

How to write a summary

We write a summary to give the main points of a text in a few sentences.

Remember!

- Only include the most important information.
- Do not include information which is not important, e.g. examples, details, direct speech.
- Use your own words and do not repeat whole phrases from the text.
- Do not give your opinion or add any extra information.

To prepare

- Read the text quickly for gist.
- Read the text again and underline the three or four most important ideas.

- Without looking at the text again, write four or five sentences about the text from memory. Try to use alternative words.
- Read the text again and check your summary. Make sure that you have (a) included all the important information, (b) not copied from the text, (c) kept to the word limit.
- If the summary is too long, cut out unnecessary detail.

Useful language

Linking (contrast): In spite of ... / Despite ... / Although ... / However, ...

Linking (adding): In addition, ... / Both ... / also / too

Linking (reason and result): This is because ... / Because ... / So ... / Therefore ...

Relative clauses: The film, **which** is about a safari, shows that ... / The statement **that** he gave in March is no longer true.

Model question

Summarize the following article in fewer than 50 words.

The Island

In recent years, we have seen significant developments in cloning. Sheep, cows, cats and, more recently, dogs have all been cloned in the name of scientific progress. One of the potential uses of **cloning** is to 'grow' replacement organs for people who are ill in human clones. It is this subject that is portrayed in **a new film** released this week in the USA called '**The Island**'.

The film features Ewan McGregor and Scarlett Johansen and it raises awareness of this highly **controversial moral issue**. However, in spite of excellent performances from both main actors and **spectacular special effects**, the film received a **disappointing reaction from American audiences**. It is possible that the subject is too difficult and that some audiences prefer their **thrillers** without the **moral dilemmas**. The film opens in the UK next week and it will be interesting to see how the British audiences react.

(1) **topic, theme**

(2) **controversial**

(3) **very good acting, very good effects**

(4) **not received well in US**

(5) **reasons for unpopularity**

Model answer

The new film 'The Island', which deals with the controversial subject of cloning people, has not been received well in the USA. Although the acting and effects are very good, some audiences may have been put off by the moral message of the film.