

Summary writing process

1 Skim-reading

Read (new) passage for gist of time, place, genre and topic, identifying unknown words to be worked out using one of the four methods: syllabic breakdown; similarity to another English word; similarity to a word in another language; guessing from context.

2 Scan-reading

After reading summary question and underlining its key words, return to passage and highlight (possibly in two colours for two different aspects) the relevant material. Select only the essential word or phrase. Examples, repetitions, direct speech, figurative language and trivial details should be excluded.

3 Transfer to plan

Transfer the highlighted material to a list, changing the words and phrases into own words at the same time. Some technical words cannot be changed and some individual words from the passage may be used, but long phrases should not be lifted. All the relevant points should be used, not just the minimum of 15.

4 Structuring the plan

The points in the plan should be grouped logically and reordered – to make it possible to combine more than one point per sentence – using brackets and arrows. The summary should be divided into two separate parts, which do not need to be linked or compared.

5 Writing the summary

The summary should be written in informative style, in complex sentences (avoiding *and*), and using the same tense and person as the question not the passage (third person). Check afterwards for lack of clarity and concision, and for repetition, all of which affect the writing mark. The summary should be purely objective and without narrative, comment, introduction or conclusion. It must not be longer than one page in total of average handwriting (9 words per line).