

FOUR FUN FRAMEWORKS for SUMMARIZING NONFICTION TEXT

Technically, a summary is a *shortened version of an original text*, stating the *main ideas and important details*, using the *same text structure and order* as the original.

Each of the simple frameworks below requires students to identify main ideas and key details while transforming the text to a different structure.

Although such frameworks may seem gimmicky, they work well in getting students to summarize and transform text, as well as to choose their words carefully; and the process works even better when students have opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups.

1. The Important Thing About...

Use the framework from *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown to identify the main idea and interesting details from the passage. The main idea is repeated on the first and last line and writers may add as many supporting details as needed. You can find a lesson plan for this framework at WritingFix.com.

*The important thing about hippos is that they are dangerous.
They kill more people than any other mammal (except other people).
They have powerful jaws and can run faster than a human.
They are related to dolphins and whales.
Their skin secretes a red oil that looks like it's bleeding.
They mark territory by spreading their scat around.
But the important thing about hippos is that they are dangerous.*

2. ACROSTIC Writing

An Acrostic is a poem, word puzzle, or other composition in which certain letters in each line form a word or words. Select a one-word topic and write the word vertically down the page. On each line, write a sentence or phrase about the topic, beginning with the letter at the start of the line.

S	Steel springs
L	Loved by girls and boys
I	Invented by accident
N	Never let it get tangled up – or you'll never be able to untangle it.
K	Kids have played with it for 60 years
Y	You know it's a wonderful toy!

You can find an interactive template online at Readwritethink.org.



3. “Telephone-Number” Writing

This is a seven-line summary of the key ideas in the passage; your telephone number will determine the length of each line. Have students write their telephone number vertically down the page. The number at the beginning of each line indicates the number of words that line must contain. (“O” is a bonus; it can be any number of words – *except* 0.) Lines may be lists of related words or meaningful phrases or sentences.

Winter Survival

- 5 Have a proper emergency kit
- 8 Dress in layers to keep warm and dry
- 5 STOP: Stay-Think-Observe-Plan
- 1 PREPARE!
- 4 Try to find shelter
- 3 Just don’t panic
- 9 Careful planning, proper gear and clear thinking can save

4. “How to Be” Writing

This framework uses imperative sentences to relate key ideas on a topic.



How to be Pluto:

Travel around the sun in a crooked orbit.

Be composed of rock and ice.

Have five moons.

Lose status as a full planet in 2006.

Get reclassified as a dwarf planet.

Wait for a visit from spacecraft on July 14, 2015.

