multiple shorter sections and gradually increasing article length as students improve their summarization skills.

Writer’s Purpose	You will write the main ideas in your own words. Include the most important details if the word limit permits. Your focus is on sharing clear and accurate information, not your opinion.
Writer’s Role	You will take the role of a researcher who has been hired by MainIdeas.com to break down information for interested adults.
Audience	Your audience will be busy, smart adults who want to get the main ideas of articles to see if they should read the article completely.
Form	You will write a summary of your assigned article in approximately 10% of the words—not exactly 10%, but around 10%. For example, if you have a 600-word article, you will write a 50- to 75-word summary.
Focus Correction Areas (FCAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>S</u> “T” A r t sentence (source, title in quotes, author’s name, right verb, topic) • 3 to 5* central ideas/own words/no opinion/≈10%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined (e.g., transition words, varied sentence beginnings, content/article vocabulary, capitalize proper nouns, etc.)
<p>Procedure</p>	<p>To help you develop your summary, we will do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the article once through without stopping to get a general sense of the topic and main ideas. • Type Two Writing: Identify the main topic of the article and what the author is trying to convey about the topic OR if the title of this article has been removed, ask, what would be a good title for this article and why? Write at least 4* lines. • Discuss the topic and author's purpose in writing this article. Record the right verb and topic in the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence on your Focus Sheet. • Together, we will look at the sections in the article as designated by the section headings OR we will work together to divide the article into 3 to 5* sections based on the way key ideas are organized. • Use the Focus Sheet to organize the article's key ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reread each section of the article carefully, stopping after each. Record the main idea from each section on your Focus Sheet. Keep track of your word count to be sure you are around 10% for each section. We will do the first one together. • Fill in the remaining information in the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence. Be sure to check that you have followed all conventions for quotation marks and capitalization. Check that you have spelled the source, title, and author's information correctly. • Draft your Ten Percent Summary, beginning with the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence and following with the main ideas you identified. Pay attention to the third FCA as you write, making sure to follow the criteria set. Check your word count! • Read your summary out loud in a one-foot voice and make any changes you think will improve it. • Show evidence that you have followed each of the FCAs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Highlight your <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence. ○ Number your main ideas. ○ Circle transition words, proper nouns, content vocabulary, etc., as determined by the third FCA. ○ Count the number of words in your summary, not including the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence; record that number at the bottom of your summary in a box. • Optional Type Four extension: Work with a partner to peer edit your summary and get feedback. Rewrite a second draft with improvements. • Submit your writing so I can provide feedback on each FCA.

* Or some other appropriate number based on the content of the article