

**This handout should be used in conjunction with the “Summary” audio podcast.**

If you have not listened to and completed the “Outline,” “Topic and main idea” and “Supporting details” podcasts, you may want to start with those.

## Summary

A summary is a brief paraphrased restatement of the most important points of a passage.

### Summary Tips:

1. A summary restates the most important points of a passage; main idea and major details.
2. Summaries state the information in a clear and brief manner.
3. The main idea is often stated first. This makes the information clearer.
4. Oftentimes, minor details should not be included in a summary because the minor details are not essential to the passage. Minor details are there to help the reader understand the major details of the passage.
5. Summaries are written in paragraph form using complete sentences.
6. Summaries take the most important ideas and paraphrase them. (Paraphrasing is putting the ideas in your own words.)
7. Summaries usually do not include quotations.
8. Use what you know about main ideas, major details and minor details to work for you.
9. Summaries are often easiest to write using an outline. This provides the main idea and major details, which need to be included, but it also causes the writer to paraphrase more easily because the author’s words are not directly in front of them.

### Example:

These days it seems everyone is going green. Recycling stations, reusable tote bags and solar panels are common sights in our everyday lives. One of the ultimate ways of helping the environment is the hybrid car. Hybrids are able to do this by working smarter. These cars use electric motors in conjunction with combustion engines. This reduces the amount of gas and oil used, and also lowers emissions. Hybrids also “think smarter” by deciding which engine should be used and when to store energy in the car’s battery. Finally, the motor acts as a generator and produces its own electricity. Going green couldn’t be easier.

Your answers do not need to be word-for-word the answers below. However, your main idea must include the topic and be completely supported by the major details.

Summary: Working off the outline provides the most important information, helps to ensure accuracy and also causes the writer to use his or her own words.

Outline:

Hybrids help environment

Hybrid cars help the environment by working smarter.

- Electric motor and combustion engine
  - Less gas, oil and emissions
- Decides which engine to use
- Stores energy in battery
- Motor produces own electricity
  - Acts as generator

Summary: Hybrid cars help the environment by working smarter. The car uses both an electric motor and a combustion engine. The result is less gas and oil being used and fewer emissions. Hybrid cars “decide” which engine to use. They are also able to store energy in the battery and produce their own electricity because the motor acts as a generator.

## Practice

These practice examples are discussed in order on the podcast. Try them on your own before listening.

1. When experts discuss conversation, they divide the process into stages. The first step is the opening or greeting that starts the conversation. A message such as “Hello, this is Joe” establishes a connection between two people. Openings can also be a nonverbal gesture such as a smile or kiss. At the second step, you usually provide some kind of feedforward. This step gives the other person a general idea about the topic of conversation. “I’m really depressed and need to talk” is an example of feedforward that also sets the tone of the conversation. The third step is the “business,” the focus of the conversation. All conversations are goal directed. That is, you converse to fulfill one of several general purposes: to learn, influence, play, or help. This is the longest part of the conversation. The fourth step is feedback, the reverse of the second step. Here you signal that the business is completed: “so you want to send Jack a get-well card?” Of course the other person may not agree that the business has been completed and may counter with “but what hospital is he in?” When this happens, you normally go back a step and complete the business. The final and fifth step is the closing, the goodbye, which often reveals how satisfied the persons were with the conversation: “I hope you’ll call soon” or “Don’t call us, we’ll call you.” When closings are vague, conversation becomes awkward; you’re not sure if you should say goodbye or if you should wait for something else to be said.
2. Can’t remember the information you just studied? Try rebooting your computer, your brain that is. In a study by Matthew Walker, 39 adults were asked to complete a memory exercise. Half of the adults were then allowed to take a nap and the other half did not. Both groups completed another memory exercise later in the day. Those who did not nap did 10% worse than those who did. Sleep is not the only factor that can affect your memory. Dehydration may make it difficult to remember the answers to your test too. While you may recognize you are thirsty, do you realize this means your entire body is lacking water, including your brain? Our bodies are made up of 60% water, but our brains are made up of 75% water. Without the needed water, our brains have more trouble with our short term memories. Another way to improve short term memory is to practice. Just like your muscles improve with exercise, so does your brain. Activate your brain’s neurons throughout the day by remembering your grocery list

without writing it down, complete everyday activities with your non-dominant hand and complete puzzles when you have some down time. If you can remember these simple steps, you may be able to improve your test scores.

## Answers:

Remember, your answers do not need to be word-for-word the answers below. However, your main idea must include the topic and be completely supported by the major details.

### 1. Outline:

#### Stages of conversation

The process of conversation can be broken into several stages.

- Opening or greeting
- Feedforward – idea of topic
- “Business” – goal of conversation
  - Learn, influence, play or help
- Feedback – conversation concluded
- Closing - goodbye

Summary: The process of conversation can be broken into several stages. The first stage is the opening or greeting. The next stage is called the feedforward which provides the idea of the topic of the conversation. Next is the “business,” or goal of the conversation. The goal may be to influence, play or help. Feedback is the stage when the conversation is concluded. Finally, you say goodbye, called the closing stage.

### 2. Outline:

#### Short term memory

Short term memory can be improved with a few simple steps.

- Sleep – resets your brain
- Water – helps brain to work correctly
- Practice – exercise for the brain

Summary: Short term memory can be improved with a few simple steps. You can reset your brain by taking a brief nap. Keeping hydrated helps the brain to work correctly. By doing different activities to practice your short term memory, you can improve your brain’s ability to remember information.

Another summary example: Short term memory can be improved by taking naps, keeping hydrated and practicing using your short term memory.