

How to summarize a given passage

In the busy world of today people have little time to read long winding reports and documents. Summaries, on the other hand, are easy to read. They are short and include only information that is relevant. Here are some guidelines for summarizing a passage.

Read the given passage to find out

What the passage is about

What its tone is

What type of writing it is

Find a title for the passage

The title should be a brief statement of the central theme. It should be pointed, not vague.

Read the passage again, as carefully as possible trying to understand every sentence. Since you have already understood the central theme of the passage, it should be easy for you to find out what is important and what is not important.

Anything that is not related to the central theme is irrelevant or superfluous and should not be mentioned in the summary.

In the passage the author may have expressed the same idea in different words for emphasis. There is no room for repetition of ideas in a summary.

Examples and illustrations are often easy to dispense with. If you find an example indispensable, it may be included in the summary.

Do not include quotations, metaphors, similes and other figures of speech.

Before you start writing the summary, jot down the important ideas in the passage. Do not copy words and phrases from the passage. As far as possible the summary should be written in your own words.