

Power Lessons - Year 5

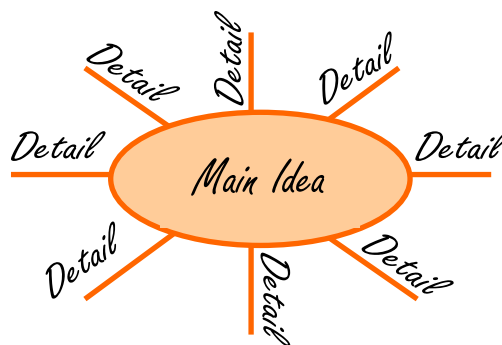
Writing a Summary: Non-Fiction

Objective: To help students use the skill of writing a summary to improve comprehension.

Materials: Any non-fiction book you have recently read to students, such as *Redback Spider* by Greg Pyers (5.5).

- Lesson:**
1. Name a topic - a recent classroom event, such as an excursion or guest speaker. Then ask a volunteer to make a summary of the event by giving the most important idea about the event and a few important details that support the most important idea. Ask, "Did [student's name] include every single thing that happened at that event? Did he/she leave out any important information?"
 2. Tell students that the volunteer just gave a *summary* of the event. Remind students that a summary states the main idea about a topic and important details. Ask, "Were all the details in this summary important? Which ones weren't?"
 3. Draw the following diagram on the board. Hold up your chosen book and ask, "What is the topic of the book? What is the main idea about the topic?" Remind students that the main idea may be stated or they may have to figure it out for themselves. Ask, "What are the important details that support the main idea?" Use students' responses to complete the diagram, drawing additional lines as needed.

Topic: _____



4. Ask, "How would you go about writing a summary of this book?" Write students' responses on the board, making sure to include the following points:
 - Identify the topic.
 - State the main idea – the most important message about the topic.
 - Look for important details, such as key vocabulary or names, dates and places.
 - List events or steps in order.
 - Keep the summary short.
 - Use your own words.

Power Lessons - Year 5

5. Have students use the information in the diagram to help you write a brief summary of the book. Review the summary against guidelines listed on the board. Ask, “Did we include all of the important details? Did we include any details that are not important?” Remind students that summaries are always short. Tell students, “If it seems like your summary is too long, check to make sure that it contains only the most important information from a book or article. You may need to delete details or combine some details to make a generalisation.

Status of the Class

Follow up: As you take the Status of the Class, ask:

- Can you tell me in a few sentences what this book (or section of the book) is about?
- What are the topic and main idea of this selection?
- What are some of the most important details?
- Which details did you choose to leave out of your summary? Why?

Added Practice: Have pairs of students think about the topic and main idea of non-fiction books they have recently read. Then have them write down the topic and some important details that support the main idea. Have partners exchange their list of details and tell what they think the main idea of each other’s book is. Ask each pair, “Did your partner come up with the same main idea that you did?” Encourage partners to discuss how the details give support to (or if opinions greatly differ, don’t support) the main idea.