

# Summarizing

# Getting to the Point

## Summary

Short account of the **central ideas** of a text

**Summaries are not a place for...**

- Opinions
- Background knowledge
- Personal information

## How To Summarize

1. Read the text.
2. Don't let big words scare you.
3. Ask, "What was this text about?"

### Your Answer...

- **Should** be a complete sentence or two
- **Should** cover **main point** and **key ideas**
- **Should** be in your own words
- **Shouldn't** just be a word or two

## Should It Go in My Summary?

Only **major ideas** and **necessary information** should go into a summary.

Ask yourself:

**"Do you need this information to understand the text?"**

If the answer is **yes**, put it into your own words in your summary.

## Main Idea and Key Points

The **main idea** is what the text is about.

**Key points** are arguments or information that is used to support the main idea.

**Key points** may be developed or elaborated with **supporting details**.

Your **summary** should only include main ideas and key points, **not supporting details**.

A penny for your thoughts? If it's a 1943 copper penny, it could be worth as much as fifty thousand dollars. In 1943, most pennies were made out of steel since copper was needed for World War II, so, the 1943 copper penny is ultra-rare. Another rarity is the 1955 double die penny. These pennies were mistakenly double stamped, so they have overlapping dates and letters. If it's uncirculated, it'd easily fetch \$25,000 at an auction. Now that's a pretty penny.

## Incorrect Example Response 1

*This text is about pennies.*

- This response is too short.
- It does not include key ideas.

## Incorrect Example Response 2

*The 1943 copper penny is worth a lot of money. Copper was hard to get during the war so there aren't many of them. The 1955 double die penny is worth a lot too. These pennies were stamped twice on accident.*

- Too much unnecessary stuff.
- Main idea is not clear.

## Correct Example Response

*This text is about two very rare and valuable pennies: the 1943 copper penny and the 1955 double die penny.*

- Includes key information.
- Doesn't include unnecessary information
- Is a complete sentence.

## Practice

Summarizing nursery rhymes.

Directions

1. We will read each nursery rhyme.
2. Summarize the nursery rhyme in **as few words as possible**.
3. Include key information.
4. We will discuss our answers.

1

The itsy bitsy spider  
Climbed up the water spout  
Down came the rain and  
Washed the spider out  
Up came the sun and  
Dried up all the rain  
And the itsy bitsy spider  
Climbed up the spout again.

2

Humpty Dumpty  
Sat on a wall.  
Humpty Dumpty  
Had a great fall.

All the King's horses  
And all the King's men  
Couldn't put Humpty  
Together again.

3

Old Mother Hubbard  
Went to the cupboard  
To give her poor dog a bone.  
But when she got there  
The cupboard was bare,  
And so the poor dog had none.

4

Jack and Jill went up the hill,  
To fetch a pail of water.  
Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got and home did trot,  
As fast as he could caper,  
And went to bed to mend his head  
With vinegar and brown paper.

5

Little Miss Muffet  
Sat on a tuffet,  
Eating some curds and whey.

Along came a spider  
Who sat down beside her  
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

What do these nursery rhymes tell us?

Just in one sentence:

## Example Answers

1. A spider fell but got up again.
2. An egg fell and was irreparably broken.
3. An woman had no food to feed her dog.
4. A boy fell, hurt his head, and bandaged it.
5. A spider scared away a girl.

Summarizing techniques:

1. Paraphrasing: paraphrase means to completely and correctly express other people's ideas in one's own words.
2. Grasping the central ideas
3. Condensation:  
Use synonyms or synonymous phrases He had a good command of English. (He knew English well.)  
Change the structure of simple sentences My brother has an appreciation of modern art. (My brother appreciates modern art.)
4. Turn complex sentences into simple sentences He received a welcome that was as cold as ice. (He received an icy welcome.) • Combine the sentences Hurry up. If you don't, you'll miss the train. (Hurry up or you'll miss the train.)
5. 4. Finding the topic sentence and making an outline.