

How can you develop a strong skill for summarizing a text?

To strengthen your skill at summarizing a text, use the following three strategies.

Strategy 1: Find the main ideas of the passage.

Strategy 2: Decide which of the main ideas is the central one and which are supporting details.

Strategy 3: Write an objective summary of the text.

How can you develop a strong skill for summarizing a text?

To strengthen your skill at summarizing a text, use the following three strategies.

Strategy 1: Find the main ideas of the passage.

If an idea is central to a text, it is often mentioned multiple times. It might be

- stated initially in one of the first few paragraphs
- expressed in one or more places in the body of the text
- restated in the final paragraph

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

The following is General Robert E. Lee's farewell order to the Army of Northern Virginia. As you read, find the main idea of each paragraph.

After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I consented to this result from no distrust of them;

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, **the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.** I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I consented to this result from no distrust of them;

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

but feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that would compensate for the loss that would have attended the continuation of the contest, I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen.

By the terms of the agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed; and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection.

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

but feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that would compensate for the loss that would have attended the continuation of the contest, **I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen.**

By the terms of the agreement, **officers and men can return to their homes** and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed; and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection.

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

What are the main ideas of the passage?

- The Army of Virginia is forced to surrender because the North has more supplies and resources.
- Lee doesn't want to sacrifice the lives of any more men.
- The soldiers and officers can return to their homes.
- Lee is grateful for their service and bids them good-bye.

Strategy 2: Decide which of the main ideas is the central one and which are supporting details.

Which of the following ideas is the central one, and which are giving further information?

- The Army of Virginia is forced to surrender because the North has more supplies and resources.
- Lee doesn't want to sacrifice the lives of any more men.
- The soldiers and officers can return to their homes.
- Lee is grateful for their service and bids them good-bye.

Summarizing a Text

Cluster 3 page 81

- The Army of Virginia is forced to surrender because the North has more supplies and resources. (Central idea)
- Lee doesn't want to sacrifice the lives of any more men. (Supporting—Lee is explaining why he is surrendering.)
- The soldiers and officers can return to their homes. (Supporting—Lee is giving directions to the men.)
- Lee is grateful for their service and bids them good-bye. (Supporting—Lee is concluding his speech.)

Strategy 3: Write an objective summary of the text.

The summary of the text should include the central idea and the most relevant supporting details. Do not include your opinion about the text. Write the summary using your own words.

Robert E. Lee tells his men that he has been forced to surrender to the better equipped Northern army. His surrender was not due to a lack of trust in his men, but his desire not to sacrifice any more lives in battle. He instructs the men to return to their homes. He thanks them for their devotion and kindness and tells them good-bye.