SUMMARY BASICS

READING STRATEGIES: FINDING THE MAIN IDEAS

Summarizing involves picking out the main ideas from a reading, and explaining those ideas in a condensed (shorter) format, in a neutral (non-opinionated) fashion, and in your own words (not the author’s). This both helps you understand what you have read and demonstrates your understanding. Before you try writing a summary, work through these online activities to brush up on some important reading skills.

➢ Go to http://www.tv411.org/reading/ (or Google “TV 411 Reading”) and select “Summarizing.” This lesson includes a brief slideshow and 3 activities.

➢ Activity 1: Make a Long Story Short: Answer the 8 questions online & the 2 below.

   ▪ “A summary is a ____________ retelling of a story or article.”

   ▪ On question 8 of 8, the correct choice is...

      ○ Unsuspecting consumers

      ○ Protection from scams

      ○ Too good to be true

      ○ Being uncomfortable

➢ Activity 2: The Main Idea vs. The Detail: Answer the 3 questions online & the 2 below.

   ▪ “Summaries can be one sentence or one paragraph long. The most effective ones quickly get to the ________________ of the matter by focusing on the main ideas and leaving out unnecessary details. Summarizing what you read can help you remember the ________________ points.”

   ▪ True or False: The fact that the boy in the story lives in the South, but supports the North is a main idea.

➢ Activity 3: Categories: Main Idea: Answer the 3 questions online & the 2 below.

   ▪ “Several details often fit in one ____________________________.”

   ▪ See feedback: “Knowing how details are ____________________________ helps you summarize. Instead of ____________________________ every detail, just write the name of the category.” For instance, on question 3, the category for “murder, robbery, mugging” is ____________________________.

Continued on the next page...
Writing a Summary Paragraph

Now summarize a movie or TV show you saw recently. See if you can do it in one hundred words or less. It's not as easy as you might think!

Attach your summary to this sheet and review with a WRC tutor or instructor. Record the feedback below:

- Does the topic sentence clearly & smoothly introduce the show or movie being summarized?

- Does the paragraph give enough information to be clear while avoiding unnecessary detail?

- Does the paragraph remain neutral, avoiding personal opinion?

- Is the paragraph well-organized?

Stop

Attach a confirmation sheet or get an instructor on duty/WRC tutor signature below: