

How to Write a Summary of a Lecture

When people take notes, they remove most of the grammatical elements of sentences. Therefore, in order to write a summary, you only need to put the grammar back into the notes.

In your summary, use small words: prepositions (*on, in, at, of, about...*) and articles (*a, an, the, some...*).

Indicate subject, verb and object (SVO). Write a complete sentence that explains everything logically.

Sometimes the best way to explain a keyword is to just put it into common sentence types using the verbs **be** and **have**:

There is/are/was/were...

It is/was... + adjective

... have/has/had...

Examples:

In 1970, **there was** no e-mail, so communication was slower.

It was difficult to send messages and receive replies quickly.

Many companies **had** less foreign competition, so the pace of work **was** slower.

Advice for writing a summary

Notes are not grammatically correct sentences. When you make a written or spoken summary of your notes, you have to put the grammar back into your explanation. Use simple grammatical structures and simple vocabulary.

1. Use *a, an, and the*.
2. Use verbs, with changes for tense and subject agreement (singular or plural).
3. Use the *be* verb: *there is/are/was/were + a/an/the/some + NOUN, It + be + adjective*.
4. You can say a lot with simple vocabulary. Use other common verbs such as *do, have, make, put, take, hold, find, go, come...*
5. Build your sentences with the SVO (subject, verb, object) order that you learned in the first English lessons of junior high school. Keep it simple.
6. Use connecting words (conjunctions) *and, so, but, because, since, therefore, then....* Connecting words are necessary to show the logical connections between ideas, especially if you have to explain causes and effects in your summary.
7. Use the active voice and the passive voice correctly. For example, if the notes say, "held meeting," you can write, "They held a meeting," or "A meeting was held."
8. Use verbs of causation to explain the why things happen: *result, cause, lead to, make, let, allow...*
9. Start with a general introduction of the topic:
In this lecture, the teacher explains two theories about....
10. Use transitions to finish one part and introduce the next part of the lecture or text that you are summarizing. (For example: *Alright, that's enough about X. Now I want to talk about Y.*)
11. Explain concepts with examples.
 - i. **For example**, probiotic foods are foods like yogurt and kimchi that contain live bacteria.
 - ii. You should eat probiotic foods **such as** yogurt and kimchi.
12. Finish with a concluding statement.

How to use *result, cause, lead to, make, let, allow...* to explain cause and effect

These *verbs* are followed by an OBJECT NOUN and another **VERB**

The second verb is in one of these forms. You have to memorize the pattern.

- a) VERB + ing for example: **working**
- b) to + VERB for example: **to work**
- c) VERB (base form) for example: **work**

In these examples, note the form of the **second verb** (as in the a, b or c patterns above)

1. High divorce rates **resulted in** more women **becoming** the head of the household.
2. This change **caused** women **to develop** the same spending habits as men. They had to spend money on expensive items that last a long time.
3. More women have full-time jobs now, so their economic power has **led to** companies **changing** their marketing strategies.
4. They want to **make** women **feel** more comfortable.
5. Changes in the roles of men and women **made** a lot of other changes **happen** throughout society.
6. When a woman has her own job, her economic freedom **lets** her **make** more of the important decisions in her life.
7. This change also has a good effect on men. Women's freedom **allows** men **to be** free as well. They don't have to feel the traditional pressure to take care of a woman financially.

Write your own examples

X results in Y: _____

X causes Y: _____

X leads to Y: _____

X makes Y: _____

X lets Y: _____

X allows Y: _____

When you make notes about the source you want to summarize, write key words which answer these questions: who, what, where, when, why, how?

Use the answers for such questions to write your original summary of the story.

A good summary should...

1. have an introductory sentence that briefly introduces the topic and covers the content in a very general and brief way.
2. have a concluding sentence.
3. be much shorter than the original—it tells only the most important information—it doesn't include minor details.
4. include names of people, places, events, discoveries, works of art, and important statistics—if you hear a number, make a note of it.
5. not include copied sentences from the original text—paraphrase and express ideas in your own words—if you use copied sentences, put them in quotation marks.

X resulted in Y: The increase in advertising resulted in people seeing ads in new places.

X caused Y: The higher number of TV channels caused people to avoid ads.

X leads to Y: This led to companies finding new ways to advertise.

X makes Y: Product placement made people not avoid ads.

X lets Y: An athlete who wears a logo lets products appear without being noticed.

X allows Y: New technology allows companies to be more effective.