

Summarizing Fiction and Nonfiction

Grade 4 • ELA • Writing one-paragraph summaries of fiction and nonfiction texts • Standards: 4.RL.2, 4.RI.2

Read each short passage carefully. Then write a one-paragraph summary that tells the main idea and includes only the most important details.

1. Read this passage: Maya found a small kitten hiding under a bush in her backyard. The kitten was wet and shivering. Maya brought the kitten inside and dried it with a soft towel. She gave it some warm milk. The kitten purred and fell asleep in Maya's lap. Write a summary of this passage.

2. Read this passage: Butterflies go through four stages of life. First, they are tiny eggs on leaves. Next, they hatch into caterpillars that eat a lot of food. Then they form a hard shell called a chrysalis. Finally, they come out as beautiful butterflies with colorful wings. Write a summary of this passage.

3. Read this passage: Tommy was nervous about his first day at a new school. He walked into the classroom and didn't know anyone. A boy named Carlos smiled and waved at him. Carlos showed Tommy where to sit and introduced him to other students at lunch. By the end of the day, Tommy felt much better about his new school. Write a summary of this passage.

4. Read this passage: The ancient Egyptians built huge pyramids as tombs for their pharaohs. It took thousands of workers many years to build just one pyramid. Workers cut heavy stone blocks and moved them using wooden sleds and ramps. The pyramids still stand in Egypt today, thousands of years later. Write a summary of this passage.

5. Read this passage: Lily wanted to surprise her grandmother for her birthday. She decided to bake cookies all by herself. Lily mixed flour, sugar, eggs, and chocolate chips in a big bowl. She dropped spoonfuls of dough onto a baking sheet. When the cookies came out of the oven, they smelled wonderful. Lily packed them in a special box with a ribbon. Her grandmother was so happy when she received the gift. Write a

summary of this passage.

6. Read this passage: Honeybees are important insects that help plants grow. When bees fly from flower to flower looking for nectar, they carry pollen on their fuzzy bodies. This pollen helps plants make seeds and fruit. Without bees, many of our favorite foods like apples, almonds, and blueberries would not grow. Bees also make honey that people enjoy eating. Write a summary of this passage.

7. Read this passage: Marcus loved playing basketball but was the shortest player on his team. During practice, the coach noticed that Marcus was very fast and could dribble the ball better than anyone else. The coach made Marcus the point guard, a position perfect for quick players. In the next game, Marcus used his speed to dodge tall players and pass the ball to his teammates. His team won the game, and Marcus scored the winning basket. Everyone cheered for him. Write a summary of this passage.

8. Read this passage: Recycling helps protect our planet by reducing waste. When people recycle paper, plastic, glass, and metal, these materials can be made into new products instead of filling up landfills. Recycling also saves energy because making products from recycled materials uses less energy than making them from scratch. For example, recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to power a computer for three hours. By recycling, everyone can help keep the Earth clean and healthy. Write a summary of this passage.

9. Read this passage: Sarah and her brother Jake were exploring the woods near their house when they discovered an old treehouse hidden among thick branches. The wooden ladder was wobbly, but they climbed up carefully. Inside, they found dusty books, a broken telescope, and a journal with drawings of birds. The journal belonged to a girl named Emma who had lived in their house twenty years ago. Sarah and Jake decided to fix up the treehouse and continue Emma's bird watching project. They spent the whole summer repairing the ladder, cleaning the space, and drawing pictures of every bird they saw. Write a summary of this passage.

10. Read this passage: The Great Barrier Reef is the largest coral reef system in the world, located off the coast of Australia. It stretches over 1,400 miles and is home to thousands of species of fish, sea turtles, sharks, and other marine animals. Coral reefs are built by tiny animals called coral polyps that create hard skeletons. These skeletons build up over thousands of years to form the reef. The Great Barrier Reef is so large that astronauts can see it from space. However, the reef is in danger because warmer ocean temperatures and pollution are causing the coral to die. Scientists and volunteers are working hard to protect this amazing natural wonder. Write a summary of this passage.

Answer Key — Summarizing Fiction and Nonfiction

For the teacher / parent. Do not distribute with the worksheet.

1. Maya found a cold, wet kitten in her backyard and took care of it by drying it off and giving it milk until it fell asleep. *(The summary identifies the main character (Maya), the main event (finding and caring for a kitten), and the outcome (kitten fell asleep).)*
2. Butterflies go through four life stages: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and finally butterfly with wings. *(The summary states the main idea (four stages) and lists each stage in order.)*
3. Tommy was nervous on his first day at a new school, but a friendly student named Carlos helped him feel welcome by showing him around and introducing him to others. *(The summary captures the problem (Tommy's nervousness), the solution (Carlos helping), and the outcome (Tommy feeling better).)*
4. Ancient Egyptians built pyramids as tombs for pharaohs using thousands of workers who moved heavy stone blocks with sleds and ramps, and these pyramids still stand today. *(The summary includes the purpose (tombs), the method (workers, stone blocks, sleds and ramps), and the lasting result.)*
5. Lily baked chocolate chip cookies by herself as a birthday surprise for her grandmother, and her grandmother was very happy when she received them. *(The summary identifies the goal (surprise grandmother), the action (baking cookies), and the result (grandmother happy).)*
6. Honeybees are important because they carry pollen between flowers which helps plants make seeds and fruit, including many foods people eat, and they also make honey. *(The summary states why bees are important (pollination), gives examples (foods), and mentions honey production.)*
7. Marcus was the shortest basketball player on his team, but his coach recognized his speed and dribbling skills and made him point guard, which helped his team win the game with Marcus scoring the winning basket. *(The summary presents the challenge (shortest player), the solution (coach recognizing his strengths), and the successful outcome (winning the game).)*
8. Recycling helps protect the planet by reducing waste in landfills, saving energy when making new products from recycled materials, and keeping the Earth clean and healthy. *(The summary identifies the main benefit (protecting the planet) and explains the two ways this happens (reducing waste and saving energy).)*
9. Sarah and Jake found an old treehouse in the woods with a journal about bird watching from a girl who lived in their house years ago, so they fixed up the treehouse and continued

the bird watching project all summer. *(The summary captures the discovery, the connection to the past owner, and the decision to continue the project.)*

10. The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef system off Australia's coast, built over thousands of years by coral polyps, and it is home to thousands of marine species, but it is endangered by warm temperatures and pollution, so scientists are working to protect it. *(The summary includes what it is, where it is, how it formed, what lives there, the danger it faces, and efforts to protect it.)*