

# Steps to Writing a Summary

<b>1. Read and understand the prompt or writing directions.</b> What are you being asked to write about?
Example: <span style="float: right;">Summary of an Article</span>  Write a summary of the article. Your writing will be scored on how well you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• state the main ideas of the article;</li><li>• identify the most important details that support the main ideas;</li><li>• write your summary in your own words, except for quotations; and</li><li>• express the underlying meaning of the article, not just the superficial details.</li></ul>
<b>2. Read, think about, and understand the text.</b> Review the material to make sure you know it well. Use a dictionary or context clues to figure out the meaning of any important words that you don't know.
<b>3. Take notes.</b> Write down the main ideas and important details of the article.
<b>4. Write a thesis statement.</b> In a single sentence, state the main idea of the article. The thesis statement should mention the underlying meaning of the article, not just the superficial details.
<b>5. Organize and outline ideas.</b> Write down the important details you need to include in the summary. Put them in a logical order. Topic Sentence: Evidence: #1: #2: #3:
<b>6. Write your essay.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your summary should be about one third of the length of the original article.</li><li>• Focus on the main point of the article and the most important details.</li><li>• Use your own words; avoid copying phrases and sentences from the article unless they're direct quotations.</li></ul>
<b>7. Revise.</b> Have you indented all paragraphs? Have you captured the main point of the article? Have you included the most important details? Is there sentence variety? Have you avoided writing short, choppy sentences? Are there transitional words and phrases to connect ideas?
<b>8. Proofread and edit.</b> Check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Is the verb tense consistent? Are all names spelled correctly and capitalized? Have you avoided writing run-on sentences and sentence fragments?
<b>9. Write your draft.</b> Use blue or black ink. Skip lines. Write on one side of the paper only. Include a title on the top line.
<b>10. Read your summary one last time before you turn it in.</b> Look for careless spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, especially omitted words or letters. Cross out errors neatly with a single line and write the correction above.

## Original Article: Bats

In the distant past, many people thought bats had magical powers, but times have changed. Today, many people believe that bats are rodents, that they cannot see, and that they are more likely than other animals to carry rabies. All of these beliefs are mistaken. Bats are not rodents, are not blind, and are no more likely than dogs and cats to transmit rabies. Bats, in fact, are among the least understood and least appreciated of animals.

Bats are not rodents with wings, contrary to popular belief. Like all rodents, bats are mammals, but they have a skeleton similar to the human skeleton. The bones in bat wings are much like those in arms and the human hand, with a thumb and four fingers. In bats, the bones of the arms and the four fingers of the hands are very long. This bone structure helps support the web of skin that stretches from the body to the ends of the fingers to form wings.

Although bats cannot see colors, they have good vision in both dim and bright light. Since most bats stay in darkness during the day and do their feeding at night, they do not use their vision to maneuver in the dark but use a process called echolocation. This process enables bats to emit sounds from their mouths that bounce off objects and allow them to avoid the objects when flying. They use this system to locate flying insects to feed on as well. Typically, insect-eating bats emerge at dusk and fly to streams or ponds where they feed. They catch the insects on their wingtip or tail membrane and fling them into their mouths while flying.

There are about 1,000 species of bat, ranging in size from the bumblebee bat, which is about an inch long, to the flying fox, which is sixteen inches long and has a wingspan of five feet. Each type of bat has a specialized diet. For seventy percent of bats, the diet is insects. Other types of bats feed on flowers, pollen, nectar, and fruit or on small animals such as birds, mice, lizards, and frogs.

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One species of bat feeds on the blood of large mammals. This is the common vampire bat, which lives only in Latin America and is probably best known for feeding on the blood of cattle. Unfortunately, in an attempt to control vampire bat populations, farmers have unintentionally killed thousands of beneficial fruit-and insect-eating bats as well.

Bats, in fact, perform a number of valuable functions. Their greatest economic value is in eliminating insect pests. Insect-eating bats can catch six hundred mosquitoes in an hour and eat half their body weight in insects every night. In many tropical rain forests, fruit-eating bats are the main means of spreading the seeds of tropical fruits. Nectar-feeding bats pollinate a number of tropical plants. If it were not for bats, we might not have peaches, bananas, mangoes, guavas, figs, or dates.

Today, the survival of many bat species is uncertain. Sixty percent of bats do not survive past infancy. Some are killed by predators such as owls, hawks, snakes and other meat-eating creatures, but most are victims of pesticides and other human intrusions. In Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico, where there were once eight million bats, there are now a quarter million. At Eagle Creek, Arizona, the bat population dropped from thirty million to thirty thousand in six years.

Bats often have been burdened with a bad reputation, perhaps because they are not the warm, cuddly sort of animal we love to love. However, their unusual physical features should not lead us to overestimate their harm or to underestimate their value.

## Summary

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>Bats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Start with a summary or overview of the article which includes the author’s name and the title of the article.</b></li> <li>• <b>Finish with a thesis statement that states the main idea of the article.</b></li> </ul>	<p>In the article “Bats,” by Debbie Dean, we learn that in contrast to some mistaken beliefs, bats are not blind rodents that usually have rabies. They have sight, are mammals, and are not especially likely to carry rabies. Bats are relatively misunderstood and unappreciated.</p>
<p><b>Body Paragraphs</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The number of paragraphs in your summary depends on the length of the original article.</b></li> <li>• <b>Your summary should be about one third the length of the original article.</b></li> <li>• <b>Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence.</b></li> <li>• <b>Each paragraph focuses on a separate main idea and just the most important details from the article.</b></li> <li>• <b>Put the ideas from the essay into your own words. Avoid copying phrases and sentences from the article.</b></li> <li>• <b>Use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Bats have some interesting physical features. They have similar bone structure and skeletons to that of humans, so they are not winged rodents. They are color blind, so they use echolocation if there is not sufficient light. Otherwise, their sight is enough.</p>
<p><b>Concluding Paragraph</b> .....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Summarize the main idea and the underlying meaning of the article.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Species of bats total about a thousand. The species come in a variety of sizes and have unique diets. Most eat insects, but some eat plant products and small animals. However, vampire bats drink blood, which can be harmful to livestock. Farmers have accidentally killed many innocent bats while trying to rid themselves of vampire bats.</p> <p>Bats can actually be helpful to humans. An important trait of bats is their ability to destroy many unwanted bugs. They also spread fruit seeds and pollinate plants. However, the survival of bats is not known because many are killed by human disruptions and predators. The bat population has dropped steadily and may continue to drop.</p> <p>Hopefully, we will realize that although bats look different than our favorite animals, we can learn to accept and admire their value and uniqueness.</p>