

Summary writing process

1 Skim-reading

Read 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 the summary question and underlining its key words, return to passage and highlight the relevant material for each part of the question. 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 make a list of all the relevant points, changing some of the words and phrases into your 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 copied.

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. This will make it possible to get all the points into a response within the word limit.

5 Writing the summary

The summary should be written in an informative style, in complex sentences (avoiding 'and'). Check afterwards for clarity and concision, and for unnecessary repetition, all of which affect the writing mark. The summary should be purely objective and without narrative, comment, introduction or conclusion.