



Summary Writing

Module 2: Main Ideas v/s
Supporting Details

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Summary Writing Module 2

Main Ideas vs Supporting Details

Learning Objective

Students will distinguish between main ideas and supporting details in preparation for summary writing.

Why This Matters

One of the biggest mistakes students make in summary writing is including too many details.

A summary should focus on the BIG IDEAS.

Think of a summary as a suitcase.

You only have room for the most important items.

If you fill the suitcase with unnecessary details, there will be no room left for the important information.

Key Vocabulary

Main Idea

A main idea is the central point or important message.

It answers the question:

“What is the most important thing the reader should understand?”

Supporting Detail

A supporting detail provides examples, evidence, descriptions, or explanations.

It answers the question:

“What information helps explain the main idea?”

Example

Read the following sentence:

Not realising I'd be talking about life, love, and politics with welcoming locals, I had worried about loneliness.

What is the main idea?

- Talking about life
- Talking about politics
- Meeting friendly local people
- Feeling lonely

Answer:

- ✓ Meeting friendly local people

The topics of conversation are details.

The important idea is that cycle touring allows people to meet and interact with locals.

Practice 1: Find the Main Idea

Read each quotation.

Circle the main idea.

Example 1

Truth is, we discover that we're capable of so much more than we ever thought possible.

- A. Riding bicycles
- B. Personal growth and confidence
- C. Physical exercise
- D. Long journeys

Answer: _____

Example 2

The boredom is far outweighed by the excitement of seeing flowers and animals that you'd never notice from a car.

- A. Cars are faster
- B. Flowers are beautiful
- C. Closer connection with nature
- D. Animals live outdoors

Answer: _____

Example 3

A typical cycle tour is about the small things: the tiny villages you pass through.

- A. Villages are small
- B. Visiting places most tourists miss
- C. Roads connect villages
- D. Tourists visit cities

Answer: _____

Example 4

Other cyclists who help you along the way.

- A. Bicycles need repairs
- B. Cyclists wear helmets
- C. Support from other travellers
- D. Long-distance travel

Answer: _____

Practice 2: Main Idea or Detail?

Write:

M = Main Idea

D = Supporting Detail

Statement	M or D?
Meeting friendly local people	
Talking about life and politics	
Building confidence	
Discovering hidden strengths	
Seeing wildlife	
Seeing flowers	
Visiting unique places	
Passing through tiny villages	
Help from other cyclists	
Excitement of each day	

Practice 3: Building Umbrella Ideas

Strong summary writers combine similar details into one larger idea.

Example:

Details:

- flowers
- animals
- forests
- beaches

Main Idea:

- ✓ Enjoying nature
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Try these yourself.

Group 1

Details:

- welcoming locals
- conversations with people
- other cyclists helping

Main Idea:

Group 2

Details:

- flowers
- animals
- forests
- beaches

Main Idea:

Group 3

Details:

- discovering strengths
- completing long rides
- achieving difficult goals

Main Idea:

Group 4

Details:

- villages
- roadside cafés
- unusual meals
- places off the tourist route

Main Idea:

Practice 4: Remove the Extra Detail

Cross out the information that would NOT be necessary in a summary.

Example:

Meeting welcoming locals and discussing life, love, and politics.

Summary version:

Meeting welcoming locals.

Try these:

1. Seeing flowers and animals that you would never notice from a car.

Summary version:

2. Passing through tiny villages and eating meals in roadside shacks.

Summary version:

3. Discovering that you are capable of more than you ever thought possible.

Summary version:

Practice 5: Creating Summary Notes

Imagine you are preparing to write a summary.

Convert the following details into short summary notes.

Details

- welcoming locals
- conversations with people
- cyclists helping one another

Summary Note:

Details

- flowers
- animals
- forests
- beaches

Summary Note:

Details

- achieving difficult goals
- overcoming challenges
- building confidence

Summary Note:

Reflection

Complete the sentence.

A good summary does not include every detail because

Exit Ticket

Choose ONE group of details below and convert it into a single summary point.

Details:

- flowers
- animals
- forests
- beaches

Summary Point:
