

The Summary should be one paragraph with at least 5 sentences and a maximum of 10 sentences. The objective is to briefly tell about the important events and characters—be sure to include how you feel about what you’ve read. The topic sentence introduces the story and your conclusion explains how the problems of the book were resolved. The middle of the summary should include one, or several, important events and how the characters dealt with or solved the problem. If you follow this help sheet, you should be able to write a good summary.

**Topic Sentence:** What is the summary about? Which book did you read?

The first sentence should clearly identify what your summary is going to be about. Include the title of the book in an interesting sentence that either identifies the big picture, or gives your opinion about the story. Example A: I have enjoyed a lot of books, but Charlotte’s Web is one of the best fictional stories I have ever read. Example B: I never would have thought reading about a pig and a spider would be so interesting, but Charlotte’s Web was a real page-turner.

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**Detail Sentence(s):** What happened first?

Summarize the most important events that happened at the beginning of the book. You may also want to introduce the main characters by providing a brief description—include physical and/or character traits to paint a picture for your reader. A simile, metaphor, or hyperbole might be helpful in your description of the main character.

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**Detail Sentence(s):** What happened next?

Use a transitional phrase to move to the action in the middle of the book. Decide what you think is most important and write one or two sentences summarizing the plot/ action/ problems in the story. Did the main character face any scary/funny/interesting situations?

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**Detail Sentence(s):** What happened last?

Use a transition to bring your reader to the end of the story—describe the action that happened last. Summarize the ending by writing one or two sentences explaining how the problems were solved. Don't worry about giving away the ending! You *need* to tell what happens at the end; **avoid saying** "to find out what happens next you have to read the book." This is a summary—you must tell what happens at the end.

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**Conclusion:** Sum up your thoughts and tell how you feel about the book.

The end of your synopsis restates your main idea without repeating the same words you used in the beginning. This is where sentence variety and good word choice will help you retell your big idea and express your feelings without sounding repetitive or boring.

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After you have completed your first draft, go back and improve your sentences by eliminating dead words, adding sizzling vocabulary, include creativity skills, and combine and revise sentences for variety.

Be sure to follow Quality Work Standards on your final draft. Students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above must complete **all work** in cursive writing. In your very best handwriting, write your final draft with a number 2 pencil on wide-ruled, loose leaf notebook paper with the holes on the left hand side, proper heading in the upper right hand corner, and indent the first sentence of the paragraph. *If you choose to type your summary*, use size 12 Arial or Times New Roman font, black ink and double spaced lines (go to format, click paragraph, adjust line spacing to double). Indent the first paragraph 1 tab, or 5 spaces. Your hand-written draft must accompany your typed work.

Re-read your final draft and check for spelling errors. Have an adult read your summary and *you* make any necessary changes they suggest before turning in your report.