

Give Me the Facts: A Lesson for the Middle Grades — Grade Six

Ohio Standards Connections

Reading Applications: Informational, Technical and Persuasive Text

Benchmark F

Determine the extent to which a summary accurately reflects the main idea, critical details and underlying meaning of original text.

(Grades 4 - 7)

Indicator 4

Compare original text to a summary to determine the extent to which the summary adequately reflects the main ideas and critical details of the original text.

(Grade 6)

Lesson Summary:

In this lesson, students will understand the importance of a summary, when and where summaries are used and what makes an exemplary summary. Students will come away from this lesson with the ability to critically read summaries, and they also will better understand how summaries are written.

Estimated Duration: *Three hours and 40 minutes broken into instructional sessions.*

Commentary:

This lesson provides practice for students in the reading of written summaries. As noted by educators who reviewed this lesson during the pilot study, knowing how to summarize is a tool to help students in developing careful and critical reading skills; hence, this lesson is targeted primarily at further development of the Reading Application Standard.

Possessing the skill to write summaries is not only practical but relevant to other instruction across content areas. Students are often asked to write summaries for other classes, like social studies, science and foreign language. Therefore, this lesson may not be the only time that students visit the concept of writing summaries. Even though students may need to re-visit the concept of writing summaries on a regular basis during the school year, this lesson provides a sample of how teachers may frame such a lesson. This model lesson also supplies teachers with ideas in the ways of how to assess and instruct in developing this essential skill. As one teacher who piloted the lesson said, "Overall, I found we need lots more practice!"

In an effort to set students up for success prior to the pre-assessment component of this lesson, teachers may find it necessary to review with students the guidelines writers follow when drafting summaries. This review could effectively be conducted by discussing or even by providing students with a chart that highlights tips for writing summaries. When students are asked to critically read summaries, they will be better able to see if the writer followed the guidelines. The following list itemizes those tips:

1. **Read** the text, and separate the important points from additional information that may not be critical to keep in a summary.
2. **Take notes** on what is remembered without looking back at the text to include everything that was just read.
3. **Don't strive for perfection**, because the notes are just a quick draft of what is recalled as most important points.
4. **Reorganize** by going back to the text that was just read and checking to see if the information in the notes is accurate information.
5. **Write** the summary from the notes and not from the text.

A "How To Write A Summary" chart of these tips may look something like this:

Read	• Remember important ideas
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Other Related Ohio Standards

Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies

Benchmark D

Apply self-monitoring strategies to clarify confusion about text and to monitor comprehension.
(Grades 4 - 7)

Indicator 7

Monitor own comprehension by adjusting speed to fit the purpose, or by skimming, scanning, reading on, looking back, note taking or summarizing what has been read so far in text.
(Grade 6)

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|-----------------|--|
| Take Notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your own words to restate the message • Jot down facts you remember • Turn notes into an organized list |
| Draft | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't worry about being neat and totally accurate • Draft the summary |
| Reorganize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go back and delete or add information • What is stressed in the article as being important? • Check summary against the text and make changes where necessary |
| Write/Summarize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the summary – using both notes and draft to check content • Proofread for mechanics, spelling and grammar • Type or word-process final copy (if required) |

If the teacher designs a chart to go with this lesson, it may be developed for student use, providing a checklist that a writer may follow when summarizing a lengthy text. Of course, this chart or one that is customized by the teacher would be reproduced on a full page for students to include in their notebooks. It also may be re-visited each time this concept is reviewed with students.

Last, before beginning this lesson, remind students that a summary is short but not too short. It should contain key points about the topic, but it is not meant to be a word-for-word description.

Pre-Assessment:

Provide students with a summary and an original text (news articles, speeches, historical documents, summaries of books) at their appropriate reading level. Have students write an explanation addressing the quality of the summary and its accuracy in depicting the main idea and critical details of the original text.

Post-Assessment:

Give students a sample of text and a summary either teacher-created or from a news article. Ensure they are at an appropriate instructional reading level. Have students complete a chart to compare the effectiveness of the summary; then write an explanation supporting reasons why the summary is or is not a good summary of the original text.

Scoring Guidelines:

3 = All aspects of the chart are completed, and an explanation concerning the

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adequacy of summary is logical and well supported.

2 = Chart is completed and explanation is logical but lacks adequate support.

1 = Chart and/or explanation are incomplete or inadequate.

0 = Off task or off topic.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Select an event with which students are familiar (a school activity, class period, etc.).
2. Have students help you write a summary of the event, pointing out the main idea and the critical details as well as the underlying meaning of the event.
Ask students:
 - Who could use this information?
 - Where could this summary be helpful?
3. Divide students into groups. Provide each group with a variety of texts, such as computer manuals, speeches, social studies books, magazine articles, resumes, newspapers, a variety of books and reference materials (encyclopedias). If students live in a community where a local suburban paper provides school news, then students may enjoy using that as a source for summaries.
4. Have the groups browse through the texts looking for examples of summaries as well as full-length selections.
5. Brainstorm when and where summaries would be helpful. Have each student report to the whole class and compile a list to be posted in the classroom. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of reading summaries in a variety of situations.
6. Discuss elements of an exemplary summary. Use text samples on an overhead to determine qualities of exemplary summaries. Be sure to emphasize whether or not the underlying meaning comes through in a summary.
7. Develop a list of books familiar to your students. (Books students have summarized in the past might be a good starting point.)
8. Divide students into small groups and assign each group several of the books from the list.
9. Have groups find summaries of their books. Online Web sites are good sources for this.
10. From the printed summary, have students identify the main idea and critical details. These should be listed on the left side of a chart. On the right side, ask students to list important ideas that are missing from the summary.
11. Have students share their charts with the groups. Have the class select one chart to share as a model. Again, focus on the main ideas, critical details and underlying meaning.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

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Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- Have students use highlighters instead of charts to feature the main idea and details. Use texts on a variety of different levels and that appeal to a variety of student interests.
- Have students create their own note-taking method. Use complex text. Direct students to critique a text after learning the difference between a summary and a critique.

Extension:

This lesson can be taught several times. Use content area text as a review of how to summarize information. It can also be extended to viewing and listening. Have students compare news reporting to news articles and news blurbs.

Have students write Exit Cards for your class. Exit Cards summarize what happened in class. Compare the Exit Cards the next day in class.

Homework Options and Home Connections:

Have students write summaries of selections for homework. Then, when they return to class, have them exchange summaries and revise them.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Try a similar activity with content-area text. This could also give students an opportunity to try their hand at writing summaries from their assigned reading.

Materials/Resources Needed:

For the teacher: An overhead; transparencies of summaries; poster paper; highlighters/colored pencils or pens; samples of summaries of works that can be compared to their complete originals (e.g., speeches, editorials, critiques); samples from news articles that can be compared to broadcasts and samples of student work summaries.

For the students: None.