

24

Summaries of Long Documents







IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- Summarize articles, reports, and other longer documents.
- Write a thesis statement for a summary.
- Identify and describe key points for summaries.
- Develop useful executive summaries.



CAREER PATHWAYS

Using *Summaries* in Writing for Your Career

Career Path	Sample Career	Use for Summary Writing	Example of Summary Writing
 <p>Communication and the Arts</p>	Manager of communications	Highlighting a nonprofit organization's track record in a summary of its annual report	In short, the Community Development Council has championed seven construction projects, created 165 new jobs, and invigorated an impoverished neighborhood. The lives of individuals and the community will be enhanced by the Council's efforts.
 <p>Health and Medicine</p>	Nurse	Summarizing a physician's orders	Dr. Forman's orders for a change to a healthier lifestyle include several points. Begin a high fiber/low fat diet, develop and follow an exercise regimen, quit smoking, and make another appointment to see Dr. Forman in six months.
 <p>Human, Personal, and Public Service</p>	Career counselor	Summarizing a magazine article	In her article, Juanita Gomez discusses three styles of professional resumes— chronological, functional, and combined. She compares the three styles and explains how job seekers should decide which style is right for them.
 <p>Business and Marketing</p>	Paralegal	Summarizing a witness's testimony	During her two-hour deposition, Ms. Shapp testified that she was in her home on the night of May 14 and that she did not hear any sounds coming from the apartment next door. Upon further questioning, she indicated that she had spoken to the defendant on the phone at about 7 p.m. on May 14.
 <p>Science and Technology</p>	Software manager	Condensing a client's lengthy letter about a computer problem	Dennis Santangelo is unable to connect to the network and the Internet about 50 percent of the time. According to his complaint, his computer is slower now than before. Also, Mr. Santangelo is receiving numerous "low systems resources" messages, but we cannot figure out why.
 <p>Environment and Natural Resources</p>	City planner	Summarizing permit parking rules in a letter to a neighbors' group	Without going into all of the details of the zoning laws, the new parking rules work this way: Residents will pay a \$20 annual fee for unlimited parking on the 200 block of Upland Road. Nonresidents will be limited to two-hour parking and subjected to \$10 fines for violating the limit.

Retaining the Knowledge

As an assistant in the human resources department at the Hoeber Department Store, Norma Weiser is responsible for editing the monthly newsletter. The newsletter is designed to boost employee morale, reinforce the corporate mission, and keep employees up to date on management trends. Employees look forward to receiving the newsletter, and Norma is dedicated to providing interesting and important articles.

Norma subscribes to several management magazines. Each month she reads the magazines, identifies articles she thinks will be of interest to Hoeber employees, and summarizes three or four of them for her readers.

Below is Norma's summary of a three-page article she read. The article featured several ways to ensure that employees who leave an organization don't take their knowledge with them until they have passed it on to other employees.

HR should get more involved in knowledge retention, according to the article "Retaining the Knowledge" by experts from the Institute for Strategic Change. This think tank of economists, management consultants, and business leaders suggests that companies follow three steps to retain knowledge within the company. First, locate where the knowledge is kept—perhaps it is stored in the heads of a few key employees. Start a system for tracking the person who has the most critical knowledge. Second, pass down the knowledge. One step you can take is to begin a mentoring program where long-time employees share their knowledge with new hires. Also, you can follow up by training everyone who should have access to the knowledge. Keeping retirees around is also important. For example, offer consulting opportunities, part-time employment, and mentoring opportunities.

Employees leave companies for many reasons, but their departure should not cripple an organization. If the company is vulnerable to surprise departures, start a knowledge retention program now. Months—sometimes years—of training are needed to replace knowledgeable employees who leave without passing on their knowledge to their replacements.

Norma condensed a long magazine article into the summary above. Do you understand the point of the longer article? Is the writing clear? Did Norma give credit for the ideas to the appropriate source? In this chapter, you will learn how to summarize long pieces of writing into shorter ones by reducing complex information into easy-to-understand main points.

Understanding Summaries

A **summary** is a condensed version of a chapter, an article, a speech, or another piece of writing. While, by definition, a summary is shorter than the original work, it is not simply a pared-down version. Instead, it is a discussion *in your own words* of the key points of the original work. In the summary, you should maintain the integrity of the original document by making sure you do not distort the views, ideas, or attitudes contained in the original.

An effective summary includes these elements.

- The author, title, and source of the original work
- A thesis statement that says what will be summarized
- A brief description of the original work
- Key points that sum up the original work
- Final recommendations, opinions, conclusions, or recommendations

Can you see how Norma's summary in *On the Job* follows this model? Compare them below to the numbered examples.

1. Thesis statement

Because too much information leaves the company when employees quit, retire, or are fired, Human Resources should get more involved in knowledge retention.

2. Description of the longer text

The Institute for Strategic Change published a list of recommendations to help companies retain the knowledge that employees have in their heads.

Key points

3. Track what employees know about the key business operations.
4. Start mentoring programs, conduct exit interviews, and develop other methods of learning what people know.
5. Keep retirees on by hiring them for part-time work or as consultants.

Final recommendation

6. If too much company knowledge is concentrated in the heads of just a few employees, you could be in trouble if those key employees leave. That is why you should start a knowledge retention plan as soon as possible.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

24

When I need to summarize long writing into a shorter document, I can:

	Usually	Sometimes	Never
State the main point of the original material.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tell the point in my own words, not just excerpt the original.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eliminate unnecessary details to help condense the writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stay on track and not get diverted by themes that diverge from the main point.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make recommendations or draw conclusions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked “Sometimes” or “Never” for any of the items, this chapter will help you improve your summary writing techniques. Even if you checked “Usually” in every instance, you will learn more about writing effective summaries and helpful instructions.

The Thesis Statement

As you learned in Chapters 4 and 14, a thesis statement should state one main point. The thesis statement should be focused enough that the rest of the writing can support, prove, or develop that point.

The thesis statement of a summary should tell the reader what will be summarized. That may sound obvious, but remember that an article or a report may make many points, some being more important than others. For a summary, the thesis statement should identify, in just one or two sentences, what the overall longer document is about. Look at the thesis statements below and compare the “good” statement with the other two.



(A) Too Generalized

An article said that HR should get more involved in knowledge retention.

(B) Too Specific

HR should start a mentoring program, a plan for keeping retirees around, and a formal system for tracking knowledge.

(C) Good

HR should get more involved in knowledge retention, according to the Institute for Strategic Change.

Example (C) is the best of the three alternatives because it references the original material (the article), it states one main point, and it tells the reader what will be summarized. Example (C) suggests what will come next: Readers can expect to learn more about what human resource departments should do to protect their companies when key employees leave the firm.

did you ever?



- Read a review of a movie in a newspaper or magazine or on the Internet to help you decide whether to see the movie?
- Write a book report that condensed a novel into two or three pages containing a description of the story’s main characters, key points, plot, and relevant themes?
- Describe in a two- or three-minute condensed version an hour-long speech you attended?

All of these situations involve summarizing, a technique that can help you write clear and concise condensations. With a little practice, you will be able to write informative summaries that others find helpful.

ACTIVITY 24.1

For each of the following subjects, write a concise thesis statement that will introduce key points to be used in a summary of the topic. The first item has been completed for you.

- 1. my favorite movie

In *The Music Man*, Professor Harold Hill, a con man, teaches himself and all of River City, Iowa, a lesson in humanity.

- 2. the dress code at my school

- 3. the vacation policy at my job

- 4. the last chapter I read in this book

- 5. a recent episode of my favorite television show

- 6. a book I read recently

WRITING WORKSHOP

Eliminating Examples, Details, and Quotes

In summarizing, knowing what to eliminate is as important as knowing what to include. Here is a paragraph and its one-sentence summary from a business article.

Paragraph

A married couple sold their small business to a third party. Both stayed on—he as vice president, she as bookkeeper. They were instructed by the new owner to pay bills only as the owner directed. When the couple realized that taxes weren't being paid, they notified the IRS. The new owner fired them.

Summary

A businessman fired two employees who formerly owned the business because they reported him to the IRS.

The summary omitted the employees' marital status and titles and the events leading up to the discovery. Here is the next paragraph and summary sentence.

Paragraph

The IRS went after all three. The couple paid its share of the assessment, then went to court for a refund. The court ruled that the couple had been responsible for ensuring that taxes were paid—even though the new owner had instructed them not to pay. However, since the couple hadn't willfully failed to pay the taxes, they showed a good-faith effort. The judge ruled, "You are due a refund because you did all you could to ensure that the taxes were paid."

Summary

In the end, the judge made the business owner pay the taxes and said the former owners were not liable.

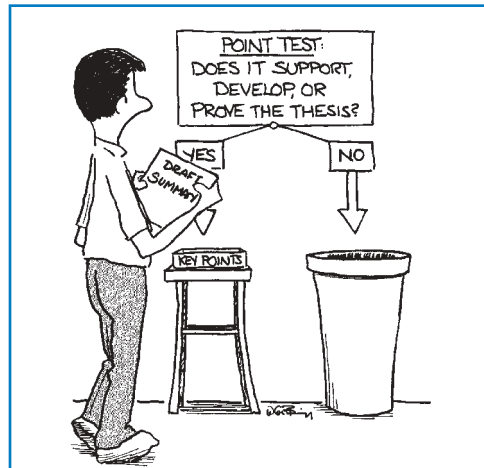
Here the summary sentence eliminates details about the IRS and what the judge said. Put the two sentences together to determine whether they tell the essentials of the article.

Including the Key Points

How do you know which points to include and which points to exclude in your summaries? The first step is to read and then reread the original material or your own notes about the original material. When you fully understand the original's meaning, you should have no trouble distinguishing the relevant points from the less relevant points.

Each point should support, develop, or prove the thesis statement. If a point does not contribute to the main idea, it should be cut from the summary. An irrelevant point can take the reader off in an unwanted direction, causing distraction and confusion.

A student's thesis statement and key points written summarizing a business course are given below. Do you see anything wrong with the student's key points?



If the point isn't a key point, delete it.



Thesis Statement

Professor Katin's lectures cover three of the most important elements of management: communication, commitment, and character.

Key Points

(A) Writing, speaking, and listening are the three most essential communication skills for a manager.

(B) Managers who are committed to their profession, ethical in their conduct, and hard-working are positive role models for employees.

(C) Managers who are of good character are often better parents and attend more school activities with their children.

Example (C) does not develop the thesis statement. The thesis statement says that character is an important part of management, not parenting. In other words, Example (C) is off the topic. In Examples (A) and (B), the key points state why communication and commitment are important. They support the thesis statement, and they describe the course. Therefore, they should go into the summary.

Taking Notes for Summaries

Identifying key points in an article, a report, or another work can be a challenge. Therefore, finding a systematic way of taking notes is extremely important. Try this simple rule-of-thumb method.

- When condensing a business document, write one sentence per paragraph that sums up the paragraph.
- When condensing a book, write one sentence per chapter.
- When summarizing a movie or a lecture, write one sentence for every three to five minutes of material.

After you read the sentences together, you should see a summary begin to form. Some sentences may need to be rearranged, eliminated, or rewritten, but with additional organization of the sentences, you will have the summary you need.

The organizational pattern you use for your summary will depend on the type of article, report, or other work you are summarizing. Three patterns for organizing a summary are: chronological, order of importance, and topical. Here are examples of when each organizational pattern might be used.

Chronological

Notes for a summary of a book on the Civil War would likely be organized chronologically, according to the years battles were fought or other events occurred.

Order of Importance

A report about the challenges a company will face in the future might be summarized according to the importance of the challenges. Raising cash to keep technology current might come first, followed by locating outstanding job applicants and purchasing a new building for the manufacturing division.

Topical

A government report of a major health scare, such as “Mad Cow Disease,” might be summarized according to topics: discovery of the problem, health risks to cows and to humans, and methods of stopping the disease.

Paragraphs from an article on how to cut prescription drug costs are shown on the next page. A student assigned to summarize the article wrote one sentence per paragraph as a start for the summary. The student’s sentences are in blue. When you read the sentences in blue, you should see a summary of the essay begin to form. The next step is to arrange the key points—in blue—into an organized summary.

Prescription Drug Costs in the United States

In *Human Resources Update*, the newsletter of the Barnum Company, Irv Ragen and Shamith Hampler wrote on one of the most important issues facing employers and employees today: rising health care costs.

Irv Ragen and Shamith Hampler wrote about rising health care costs in Barnum Company's monthly newsletter.

Prescription drugs are the country's number one health care expense. However, there is good news: You can show employees easy methods of reducing prescription drug costs. When you say, "Sorry, but you're going to have to pay more this year," you also should add, "But here's how you can offset the additional costs—and probably save some money!"

Health care costs are going up every year, but companies can teach employees how to save money on prescription drugs.



Employers expect health care spending to soar 15 percent next year. But the maximum additional costs that firms say they can handle is only 10 percent. The resulting gap will more than triple the average worker's health care costs over the next five years—that is, if cost shifting alone continues to be the employers' primary means of cost containment. The two strategies given below can help employees cut costs. So get the word out during meetings and new employee orientations and in memos, on bulletin boards, and via e-mail.

Two strategies for reducing costs are available.

Pick up the phone. We called four drug stores within a three-mile radius and asked the cost of a prescription for Vicodin®, regular strength, 30 pills. Interestingly, the prices ranged from \$23 to \$35—a difference of about 30 percent. It took less than ten minutes to call four pharmacies. Encourage employees to compare prices and to go with the best deal.

Price shop: Different pharmacies charge different prices for the same medicine.

Split pills. Many prescription drugs are available in bigger doses for less money. Lipitor® is the same price for all strengths. A patient can save up to \$100 a month by purchasing a larger strength and cutting the pill in half.

Patients can save up to \$100 a month by buying pills in bigger doses and splitting them.

Now read the student's summary, organized according to paragraph topics.

Summary of the article "Prescription Drug Costs in the United States"

In the company newsletter, Irv Ragen and Shamith Hampler wrote about rising health care costs. Employers may not be able to control rising health care costs, but they can tell employees how to save money on prescription drugs. Price shopping and pill splitting are two ways employees can reduce the cost of prescription drugs. Employers should share these strategies with employees.

ACTIVITY 24.2

After each paragraph below, which is excerpted from “Glimpses of Great Masters at Home—Beethoven,” by Arthur S. Garbett, write—in your own words—one sentence that summarizes the entire paragraph.



1. Beethoven suffered a three-fold loneliness: he was unmarried; he was deaf; he was a genius. The first deprived him of the loving sympathy he so much needed; the second, of social intercourse and of the music that was the breath of his life; and the third set him apart from all mankind. Beethoven had many friends. They were kind to him, helped him when he was troubled, and provided him with financial assistance. Beethoven felt the lack of a real companion keenly; he needed someone to play David to his Jonathan. “I have no real friend,” he wrote to Bettina Brentano. “I must live alone. But I know that God is nearer to me than to many in my art, and I commune with Him fearlessly.”

2. To speak of the “home life” of this lonely, homeless genius seems strange. Save when he visited such friends as Count Licknowsky or Prince Lobkowitz, save for his brief glint of home life with the Breunings in Bonn, after his mother died, his whole life was spent in Vienna, in one dreary attic after another. Occasionally the monotony was broken by a visit to the country in search of health; but mostly he wandered from one lodging to another; and, from the many descriptions given by those who visited him, one gathers always the same impression of bare walls, scanty furniture, scattered papers, a piano or two and a few other musical instruments, clothes lying where they fell and a general atmosphere of indifference to material things.

3. Before deafness interfered, he was sociably included; and his genius as a pianist made him welcome in princely houses, where otherwise his bluff speech and open rudeness might have denied him admittance. As silence closed about him, however, he locked his doors to all save his intimates, and even to them at times. Schindler, Ries, Moscheles, Carl Czerny, Lobkowitz, Rasoumowsky, and other persistent friends, however, kept in touch with him constantly, and were wise enough to regard his outbursts of passionate irritability as merely pathological symptoms, the consequence of a mighty spirit forced to take shelter in a frail, inadequate body. In return they were privileged to watch the unfolding of his ever-growing genius.

ETHICS CONNECTION

Say It *Your* Way

When condensing long documents, it is important to summarize in your own words. At the same time, a summary should reflect the original author's intent, not your personal opinions. A summary is a condensed version, not an editorial analysis.

Some writers use word processing applications to cut an excerpt from one source (often on the Internet) and paste it into their own work. Excerpting is acceptable when the source of the excerpt is identified, but keep in mind that excerpting is not summarizing.

Sometimes writers excerpt from the original material, change a few words, swap a pronoun or two, and call it their own. That is not summarizing either; it is plagiarizing. Plagiarism is unethical. In business and publishing, plagiarizing may result in civil penalties and other court judgments (not to mention professional disgrace).

Transitions

In summaries, transitional words, phrases, and sentences help guide the reader from one key point to the next. Below is a summary of the article about saving money on prescription medicines. It appears two ways: Example (A) has no transitions; Example (B) has three transition.

Example A

Health care costs are on the rise, but people can save money on prescription drugs. Price shopping and pill splitting are two ways to save money when purchasing prescription drugs. Employers should communicate these strategies to employees.



Example B

Health care costs are on the rise, but people can save money on prescription drugs. *For example*, price shopping and pill splitting are two ways to save money when purchasing prescription drugs. *Many employees are getting hit with higher premiums. Therefore*, employers should communicate these strategies to employees.

Do you see how the transitional word, phrase, and sentence help the summary flow by giving direction to the reader? Remember, summaries should be concise. Therefore, you don't want to overuse transitions. You should, however, include a few transitional words that make the reading easier by moving the reader from point to point.

WRITING WORKSHOP

Executive Summaries

Business reports and proposals often begin with an executive summary—a one-page (or less) summary of the document. An executive summary allows busy senior managers to digest the meaning of a report or proposal in minutes without having to read the entire document. In most summaries, a writer condenses another writer's longer work. In an executive summary, however, it is your own writing that you condense. Although the executive summary appears at the top of the report or proposal, it should be written last. Here is an example of an executive summary for a report about a computer-based training system.

The Kelly System is the latest in computer-based training. Proponents of the system claim it can be used to train customer service representatives faster and more thoroughly than ever before. This report will focus on its implementation at Parker Products, Inc. Included in this report are before-and-after test scores, testimonials by students and instructors, technical specifications, and prices for the software.

ACTIVITY 24.3

Below is a summary of an investor's meeting held at a Florida retreat. The summary lacks transitional words, phrases, or sentences, and the key points read like a list. Rewrite the summary to direct the reader from one event to the next.



The investor's meeting last week consisted of six guest speakers and several seminars about technology. Troy Raheem talked first. His presentation was about next year's marketing initiatives, which should cost less than last year's while reaching more people. Drew Black talked after that. His presentation was about next year's enhanced distribution model, which will enable the company to surpass its competitors in fast delivery. Dorothy DeMeo talked last. Her presentation was about how a new category management system will enable the company to process three times the amount of orders in half the time. She says we will have fewer errors. Rachel Trueblood talked about next year's financial picture, which looks rosy. Everyone liked hearing what she had to say because finances will affect the overall success of our company.

TECHNOLOGY CONNECTION

Keeping E-mail Summaries “Above the Fold”

In the world of business, people are frequently asked to summarize a meeting, a conference, or another event in an e-mail. Here is a simple guideline for writing a summary in an e-mail or on a web page: Write it so the reader does not need to scroll down to read what you wrote. Instead, try to make your summary fit into the space that is within view when the reader is looking at the computer monitor.

“Above the fold” is an expression that comes from the newspaper industry. Long ago, editors discovered that the stories included on the top half of the page—the stories above where the newspaper was folded in half—were the stories that attracted the most readers. More recently, computer usability experts realized that the same holds true for e-mail and for web site users. Research shows that most online readers pay closer attention to the content that appears at the top of the e-mail—“above the fold”—than to the content “below the fold.” Sometimes readers simply stop reading when they get to the bottom of the screen.

Over the years, numerous usability studies have shown that online readers simply prefer not to scroll down. Therefore, when you summarize something in an e-mail, try to keep your summary—or at least its most important points—“above the fold.”

Of course, differences in the size of monitors, e-mail programs, and computer settings (not to mention varying lengths of original material) mean that this guideline is not an exact science. But it should help you determine a reasonable length for your e-mail and web page summaries.

SUMMARY FOR WRITING SUMMARIES

- ❑ A summary is a condensation of a chapter, an article, or another work.
- ❑ Summaries are written in the summary writer’s own words but express the original writer’s intent.
- ❑ A key point is a relevant part of the original material.
- ❑ In a summary, the thesis statement says what will be summarized.
- ❑ A summary writer eliminates unnecessary examples and details in favor of the original’s key points.
- ❑ In summaries, transitional words, phrases, and sentences help direct the reader from key point to key point.

PRACTICING YOUR SKILLS

Now that you understand the elements of a good summary, put your knowledge to work in the following activities.

PRACTICE 1

Read this report about services from the president of an industrial janitorial service to the board of directors. Then follow the instructions at the end.



The Special Services Division (SSD) at Home Methods Associates (HMA) is staffed with expert technicians who work all day, every day, with our clients' most troublesome floors, walls, carpets, and windows. Unlike other janitorial contractors who only occasionally perform specialized work, our SSD personnel clean and polish building materials every day that others may try to tackle only once or twice a year. What's more, those small contractors can't respond with the speed or range of services that we can. With HMA as a service contractor, our clients can feel confident that every part of their building will receive the care it needs. Our Special Services Division is broken into five business groups:



Carpet Care. Our technicians are fully trained and capable of providing restorative cleaning to any type of carpeting, from broadloom to squares, from nylon to wool. We can also clean a clients delicate oriental rugs. Because carpets resoil, we strongly recommend that our clients purchase an ongoing maintenance program that provides appropriate levels of service where they are most needed. Maintenance programs are known to prolong the life and beauty of a carpeting investment and help keep the appearance of a building at a consistent level. Ongoing maintenance services are available to our clients for an annual fee.

Marble and Stone Care. HMA is one of only a few contractors in the country who is authorized by MarbleKing to provide its marble maintenance program. HMA's technicians are highly experienced in the care of expensive stones such as marble, travertine, and granite. Our company spends thousands of dollars each year in its technician training program, thus assuring clients of our company's reliability. Too often we see janitorial contractors treating these surfaces like tile, using the wrong products and methods. Stones are very different from man-made materials, and they have their own unique requirements. Proper care of these surfaces requires an understanding of how stones react to cleaning agents and when and if to apply coatings to the stones. Our methods include diamond honing and polishing, recrystallization, surface impregnation, and—when appropriate—surface sealing. Often, we can restore a stone to its original beauty and will recommend the proper maintenance to avoid costly future restorations.

Metal Maintenance. Extensive work in the city has made us familiar with the vast array of architectural metal surfaces in our clients' buildings. Our technicians clean, restore, and coat a full range of metals, including aluminum, brass, bronze, and stainless steel. They can remove scratches and years of oxidation from the metal, polish it to look like new, and apply a protective coating that will make any building's metal look as beautiful as when it was first installed. No other janitorial contractor in this market has the capability to provide this service with its own in-house technicians. Furthermore, no other metal maintenance contractor can begin to provide the range of services that we offer.

Specialty Cleaning. Our SSD technicians are called on frequently to perform a wide variety of services that include stripping and refinishing vinyl tile; construction cleanup; pressure washing; and cleaning of ceiling tiles, window blinds, and light fixtures. We welcome the challenge of cleaning unusual finishes and investigate carefully to determine the most appropriate cleaning methods for imported or unique finishes that require special care. If something needs cleaning, we've got the experience to do it! From floor to ceiling, our staff has tackled every kind of job you can imagine. Our technicians are professionals, working quickly to the customer's complete satisfaction.

Disaster Preparedness and Recovery. All too often, pipes break, sprinkler heads go off, roofs leak, or plumbing systems go awry. A building manager's worst nightmare, a fire, may leave his or her tenants in a frustrating and vulnerable position! As soon as we receive a call over our toll-free telephone line, we respond with trained professionals. Our crews can remove the water from a client's building, dry it, and get the client back in business fast! There is no other local contractor who offers this level of response and professionalism. Clients will not suffer through the anxiety of having one or two janitors desperately trying to remove thousands of gallons of potentially contaminated water with a shop vacuum. Our crews are prepared and equipped with high-capacity water-moving equipment, pumps, and an impressive array of dehumidifiers and air handlers. They will clean all affected surfaces, remove odors, and restore your building's finish to the best possible condition. Should a disaster occur, HMA will help you through this difficult time with experienced crisis management.

The Thesis Statement

1. Find the thesis statement and underline it.

The Key Points

2. Identify and circle one key point per paragraph.
3. Write one sentence to sum up each paragraph.

4. Arrange the sentences into a summary.

5. Include transitions to help the reader get from one key point to the next.

The Conclusion

- 6. Underline the original work's conclusion.
- 7. Add a conclusion to your summary. Remember, you should reach the original writer's conclusion, not your own.

PRACTICE 2

Here is an article about managing employees. After you read it, follow the instructions at the bottom of the article.



A growing number of firms are testing candidates to gauge their personality types and predict who's right for a job. If you, like many employers, are considering using personality testing on job candidates, keep in mind that experts caution that not every test is effective. They say firms should take special care to match the appropriate test to the traits they seek in employees. For example, if you are measuring attitude, make sure the test includes several questions that address items related to attitude, including traits such as cooperation and sense of responsibility. Additionally, employers should remember to use these tests alongside the interview process—not as a substitute for it.



Soon after one retailer began testing its sales associates for personality traits and placing the associates with specific accounts that would profit from these traits, the organization reported a 15.4 percent increase in sales per hour. At the same time, turnover dropped 18 percent, and the time it took to make a decision about whether to hire a specific associate was reduced from several days to just 24 hours.

If you're considering introducing this kind of testing, you will find many options available. You should work closely with your supplier to ensure that you select the right testing program for your business's needs.

The Thesis Statement

1. Find the thesis statement and underline it.

The Key Points

2. Identify and circle one key point per paragraph.
3. Write one sentence to sum up each paragraph.



APPLYING YOUR SKILLS

Now go to your data CD, Chapter 24, Summaries, and select an essay to summarize. You will work through the stages of the writing process. Save each stage of your writing so you can observe your progress.

Prewriting

First, select an essay from your data CD. Read and reread the original material until you understand it thoroughly.

Next, develop a thesis statement that sums up the essay in one or two sentences. Then identify one key point in each paragraph and develop that point into one sentence. Finally, construct a simple outline for your paragraph in a form like this:

THESIS STATEMENT _____

KEY POINT 1 _____

KEY POINT 2 _____

KEY POINT 3 _____

CONCLUSION _____

WRITING FOR YOUR CAREER

CRITICAL THINKING

Choose a writing project from one of the six career pathways and use your new skills to write a summary of the topic. When the project description refers you to a web site, go to <http://humphrey.swlearning.com> and click on the Links tab. Look for Chapter 24, “Writing for Your Career.”



Communication and the Arts

Imagine that you are applying for a job as a production assistant at a film production company. If hired, one of your responsibilities will be to read and summarize scripts that screenwriters submit to the producers. Your job will not be to recommend scripts, but to read and condense them into one-page summaries. You may have to read five or six scripts a week. Your interviewers want to test your skills: As part of the interview process, you have been asked to write a summary of the script for *The Wizard of Oz*. You will find the actual script on your Data CD. Locate the script, read it thoroughly, and write your summary. Remember, your summary comments should stick to the plot—not include your opinions about it.



Health and Medicine

You are a registered nurse at a community hospital. Lately you have observed that when physicians give patients a great deal of information about lowering cholesterol, the patients sometimes become overwhelmed and confused about how to care for themselves. You decide to visit the American Heart Association web site, read a lengthy article about avoiding heart attacks, and summarize it so patients have an overview of lifestyle changes they can consider. Go to the textbook web site and locate the instructions for Chapter 24, Health and Medicine. You will find a link to the American Heart Association’s web site, which has numerous articles about healthy living. You should select one, read it, and write a summary for your patients.



Human, Personal, and Public Service

As the manager of a local crisis center, you are compiling information for a brochure about coping with everyday stress. One section of the brochure will be directed at people who serve as caregivers to family or friends who are living with chronic illnesses. On your Data CD, you will find an article about caregiver stress from the U.S. Department of Human Services. Read and reread the article. Then summarize it in two or three short paragraphs.



Business and Marketing

You are an administrative assistant who works for the CEO of a small manufacturing company. Every Tuesday at noon, your supervisor invites a few key employees to an informational lunch meeting. At these meetings, each department head gives a presentation on his or her particular area of expertise. Your responsibility is to take notes. Today the vice president of finance talks about budgeting. For this assignment, go to your Data CD and locate the article called “What Is a Budget?” Read and reread the article and summarize it in one paragraph.



Science and Technology

You are a research assistant at a biotechnology company. Last night you read an article in a scientific journal and thought your colleagues would find it interesting. Your department hosts a weekly lunch meeting where employees are encouraged to share useful information. You decide to write a summary of the article and distribute copies to your colleagues. For this assignment, you may read any scientific article you wish on the *Popular Science* web site and summarize it in one page or less. You can find the *Popular Science* web site by visiting the textbook web site and locating the link for Chapter 24, Science and Technology.



Environment and Natural Resources

As a teaching assistant at a high school, you are helping to prepare a curriculum about the environment. Your assignment is to read what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) includes on its web site about global warming and the climate. Next, you should summarize what you read in one page or less. You will find the EPA's web site by visiting the textbook web site and locating the link for Chapter 24, Environment and Natural Resources.