

## D. How to write a summary

### Characteristics of a summary

A summary is a shortened version of a text that highlights its key points.

The purpose of a summary is to give a reader a condensed and objective account of the main ideas and features of a text. Usually, a summary has between one and three paragraphs or one hundred to three hundred words, depending on the length and complexity of the original text.

Typically, a summary will do the following:

- **Cite the author and title of the text.** In some cases, the place and date of publication or the context for the text may also be included.
- **Indicate the main ideas of the text.** Accurately representing the main ideas (while omitting the less important details) is the major goal of the summary.
- **Use direct quotations of key words, phrases, or sentences.** *Quote* the text directly for a few key ideas; *paraphrase* the other important ideas (that is, express the ideas in your own words.)
- **Include author tags** (“*According to...*” or “*as the author explains*”) to remind the reader that you are summarizing the author and the text, not giving your own ideas.
- **Avoid summarizing specific examples or data** unless they help illustrate the thesis or main idea of the text.
- **Report the main ideas as objectively as possible.** Do not include your reactions.

### Steps for writing a summary

1. Read the headline carefully (it is very important) and identify the author, date and place of publication
2. Skim through the text once or twice to get an overall sense of what it is about. Ask yourself “What is the passage about?”
3. Read the text again to understand more details. Use the context to help you understand the meaning of unknown words. Use a dictionary for words you still can’t understand. You must understand the whole text.
4. Read paragraph by paragraph. For each paragraph find the topic sentence which contains the main idea. Underline important words and make notes. The other sentences in the paragraph support the main idea. Highlight anything else that seems important but leave out examples, evaluations and interpretations.
5. Form sentences with the keywords you have underlined in each paragraph, trying to convert the ideas into your own words. Use short, simple sentences. Be objective: don’t mix your reactions with the summary.
6. Connect the sentences using suitable conjunctions.
7. Re-read the summary to make sure it is clear and to-the-point. Eliminate repetitive words, too many descriptive words (adjectives and adverbs) and non-essential sentences.
8. Check your spelling and grammar.
9. Finally, check your summary against the author’s original. Have you correctly described the author’s main idea and the essential supporting points?
10. Make any necessary adjustments or changes and write your final version.

### Activity

1. Write a summary of an article or a text of your choice from the Student’s Book.

## E. How to translate

### What is translation?

Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. It is never an easy task because it involves a variety of skills and techniques which can be learnt with practice and the help of a good dictionary.

Translating business letters from one language into another is an important skill which may be part of your future work.

### Translating a business letter

Remember that:

- you must not translate word by word, but must understand the main ideas of the letter that you have to translate and try to convey these ideas in the most appropriate way;
- many expressions and phrases in English or Italian have special meanings that are different from the literal meaning of the words. To understand these expressions you have to find the meaning of the phrase as a whole. Be careful with false friends.
- business letters in Italian usually have long and complicated sentences. So, before translating anything you should mentally transform the Italian sentence into a simpler form.

### Steps for translating a business letter

1. Read the letter to get an overall idea of what it is about and which parts of it are most relevant.
2. Read it more carefully for content, style and tone.
3. Read each sentence carefully for details. Focus on the content, examine the vocabulary and grammar.
4. Look up words you don't know in your dictionary
5. Use words and structures which you have already seen in other letters.
6. Do not use long sentences.
7. Do not start to write the translation until you have a full sentence, or a complete part of it, in your mind.

### Activity

#### 1. Match the Italian phrases with the English equivalents.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. La vostra azienda ci è stata caldamente raccomandata da...</li> <li>2. La contatto per avere maggiori informazioni circa...</li> <li>3. Per quanto concerne...</li> <li>4. Le saremmo molto grati se volesse inviarci informazioni più dettagliate in riferimento a...</li> <li>5. Potrebbe inviarmi... per favore.</li> <li>6. La invitiamo caldamente a...</li> <li>7. Dopo attenta considerazione della Vostra proposta...</li> <li>8. In caso fossero necessarie ulteriori informazioni, non esiti a contattarmi.</li> <li>9. Rimango a disposizione per ulteriori informazioni e chiarimenti.</li> <li>10. La ringrazio per l'aiuto nella risoluzione di questa questione.</li> <li>11. Spero di sentirla presto.</li> <li>12. Spero vivamente che sia possibile pensare ad una prossima collaborazione.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. We carefully considered your proposal and...</li> <li>b. Thank you for your help in this matter.</li> <li>c. I am writing to enquire about...</li> <li>d. I look forward to the possibility of working together.</li> <li>e. With reference to...</li> <li>f. Would you please send me...</li> <li>g. You are urgently requested to...</li> <li>h. If you require any further information, feel free to contact me.</li> <li>i. I look forward to hearing from you soon.</li> <li>j. Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.</li> <li>k. We would appreciate it if you could send us more detailed information about...</li> <li>l. Your company was highly recommended by...</li> </ol> |
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