

2021 N LEVEL ENGLISH SUBJECT-BASED STRATEGIES

How to *plan* better for Summary

The summary question is actually a comprehension question that requires you to pick out important points from the passage (take note of which paragraphs the question wants you to take the information from!), and to phrase the answer in your own words, within an 80-word limit.

How do you plan?

Step 1: Analyse the Question

Read the question and underline (or highlight, if you wish) the keywords and phrases in it. The question may require you to summarise one or two points in the paragraph. Make sure you *cover all the required components* in your summary.

e.g.

Write a summary of (*topic 1*) the attractions that Sentosa has to offer tourists

Write a summary of the (*topic 1*) advantages and (*topic 2*) disadvantages of ordering your food via food delivery service.

Step 2: Search for the Main Points

1. Mark out *the relevant parts of the text* – Use a marker just before and just after this section to *ensure that you do not select any points from irrelevant parts* of the text.
2. Read the relevant section of the text, and as you read it, underline (or highlight. Or box up. *Just be neat!*) each main point you find, then immediately rephrase it (either on the text itself, or on any empty spaces, in note form, in your own words).
3. *A standard text would have more than 8 points.* On average, you will be able to find 10 points available to use for every summary question. *Use them all, if possible.* It is better to write more points (you will not get penalised for using extra content points) than exactly 8 points (you may be wrong with one, two, or more, points).

Include only the main points in your answer. Leave out the following*:
Details, Examples/Illustrations, Elaborations, Repetitions, Quotations

Always rephrase points and do NOT plagiarise. Rephrase verbs and adjectives using synonyms and antonyms.

**But*, if the question *specifically* asks you to summarise details and/or examples, then you will have to decide which details or examples qualify as main points.

Step 3: Ways to Rephrase and Organise Points

1. It is important to rephrase the text language as much as possible and note that the summary is free from lifting except for phrases from the text which are difficult to substitute.
2. To ensure the language is effectively re-phrased, you can highlight the key words/phrases such as verbs, adjectives, adverbs. Words/phrases such as nouns or noun phrases may be hard to paraphrase.
3. After re-phrasing, read through the summary again and consider the order of the points this time round. Ensure that there is coherence (i.e. flow) throughout. There should also be a quick check for grammar and spelling errors.