

Summarizing

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. When you summarize a book, you find its essentials. You think about what you've read and decide what matters most. That's why summarizing builds critical-thinking skills. Summarizing can help you focus on the most important parts of a text and keep them organized in your head. It makes it easier to understand and remember what you're reading.

According to this passage, why are you building critical-thinking skills when you summarize?

- A. because you're evaluating the text to decide what's most important
- B. because you're critiquing the text to determine if it was interesting or boring
- C. because you're using your imagination to write a new ending
- D. because you're combining what you've learned in one text with your background knowledge
2. Your summary shouldn't be too short or too long. Look for irrelevant or unimportant details that may make your summary too long, and cut them. Be sure you still answer key questions about the text though! If you don't, your summary might be too short, and you'll need to add more details when you revise.

Read the summary below.

Cynthia and the Spaceship is a novel by Evelyn Redding. In the book, Cynthia, the main character, overcomes a challenge to accomplish her dream of owning a spaceship. The novel is set in Chicago in the year 2150.

Which of the following would improve this summary?

- A. cutting the final sentence
- B. adding details about the challenge Cynthia faces in the novel
- C. adding details about what the spaceship looks like
- D. cutting the title and the author of the book

3. No matter what you're reading, you have to find the main ideas to summarize it. If you're reading a novel or story, you might organize your summary with five words: "Somebody wanted but so then." As you're reading, focus on the main character. That's the **somebody**. What do they **want**? **But** what stands in their way? **So** what do they do? **Then** what is the outcome?

Read the following story.

Little Red Riding Hood wanted to bring a basket of food to her sick grandmother. A mean wolf saw her walking on the path and wanted to trick her. He ran ahead to the grandmother's house and locked the grandmother away. He then dressed up in the grandmother's clothes before Little Red Riding Hood arrived. When she got there, Little Red Riding Hood was almost fooled. But she realized the trick and ran away to get a woodcutter who was working nearby. He killed the wolf. Little Red Riding Hood saved her grandmother.

Which of the following best summarizes this story?

- A. A woodcutter saves the day.
- B. Little Red Riding Hood wanted to bring food to her grandmother, but a wolf tried to play a trick on her by locking up her grandmother. So Little Red Riding Hood found a woodcutter who was working nearby, and he and Little Red Riding Hood put an end to the wolf's tricks and saved the grandmother.
- C. Little Red Riding Hood went to visit to her grandmother who was sick. A wolf saw her walking on the path. There was also a woodcutter working nearby.
- D. A wolf dressed up as an old woman.

4. Opinions don't belong in a summary. You shouldn't mention if you liked a text or not. Stick to facts and what the text is mostly about, or the main ideas.

Read the following passage.

The article "Orange You Glad" by Wanda Biederman is all about oranges: the history, varieties and products that are made from them. Oranges are not known to grow wildly. They likely originated in Asia, either in India or in China. Spanish travelers brought the fruit to the Americas in the 1500s. There are bitter oranges and sweet oranges. I like to use bitter oranges to make jelly. Orange juice is made from oranges, and orange oil, which is used to flavor foods, is made of sweet oranges. Oranges are packed with vitamin C, a fact that historically made them a popular food among sailors. Vitamin C helps heal wounds and repair bones. The article concludes with the idea that people should eat an orange, and not an apple, every day.

Which of the following details from the passage does not belong in the summary?

- A. "They likely originated in Asia..."
- B. "...that historically made them a popular food among sailors."
- C. "Vitamin C helps heal wounds and repair bones."
- D. "I like to use bitter oranges to make jelly."
5. In a newspaper article, the first paragraph functions like a summary of the event. After answering the five W's, a reporter can give more details about what happened in the remainder of the article. This structure is called an inverted pyramid. It starts out general—with the main ideas—and gets more specific—with details.

Based on this passage, reading only the first paragraph of a newspaper article would

- A. give a reader no information about a current event.
- B. answer all of a reader's questions about a current event.
- C. give a reader the main ideas of a current event.
- D. answer only where and when an event took place.

6. After you've read, underlined, coded and taken notes, it's time to write your summary. Like all writing, it's a process. Your first draft probably won't be perfect, so review and revise it. Make sure it's the right length, that it's organized in a logical way and that it answers the five W's. Be sure it's written in complete sentences and in your own words.

Which of the following is the strongest summary of the story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*?

- A. Once upon a time, there was a curious girl with golden hair. One day, she wandered into a cottage that belonged to three bears. That night, the bears found her. Before that, she sat in their chairs, ate their porridge and fell asleep in the baby bear's bed. When she ate their porridge, one bowl was too hot. Also, one chair she sat in was too soft. Everything that belonged to the baby bear was just right.
- B. Goldilocks, bears, cottage, porridge, chairs, bed, too hot, too cold, just right, happily ever after
- C. In the story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, a girl discovers a cottage that belongs to three bears. She has golden hair. That's why she's called Goldilocks. She's also very curious, so she wanders inside. The three bears are a mother, a father and a baby. They aren't like real bears; they eat out of bowls and sleep in beds.
- D. In the story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* a curious girl named Goldilocks discovers a cottage that belongs to three bears: a mother, father and baby. While the bears are away one autumn morning, Goldilocks explores their home. She sits in their chairs, eats their porridge and eventually falls asleep in the baby bear's bed. When the bears come home, they can tell that someone has been in the house. Eventually, they find Goldilocks. She wakes up, sees the bears and runs away before they can harm her.