

Guide to Writing a Good Summary

A good summary should capture the big picture of your story, without getting lost in every detail. It should give someone who's not familiar with the story a quick way in, while capturing the tone and feel.

Before beginning to write, start with the basics. Ask yourself:

Who is the *main* character and what's their situation?

What do they want?

What gets in their way?

How does it all wrap up?

Knowing the answers to these questions will give you the backbone of your summary.

Kick off with the main character

Introduce the story through the person (or people) it follows, not forgetting to include **where** and **when** they are.

Next, walk through the big events, telling the story in order and making sure to give us the major turning points:

How does it begin?

What big challenges happen in the middle?

How does it end?

Focus on the main thread

Complicated backstory and side plots or minor characters can usually be skipped.

Keep It Simple and Clear

Use everyday language.

Stick to the main points of the story.

Bring Out the Mood of the Story

A summary isn't just "what happens" — it's also the *feel*. Is the story exciting? Sad? Inspiring? Funny? Include that sense of mood.

Make sure the story reaches its conclusion

Even if you're summarising a tragedy or an unfinished tale, explain the outcome.

And make sure to GIVE US THE SPOILERS – we really *do* want to know the twists, the turns and how it all ends. Don't leave us in suspense!