

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 central ideas, and every reading test includes questions about the central 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.

<i>Writer's Purpose</i>	You will write the central ideas in your own words. Include the most important details if the word limit permits. You will want clear and accurate information with no opinion. Remember: this is a summary, not an evaluation.
<i>Writer's Role</i>	You will take the role of a researcher or analyst who has been hired by MainIdeas.com to distill information for interested adults.
<i>Audience</i>	Your audience will be busy, smart adults who want to get the central ideas of articles to see if they should read the article completely.
<i>Form</i>	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 1,000-word article, you will write a 90- to 110-word summary.
<i>Focus Correction Areas (FCAs)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence (source underlined, 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 quickly to get a general sense of the topic and key ideas. • Use the Focus Sheet to organize the article's central ideas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reread the first few paragraphs (10% to 20% of the article) more carefully. The first few paragraphs usually contain the author's position on the topic. Record the author's position as the topic in the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence on your Focus Sheet. ○ Carefully reread the middle paragraphs (about 60% to 80% percent of the article). Record 3 to 5* central ideas from these paragraphs on your Focus Sheet. Keep track of your word count to be sure you are around 10%. ○ Carefully reread the last paragraphs of the article (10% to 20%). They usually sum up the main points and may help you to clarify the topic in your <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence. • Fill in the remaining information in the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence. Be sure to choose the <i>right verb</i> carefully to reflect the author's purpose. • Draft your Ten Percent Summary, beginning with the <u>S</u> "T" A r t sentence and following with the central 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 central 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