

## Summarizing Information from Handouts

**Objective:** by the end of this lesson, learners will be able to use summarizing techniques to rewrite information from handouts.

A **summary** is a brief overview of an entire discussion or argument. You might summarize a whole research paper or conversation in a single paragraph, for example, or with a series of bullet points, using your own words and style.

**Objectives:** People often summarize when the original material is too long, or to emphasize key facts or points. Summaries leave out detail or examples that may distract the reader from the most important information, and they simplify complex arguments, grammar and vocabulary.

1. **Get a general idea of the original text.** Pay particular attention to the title, introduction, conclusion, the headings and subheadings.

2. **Check Your Understanding** by scanning the text carefully.

3. **Break the text down into sections** to make the text more manageable and to understand its sub-points.

4. **Identify the key points in each section.** Go through each part and pick out its most important points. What does your reader need to know to understand the overall argument?

5. **Take notes.** Use bullet points, and introduce each bullet with a key word or idea. Make sure your notes are concise, well-ordered, and include only the important points.

6. **Write Your Summary.** Your notes will need editing especially if you want other people to understand them. Some summaries require continuous prose. If this is the case, write your summary as a paragraph, turning each bullet point into a full sentence. Aim to use only your own notes, and refer to original documents only if you really need to. This helps to ensure that you use your own words and style.

7. **Check Your Work.** Your summary should be a brief but informative outline of the original. Check that you have expressed all of the most important points in your own words, and that you've left out any unnecessary detail.

### Task1: Summarize the following text.

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#### Gothic novels

However, many Romantic writers recognized that nature (and human nature) also has a dark side, and can arouse feelings of terror as well as pleasure. This fascination with the destructive power of nature, and even the supernatural, inspired the genre that came to be known as gothic literature. The tone was set in Germany by Goethe's play *Faust*, and the short stories by E. T. A. Hoffmann, but the genre was most eagerly adopted by English novelists, such as Mary Shelley, who wrote *Frankenstein*. Elements of the gothic run through many Victorian novels, often stressing the

untameable nature of a Romantic hero in a wild landscape, as in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, or the grotesque characters in grim urban surroundings that feature in the works of Charles Dickens. The genre also became popular in the US, as exemplified by Edgar Allan Poe's tales of the macabre; it also influenced the style adopted by Herman Melville in his haunting short stories and *Moby-Dick*.

<sup>1</sup> From *The Literature Book : Big Ideas Simply Explained*. P109.