

# Fifth - Twelfth Grade Summary Writing Instruction and Practice

## Summary Writing Instruction and Practice

### Directions:

- Read through the writing instruction pages, “Steps to Writing a Summary Paragraph”.
- Practice writing a summary paragraph using the example selection, “Snow”.
- Then choose at least a five paragraph selection from your science or history book and practice writing a summary paragraph.
- When you feel comfortable with the summary writing process, complete your yearly school-wide writing sample assignment.

# Steps to Writing a Summary Paragraph

1. Read the entire selection. Plan your topic sentence using the three part topic sentence graphic organizer called: “NAME IT – VERB IT – FINISH IT”. Memorize and draw this topic sentence organizer when planning the topic sentence for your writing assignment. Refer to the verb chart when selecting the verb.

a. Topic Sentence: Blank graphic organizer.

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b. Topic Sentence: Graphic organizer explained.

NAME IT.	VERB IT.	FINISH IT.
<b>Identify the text (genre/ title/ author)</b> Genre: usually an <b>article</b> Titles of articles: are always in <b>quotes</b> Titles of books: are underlined (See titles chart for quote/underline)	<b>Select a verb.</b> <b>explains</b> (See verb chart for more verb suggestions)	<b>Finish your thought.</b> <b>Finish the sentence</b> with the main idea of the text.

2. Re-write your writing assignment topic sentence from your graphic organizer onto the lines below to look like a real sentence. Fix spelling and capitalization errors. Remember to indent.

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3. Now for your paragraphs, use a different graphic organizer (shown below). Draw one graphic organizer for each paragraph in the selection you are to summarize. (If you have five paragraphs, you would draw five lines that are divided, down your planning page).  
 Re-read the selection. As you read, circle one main idea word in each paragraph, and underline 5 key words in each paragraph. The main idea word will often be in the first sentence of each paragraph. It is also often the word that is repeated most in the paragraph.

Main Paragraph Word	Five Key Words (separated by commas)
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**4. Make paragraph key word outlines. When you have finished identifying one main word and five key words in each paragraph, write the words from paragraph one on graphic organizer one, the words from paragraph two on graphic organizer two, etc., and do this for all the paragraphs. DO copy the main and key words from the selection onto your organizers. Check them for spelling. DO NOT copy long phrases or whole sentences.**

(Paragraph 1) \_\_\_\_\_

(Paragraph 2) \_\_\_\_\_

(Paragraph 3) \_\_\_\_\_

(Paragraph 4) \_\_\_\_\_

(Paragraph 5) \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Once you have completed the planning phase (topic sentence and paragraph organizers), you are ready to write your summary paragraph.**

- Begin your summary paragraph with your topic sentence. Remember to indent this sentence.
- Use the main and key words from paragraph one to write the next 1-3 sentences.
- Use the main and key words from paragraph two to write the next 1-3 sentences. Do this for all paragraphs. If there are a lot of short paragraphs or the paragraphs have a lot of dialogue, you may want to simply divide the selection into your own arbitrary paragraphs for planning purposes.
- When you are done you should have one summary paragraph that begins with an indent and that is only about 1/3 to 1/4 as long as the original selection.
- Use the Summary Writing Checklist to make sure you have met the requirements of a good summary paragraph.

## **6. Scoring**

- Refer to the school's Summary Writing Scoring Rubric and "score" your paper.
- Give your summary to someone else to score and see how your scores compare. Discuss differences in scoring to determine why the scores were different. This will help

you to learn and understand the scoring rubric.

## Summary Writing Topic Sentence Verbs for “Verb It”

**List A: A good place to start!** The word “explains” works as a verb for most topic sentences, but it is not very specific. Once you get used to writing topic sentences for summaries, try using some of the other words that are more vivid and precise.

<b>explains</b>	tells	compares
describes	gives	presents
lists	shows	defines

### **List B: Now try these!**

acknowledges	evaluates	supports
adds	explores	confuses
advises	expresses	defends
asserts	features	depicts
blames	furnishes	encourages
confirms	names	illustrates
confronts	offends	invites
considers	offers	judges
contrasts	predicts	misjudges
critiques	proposes	praises
demonstrates	provides	recommends
denounces	traces	simplifies
discourages	answers	solves
endorses	asks	suggests

teaches

clarifies

captures

## **Titles**

When Do I Underline (or Italicize)?

When Do I Use Quotation Marks?

All titles must either be put in quotation marks, or underlined (use italics when keyboarding). **Most of the time, the selection you will be asked to summarize will be an article of some kind, and titles of articles are always put in quotes.**

### **Use Quotation Marks for:**

newspaper article titles  
magazine article titles  
poem titles  
short story titles  
song titles  
episodes of radio shows  
episodes of television shows  
subdivisions of books

### **Use Underline (or Italics) for:**

title of books  
name of magazines  
name of newspapers  
title of plays  
title of films  
name of encyclopedias  
title of long poems  
title of radio programs  
title of comic strips  
title of software  
title of pieces of art

To help you remember whether to use quotes or underline a title, ask yourself, "Would I carry this text under my arm, or put it in a file folder?"

**FILE FOLDER = Quotes**

**UNDER THE ARM = Underline (or Italics)**

**Under the Arm:** You could carry a book, a newspaper, a magazine, or one volume to a set of encyclopedias under your arm. The titles of a book, newspaper, magazine, or encyclopedia are underlined. When you think of a play, the script of a movie, and the script of a television program typed and bound, it would be big enough to carry under your arm.

**File Folder:** Think of a file folder when you want to remember what gets quotation marks. If you could carry the item in a file folder, the title of the item will need quotation marks when you write it out. A poem, the lyrics to a song, and an article from the daily paper could all fit into your file folder, so the titles of these items all need quotation marks.

# Steps to Writing a Summary Paragraph - Example

## Snow

A blanket of fresh snow can brighten a winter landscape. But snow is more than just beautiful. It is helpful, too. Snow benefits plants, animals, and people in many ways.

Snow helps plants that stay in the ground all winter. It does not kill plants. It acts as a shield. Snow traps air beneath it. This air is warmer than the air above the snow. The warm air surrounds and protects plants. Biting winter winds cannot reach them. Ice storms and bitter cold cannot harm them. Plants stay alive through the worst weather.

Snow helps animals, too. Some animals nest below ground. They spend the whole winter there. A blanket of snow serves to keep the nests warm. Other animals do not nest below ground. They tunnel into the snow itself. They make nests there. Compared with the cold air above, snow nests are cozy.

Snow also benefits people. It helps many people earn a living. Some communities are centers for winter sports. Many visitors go there to ski. People who live and work in these communities need snow. Without it, they would have no business.

Snow is useful even when it melts. Melting snow runs into wells. It flows into rivers and streams. These supply water to towns and cities. Farms benefit from melting snow as well. Some areas are dry in summer. They get little rain. Nearly all their water comes from melted snow. The water is stored in dammed-up lakes and ponds. It is used during the growing season to water fields and orchards. Without this water supply, there could be no crops. In this way, the summer harvest depends on winter snow.

**NOTE:** The selections chosen for summarization practice should be at or below the child's reading level. If you find the selection is too difficult for your child, simply find a selection from a lower reading level. The intent is to allow your child to practice summarizing information, while hopefully discovering that writing can be a pleasurable experience. Difficult words are often chosen as one of the key outline words and will be copied from the source text onto the outline, and from the outline to the final paragraph. So don't be afraid to use paragraphs with words that your child cannot spell. Copying the spelling of the key words (but not long phrases or sentences) from the source paragraph onto the key word outline and then to the final paragraph is a good skill for your child to develop and should be encouraged.

Now let's practice writing a summary paragraph!

1. Read through the entire selection entitled, "Snow". On your planning paper, draw the graphic organizer for the topic sentence and complete it with the required information. Yours should look something like this (only the words on the bottom):

NAME IT Identify the item (genre/ title/ author)	VERB IT Select a verb.	FINISH IT Finish your thought.
The article, "Snow",	explains	how snow is helpful to people, plants, and animals.

2. Write the complete topic sentence onto your planning paper from the graphic organizer to look like a real sentence. Fix spelling and capitalization errors. Remember to indent.

The article, "Snow", explains how snow is helpful to people, plants, and animals.

3. On your planning paper, draw one paragraph graphic organizer for each paragraph in the selection.
4. Re-read the selection. As you read, circle one main word and underline five key words in each paragraph. When done reading/marking, complete your paragraph graphic organizers as shown below (yours will have the words you chose).

(Paragraph 1)	beautiful / helpful	people, plants, animals, man
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(Paragraph 2)	plants	shield, traps air, wind, ice
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(Paragraph 3)	animals	nest, below, ground, blanket, tunnel
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(Paragraph 4)	people	community center, earn living, sports
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(Paragraph 5)	melt	water supply, farm, orchard
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**NOTE:** As you can see by looking at the example paragraph graphic organizers, occasionally a “key word” might be two words, and sometimes not all five key words are needed to get the main idea and details from a paragraph. These deviations are OK. However, avoid copying long phrases of words, or whole sentences. Remember that copying and checking the spelling of the main idea and key words is a good skill and is encouraged.

5. Now, using your topic sentence and paragraph graphic organizers, write your final paragraph. Remember to indent and double space.

Here is how this student’s final paragraph looked. The main idea paragraph words are italicized (not circled as your paper will be), and the five key words are underlined to show you how the words from the graphic organizer were incorporated into the final paragraph. You will not make the circle and underline markings on your final paragraph. The marks will only be on your selection when you read and marked it during the planning phase.

## Snow

The article, “Snow”, explains how snow is *beautiful*, but more importantly, *helpful* to plants, animals, and people. It is helpful to *plants* by providing them a shield that traps warm air to protect them from the wind and ice. Snow helps *animals* that nest below the ground by providing them with a protective blanket. Some animals even tunnel into the snow because it is warmer inside a snow cave than outside it. Many *people* who live in snowy areas earn their living from people who come to their community centers for winter sports. *Melted* snow is also good because it provides water for the water supply and for farms and orchards.

6. Now, check your work using the Summary Writing Checklist.