



Reading and summarizing

When you read, it's up to you to decide what information is the most important. One way you can do this is by writing a **summary** of what a text says.



A **summary** is a shorter version of a text that only includes the main ideas.

Summarizing is when you re-write the most important information from something you read in your own words.



How to summarize

There are lots of different strategies for writing a summary. Here's one strategy you can try:

1. Preview the text before you read. Ask yourself what you think the text is about, and what information you should look for. Identify any keywords to look for while you read.
2. Read the text from beginning to end. Read at a pace that works for you. It's ok to read slowly.
3. Re-read the text. This time, take notes. Highlight, or underline anything you think is important.
4. Re-read your notes. Look at the parts you highlighted or underlined. Ask yourself what the most important information is.
5. Write down the most important information in your own words. You can use full sentences, or bullet points.
6. Check your summary. Ask yourself if you've missed anything important. Did you include extra information you don't need? Make any changes you want.



Let's practice

Imagine you're a customer service representative at a phone company. One of your jobs is to read and summarize customer emails, and give the summary to your boss. Your boss uses the summaries to decide whether or not to follow up with the customer. Follow the steps below:

- read each email in the chart
- use the steps above to summarize each email in 1 or 2 sentences

Customer email

From: Jamal

I just wanted to write to tell you about a great experience I had with one of your representatives. I called in early last week to talk to someone about an issue I was having. Basically, I couldn't figure out how to transfer my contact list from my old phone into my new phone. I spoke with Julianne, and he walked me through it step by step. He was so kind, and so patient with me. He really turned a frustrating experience into a positive one. Please make sure to pass my thanks on to him.

Your summary

Jamal is satisfied that Julianne helped him transfer his contacts into his new phone. He would like us to thank him for his help

Customer email

From: Mario

I'm writing to share an idea that I had with you. One thing that frustrates me about the service that I get from your company is that it's very difficult to get in touch with you. Yesterday, I was dealing with my bank, and realized that they have a live chat that customers can use. I decided to try it out, and it was amazing. I was able to get in touch with someone right away, and they helped me fix my problem within 5 minutes. It was so much nicer than having to call, and dealing with being on hold. I strongly recommend adding an online chat to your website!

Your summary

Customer email

From: Aparna

I'm becoming really frustrated with something that keeps happening to me... Every time that I get my bill each month, it says that I have gone over on my data usage, and that I need to pay extra. But I don't see how this is possible, because I don't even have my data turned on! I'm always on Wi-Fi when I'm at work and at home, and only use data when I absolutely need to. But there's no way that I'm going over my monthly limit! I've been trying to call you guys to talk about this, but I keep getting put on hold for hours at a time. I need to speak with someone who can fix this issue.

Your summary

Customer email

From: Svetlana

I'm emailing because I need to cancel my plan with you. I'm disappointed to have to cancel, because I've always felt that you provide great customer service. In fact, I've been a loyal customer for many years! Unfortunately, I just took a new job in another country, and I will need to find a new phone company there. Please help me connect with someone who can take care of this for me.

Your summary

Customer email

From: Yamuna

I'm writing to tell you about a problem with my phone. There seems to be an issue with the battery. Since the first day I had it, it would only last for about 4 hours before it died. I expect a new phone's battery to last for at least 12 hours. This is very frustrating for me, as I am out of the office at my job for 10 hours each day, and can't charge it while I'm working. I need a phone that will last me through my work day. Is it possible to receive a new battery for the phone?

Your summary
