

# **Writing Summaries of Newspaper Articles**

ESL 006

Packet of Course Materials

Northern Virginia Community College

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## Chapter 1: An Introduction

### Part 1: Comparing Two Texts

Read the following two texts very carefully. When you are done, answer the questions that follow.

#### Text No. 1:

"Time is of the exercise essence" by Nanci Hellmich

A lack of time is one of the main excuses people give for not exercising, but experts say it's easy to sneak exercise into your life.

Melina Jampolis, an internist who works with overweight patients in the San Francisco area, advises clients to squeeze in activity whenever they can. She tells them to do five minutes of calisthenics, such as sit-ups or push-ups, in the morning, take a 10-minute walk at lunch, pace when talking on the phone and march in place while watching commercials on TV.

She also suggests broadening your definition of exercise beyond the traditional workout. Active volunteer work, for example, like coaching a Little League team, packing boxes at a food bank or cleaning up the neighborhood, will get you moving and use your muscles.

Jampolis, author of *The No Time to Lose Diet*, says one of her female patients started walking dogs at an animal shelter. The activity, along with a more healthful diet, helped the woman lose 15 pounds.

Many people don't do enough strength training, also called weight training, even though studies show it reduces the risk of many diseases, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer and osteoporosis.

Miriam Nelson, an exercise scientist at Tufts University in Boston and one of the authors of *Strong Women, Strong Hearts*, suggests keeping a set of dumbbells near the TV. While you are watching your favorite show or the news, do a set or two of different exercises, such as biceps curls, triceps extensions, seated overhead presses, forward fly exercises, side leg raises, ankle exercises, lunges and squats. Try to do strength training two to three times a week, she says.

Form is important, and you need to challenge yourself, she says. "Strengthening exercises need to be at an intensity where you feel them. They should be moderately hard to hard to get the most benefit."

When traveling, it is best to do body-weight exercises such as push-ups, sit-ups, lunges and squats, she says.

Timothy Church, who supervises exercise studies as director of preventive medicine research at Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, is convinced a workout partner helps many people maintain a consistent routine.

"Your buddy doesn't have to be a friend. It doesn't even have to be a human. It can be a dog," he says. "With exercise, it's easy to talk yourself out of doing it and skip it, but it's very difficult to let someone else down."

**Text No. 2:**

In the article, “Time Is of the Exercise Essence” by Nanci Hellmich, the author writes that even though people say they don’t have time for exercise, there are ways to make it fit into a busy schedule. Internist Melina Jampolis says that people should try to fit exercise into their day whenever they can, even if for only a few minutes at a time. She also says people can change their definition of exercise by doing active volunteer work. Then, Hellmich writes that strength training is also important, citing advice from exercise scientist Miriam Nelson to keep dumbbells in front of the TV. Exercise researcher Timothy Church recommends having an exercise partner, human or animal.

**Part 2: Discussion Questions**

- 1) How are these two texts similar to or different from each other? Be specific!  
↓ (make notes in table below)

What do they have in common?	What is different?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

- 2) If you were in a hurry or only needed to know the most basic information, which text would you prefer to read? Why?
- 3) One of these texts was written by a journalist. The other text was written by an ESL student. Can you tell which? How do you know?

### Part 3: What is a Summary?

A *summary* is a short text that students write in order to provide their reader with the main idea of another piece of writing. Here are some important details to remember about summaries:

- 1) They are always much shorter than the original.
- 2) They contain only the most important information from the original.
- 3) They begin with the original text's main idea (this is the first sentence of the summary).
- 4) The student does not change any of the information that is in the original.
- 5) They are written in the student's own words (none of the phrases or sentences used by the original author are allowed).
- 6) They contain none of the student's opinions.
- 7) They are written for people who did not read the original article.

**\*\*Text No. 2 is a *summary*.**

In the first **weeks of learning about summaries**, you will only practice the basic skills of summarizing. These are: 1) finding and writing the main idea; 2) paraphrasing; 3) writing an outline and 4) writing transitions.

**After this**, you will write two revised summaries of your own. This means that you will do some of your work in class and some at home. You will write at least two drafts of each summary. In addition, you will write one in-class timed summary that will be part of your final exam.

Also, you will learn other basic skills of summarizing such as: 1) avoiding plagiarism; 3) working with verb tense and 4) how to write an in-class summary.

Here is the summary writing schedule:

- 1: Introduction to summarizing
- 2: Paraphrasing (part 1)
- 3: Working with the main idea
- 4: Paraphrasing (part 2)
- 5: Outlining
  - \*Midterm
- 7: Working with verbs in summaries
  - \*revised summary No. 1
- 8: Writing and in-class summary
  - \*revised summary No. 2
- 9: Final in-class summary exam



### **Part 3: Inferring the Article's Topic**

Now, read the article's title (only the title!). What does the title tell you about the article's topic? Below, write what you expect to learn from this article after reading only the title.

### **Part 4: Active Reading**

Next, read the article two times. The first time, try to read it very quickly so that you get the general idea. Then, read it very closely so that you understand it fully. After this, answer the questions that come after the article.

\*As you read, do the following:

- 1) Draw a star next to any information that you find particularly interesting.
- 2) Draw a question mark next to any information that you do not understand.
- 3) Circle any new words you find.

When you are finished, compare your markings with your groupmates.

Cellphones' Growth Does a Number on Health Research  
By David Brown, *The Washington Post*

In our information-crazy, never-out-of-touch world, it's becoming harder and harder to find out who we are and what we do.

That's the ironic truth facing epidemiologists around the country. The popularity of cellular telephones, an increasingly mobile population, rising expenses, flat budgets and new insights into ways people can answer a question differently depending on how it's asked -- all are conspiring to make health surveys more difficult.

In public health, pretty much everything depends on good data. Researchers and policymakers can't identify a problem, figure out whether it's serious and devise a strategy to fight it without first being able to count it. "If you can't measure something, you won't be able to change it" is an oft-heard aphorism.

How big a problem is obesity? Are restrictions on smoking changing people's habits? Is autism more prevalent than it was a decade ago? Is the recession affecting people's access to health insurance?

All are questions of national importance -- and none can be answered without unbiased surveys of a representative sample of the population. Cellular telephones are perhaps the biggest threat to survey data that epidemiologists have confronted in years.

The National Center for Health Statistics reported that in the first half of last year, 16 percent of American adults lived in households that have only cellphones. This was up from 7 percent three years earlier, and rising rapidly.

The federal government's main tool for measuring the health habits of Americans, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), uses the telephone to interview a nationwide sample of adults (470,000 this year). Historically, interviewers called only conventional telephones, as all but the 2 to 3 percent of households with no phones at all could be reached through them. But that's not remotely true anymore.

Surveyors, however, cannot just extrapolate from the land-line respondents. That's because studies have shown that people who have only cellphones are different from people who don't have them or use them only occasionally.

The BRFSS surveyors this year will include cellphone numbers in every state, with a goal of having 10 percent of the interviews done that way. But it's easier said than done.

Federal law requires that calls to cellphones be hand-dialed; it is illegal to use automatic dialers, which are standard tools for survey and polling firms. Furthermore, a huge fraction of "owners" of cellphone numbers are children ineligible for the health surveys. Once reached, some cellphone users are reluctant to talk at length because they have to pay for incoming calls.

People's willingness to answer questions has also been affected by the barrage of phone calls, many unsolicited, they get every day. The response rate in public opinion polls has fallen from about 60 percent two decades ago to 25 percent now, according to Keeter. In all, what seems like a fairly simple and straightforward task is in truth hard and messy.

"It's a bit like making sausage," said Christopher J.L. Murray, a physician and epidemiologist who heads the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

"As soon as you start to explore how surveys are made," he said, "you begin to see how difficult it is to get consistent information at the population level over time."

**Part 5: Comprehension Questions**

Answer these questions after you have read the article two times. You may work alone or with your groupmates.

- 1) How do surveyors use telephones to collect health data?
  
- 2) What kind of useful information is gathered from telephone surveys?
  
- 3) Why do surveyors have to include cellphone users when they collect information?
  
- 4) Why is it hard to collect information from cellphone users? List at least three reasons.
  
- 5) What do surveyors plan to do in order to reach cellphone users?

**Part 6: Finding the Article's Main Idea**

Now, can you find the main idea? Underline the sentence that you think explains the article's main idea best. The main idea is one sentence you would use to tell another person what the article is about.

*\*\*Hint: the main idea in a newspaper article is always near the beginning.*

Write the main idea below. Copy it exactly as the author writes it:

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## Part 7: Examining the Article's Main Idea

Let's look more closely at the main idea and how it is written. Here is the main idea from the previous article, as the author wrote it:

*"The popularity of cellular telephones, an increasingly mobile population, rising expenses, flat budgets and new insights into ways people can answer a question differently depending on how it's asked -- all are conspiring to make health surveys more difficult."*

Note that this appears in the third paragraph. In fact, it is a paragraph of its own. Most newspaper articles are written this way. The author writes a few sentences to get you interested and curious and then immediately gives you the main idea.

Look at the first paragraph of the article below. Do you see how it gives us only enough information to make us want to read more? Isn't it mysterious?

*"In our information-crazy, never-out-of-touch world, it's becoming harder and harder to find out who we are and what we do."*

## Part 8: The Introductory Phrase

In our summary, we always write the main idea first, even if does not come first in the original article. Because of this, we also need to include the author's full name and the title of the article in the main idea sentence. We will write this in an *introductory phrase*. Here is the best way to do this:

*In the article, "Article Title" by Author's Name, the author writes that (main idea).*

So, first we write the name of the article. Then, we write the author's full name. Finally, we write the article's main idea. We do all of this in one sentence at the very beginning of our summary. For the article above, our *introductory phrase* will be:

*In the article, "Cellphones' Growth Does a Number on Health Research" by David Brown, the author writes that...*

\*Make a note of the punctuation used in this *introductory phrase* as well.

Comma separating the phrase *In the article* from article title

Quotation marks around title

*In the article, "Cellphones' Growth Does a Number on Health Research" by David Brown, the author writes that...*

Comma separating author's name from phrase with main idea

### Part 9: Finding the Correct Summary Main Idea

Now that we know what our introductory phrase will be, we need to write a main idea in our own words.

This first time, it will be a little easier for you. All you need to do is choose the correct main idea from the list below. Work in your group or alone to decide which of the following would make the best main idea sentence for our summary. What is wrong with the other three? Be ready to explain your answer.

- a) *In the article, "Cellphones' Growth Does a Number on Health Research" by David Brown, the author writes that people use cellphones too much and it bothers surveyors.*
- b) *In the article by David Brown, the author writes that cellphones are making health surveys more difficult.*
- c) *In the article, "Cellphones' Growth Does a Number on Health Research" by David Brown, the author writes that the prominence of cellphone usage is making it more difficult to conduct health surveys.*
- d) *In the article, "Cellphones' Growth Does a Number on Health Research" by David Brown, the author writes that only 25 percent of people who are called for health surveys actually answer the questions asked by the surveyor.*

### Chapter 3: Paraphrasing 1 (part 1)

Newspaper article: "Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing"

#### **Part 1: Generating Background Knowledge**

In this activity, you will read a newspaper article and practice paraphrasing parts of it. First, however, in your group or alone, answer the following questions related to the article's topic. Write your answers below each question.

- 1) If you needed a prescription, would you rather have it on paper or would you rather it be sent electronically to your pharmacy? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) People say that paper prescriptions can result in medical errors. Why do you think this happens?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Doctors prefer to use paper prescriptions over electronic ones. Why do you think they are resisting it?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What are some drawbacks that you can think of to using paper prescriptions?

**Part 2: Vocabulary**

Now, make sure you know all of the underlined words in the text. Using a dictionary, write the definitions of the words that are new to you on a separate sheet of paper.

**Part 3: Inferring the Article's Topic**

The title of the article you are going to read is "Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing." What does the title tell you about the article's topic? Below, write what you expect to learn from this article after reading only the title.

**Part 4: Active Reading**

Next, read the article two times. The first time, try to read it very quickly so that you get the general idea. Then, read it very closely so that you understand it fully. After this, answer the questions that come after the article.

\*As you read, do the following:

- 1) Draw a star next to any information that you find particularly interesting.
- 2) Draw a question mark next to any information that you do not understand.
- 3) Circle any new words you find.

When you are finished, compare your markings with your groupmates.

*Good luck!*

Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing  
By Ceci Connolly, *The Washington Post*

Samuel Benesh, an internist who practices in Owings Mills, Md., tossed his prescription pad nearly three years ago, and he hasn't missed it since.

Patients still get their medications, but now there are no more lost slips of paper or long waits in line at the pharmacy. They don't even need to phone in for refills. It all happens electronically -- or magically, as one of Benesh's patients put it.

Benesh is among a small group of physicians nationwide using technology to transmit prescription orders from a computer to the pharmacy. In an effort to nudge more physicians in that direction, the federal government will begin offering bonuses in January to Medicare physicians who write electronic prescriptions.

Patients say the system, known as "e-prescribing," is much more convenient. More important, it offers the hope of sharply reducing dangerous and costly medication errors.

Each year, more than 3.52 billion prescriptions are written in the United States, and at least 1.5 million preventable adverse drug reactions occur, according to the Institute of Medicine. Many errors are due to doctors' infamously illegible handwriting. Other mistakes involve allergies or problematic interactions with another medication.

Electronic prescribing helps minimize errors because the computer automatically checks a patient's record and alerts a doctor to potential trouble.

"This definitely improves quality and safety," said Benesh, who began e-prescribing as part of a pilot project with CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield.

E-prescribing is one small attempt to make medicine a bit more modern. Experts say technology is an underappreciated medical tool that could bring accurate, fast information to physicians and consumers.

For some doctors, such as Brian Yeaman and his colleagues at Norman Regional Health system in Oklahoma, writing prescriptions electronically has not only increased accuracy, but also was the first step toward creating a fully integrated electronic medical record-keeping system.

"Using the computer templates," said Yeaman, a family physician, "it is hard to select the wrong drug or make up a wrong dose."

But Yeaman and Benesh are the exceptions. Overall, just 2 percent of eligible prescriptions written in the United States are transmitted electronically, according to the eHealth Initiative, a nonprofit group that promotes technology in medicine. Officials at the Medical Society of the District of Columbia could not identify a single local doctor who e-prescribes.

"When we talk to clinicians across the country, the key barrier to getting to electronic prescribing is financing," said Janet Marchibroda, chief executive officer of the eHealth Initiative. Some Web-based systems, including the DrFirst portal used by Benesh, are free. But others -- especially those that combine e-prescribing with full electronic medical records -- can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Beginning in January, doctors who use e-prescribing for roughly half of all eligible prescriptions will receive a bonus of 2 percent of their negotiated Medicare payment. The program could cost Medicare \$240 million next year, according to federal actuaries. In 2010, the bonus will be reduced to 1 percent, and in 2012 doctors still wedded to handwritten prescriptions will start paying penalties.

"This is the proverbial carrot and stick," said Kerry Weems, acting administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. For the average Medicare physician, the 2009 bonus could total \$1,600, he said.

"A lot of prescriptions end up on the dresser," Weems said. With e-prescribing, "the physician can check on patient compliance."

**Part 5: Comprehension Questions**

Answer these questions after you have read the article two times. You may work alone or with your groupmates.

- 1) How many prescriptions are written in the United States every year?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What is e-prescribing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What are two causes of adverse drug reactions that can be avoided using e-prescribing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What is the No. 1 reason why more doctors do not e-prescribe?

**Part 6: Find the Main Idea**

Now, can you find the main idea? Underline the sentence that you think explains the article's main idea best.

Then, copy it below:

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## Part 7: Examining a Paraphrase

Below is a sentence from the article followed by a paraphrase of it. Read both closely and answer the questions that follow.

From the article:

For some doctors, such as Brian Yeaman and his colleagues at Norman Regional Health system in Oklahoma, writing prescriptions electronically has not only increased accuracy, but also was the first step toward creating a fully integrated electronic medical record-keeping system.

Paraphrase:

*Some doctors say that writing electronic prescriptions is a stepping stone to full electronic medical record keeping.*

Questions:

- 1) What information is omitted from the original sentence? ~~Draw a line~~ through any information that is in the original, but is not in the paraphrase.
- 2) What words or phrases are exactly the same in the original and the paraphrase? Circle them in both versions.
- 3) What words and phrases do you see that have similar meaning, but are written differently in each version? Underline them in each version.

Because a summary must be written in your own words and must be shorter than the original article, you must change the way that the ideas are written. But always remember this rule:

**A reader must be able to understand the original article by reading only your summary.**

Note that the paraphrase above is shorter than the original and contains less information without changing the original idea.

Also, Dr. Brian Yeaman's name and place of work are not needed to understand the original sentence's main idea. In cases like this, it is OK to omit the names of people and places in your paraphrases.

Some phrases are easy to change without altering the original idea. For example, "first step" in the original is easily replaced by "stepping stone" in the paraphrase. These two phrases have very similar meanings.

Other phrases are much more difficult to change and can be left alone. For example, there is no better way to write "electronic medical record keeping."

This may seem difficult now, but it will get easier with practice.

## Paraphrasing 1 (part 2)

Newspaper article: "Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing"

### Part 1: Choose the Best Paraphrase

For each section below taken from "Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing," choose the best paraphrase. Be prepared to explain your answer.

1) From the article:

Patients say the system, known as "e-prescribing," is much more convenient. More important, it offers the hope of sharply reducing dangerous and costly medication errors.

Possible Paraphrases:

- a) *Patients say that the system is cheap and safe.*
- b) *Patients say that e-prescribing is easy to use and safe.*
- c) *Patients say the system is more convenient and it offers the hope of reducing dangerous and costly errors.*
- d) *The new system, called "e-prescribing," is much easier for the patients because it provides great reduction in expensive and hazardous errors in medication.*

2) From the article:

Each year, more than 3.52 billion prescriptions are written in the United States, and at least 1.5 million preventable adverse drug reactions occur, according to the Institute of Medicine.

Possible Paraphrases:

- a) *Experts say that there are lots of drug reactions every year.*
- b) *The Institute of Medicine says that 3.5 billion prescriptions are written and 1.5 million avoidable dangerous drug reactions occur every year.*
- c) *Experts say that millions of avoidable dangerous drug reactions occur every year.*
- d) *Experts say that out of billions of prescriptions written every year, millions of avoidable dangerous drug reactions occur.*

3) From the article:

Many errors are due to doctors' infamously illegible handwriting. Other mistakes involve allergies or problematic interactions with another medication.

Possible Paraphrases:

- a) *Errors happen because of doctor's poor handwriting and because they have allergies and do not understand drug interactions.*
- b) *Poor handwriting, allergies and dangerous drug interactions are reasons for many errors.*
- c) *A large number of mistakes are because of doctors' well-known poor handwriting and also because of allergies and dangerous interactions with different drugs.*
- d) *Doctors make many mistakes because of their famous handwriting.*

## Part 2: Paraphrase Jumble Activity

Read each of the sentences below taken from the article "Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing." Then, use the words and phrases after each sentence to create your own paraphrase. The first one is done for you.

0) From the Article:

Patients still get their medications, but now there are no more lost slips of paper or long waits in line at the pharmacy.

Words and Phrases for Your Paraphrase:

*waiting in line*      *now, people*      *about losing*  
*do not have to worry*      *or*      *their prescription*

Your Paraphrase:

*Now, people do not have to worry about losing their prescription or waiting in line.*

1) From the Article:

Overall, just 2 percent of eligible prescriptions written in the United States are transmitted electronically, according to the eHealth Initiative, a nonprofit group that promotes technology in medicine.

Words and Phrases for Your Paraphrase

*experts say that*      *of prescriptions*      *electronic*  
*in the United States*      *are*      *two percent*

Your Paraphrase:

2) From the Article:

Beginning in January, doctors who use e-prescribing for roughly half of all eligible prescriptions will receive a bonus of 2 percent of their negotiated Medicare payment.

Words and Phrases for Your Paraphrase:

*make more money*      *half of the time*      *use e-prescribing*  
*if they*      *doctors will*      *soon*

Your Paraphrase:

### Part 3: Writing Your Own Paraphrases

Below are a few short sentences from the article, "Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing." For each, work alone, with a partner or in a small group to write a paraphrase.

1) From the Article:

Benesh is among a small group of physicians nationwide using technology to transmit prescription orders from a computer to the pharmacy.

Your Paraphrase:

2) From the Article:

Electronic prescribing helps minimize errors because the computer automatically checks a patient's record and alerts a doctor to potential trouble.

Your Paraphrase:

3) From the Article:

Experts say technology is an underappreciated medical tool that could bring accurate, fast information to physicians and consumers.

Your Paraphrase:

4) From the Article:

Officials at the Medical Society of the District of Columbia could not identify a single local doctor who e-prescribes.

Your Paraphrase:

5) From the Article:

In 2010, the bonus will be reduced to 1 percent, and in 2012 doctors still wedded to handwritten prescriptions will start paying penalties.

Your Paraphrase:



### **Part 3: Active Reading**

Next, read the article two times. The first time, try to read it very quickly so that you get the general idea. Then, read it very closely so that you understand it fully. After this, answer the questions that come after the article.

\*As you read, do the following:

- 1) Draw a star next to any information that you find particularly interesting.
- 2) Draw a question mark next to any information that you do not understand.
- 3) Circle any new words you find.

When you are finished, compare your markings with your groupmates.

"More and More, Schools Got Game"

By Michael Alison Chandler, *The Washington Post*

Lifelong gamer Russell Alford, 15, usually has to wait until his homework and chores are finished before he can play Call of Duty 4, but this semester he got to play another video game at school. His finance class at Marshall High School in Fairfax County designed avatars and saved a virtual city from an oil spill -- earning points for teamwork, research on the world's water supply, business ethics and negotiating skills.

As Net-generation teachers reach out to gamers, classrooms across the country are becoming portals to elaborate virtual worlds. Business and science classes from Woodbridge to Frederick are sampling sophisticated software that allows students to try out potential careers, practice skills or explore history through simulated missions in national parks, ancient cities or outer space.

Teachers have long yearned for the rapt attention students lavish on mutants and aliens, but stereotypes of video games as violent or brain-numbing have slowed their entry into schools. While the military and even medical schools are turning to "serious games" or simulations for training, the Software and Information Industry Association estimates that instructional games make up only a tiny portion of the \$2 billion-a-year educational software industry.

But lately, researchers and educators say sentiment toward gaming is changing. Advocates argue that games teach vital skills overlooked in the age of high-stakes tests, such as teamwork, decision-making and digital literacy.

The Pew Research Center reported in September that 97 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 play video games, and half said they played "yesterday." Time spent glued to the screen is often particularly high in wired, affluent communities such as Fairfax, where a survey this year showed that almost three out of four students play video games or use the computer for non-school-related stuff an hour or more each night.

A new generation of game designers is borrowing from the sophisticated platforms and stunning graphics that captivate students for hours after school. They hope to channel the kind of feverish determination students exhibit when stealing a car in Grand Theft Auto and redirect it toward more wholesome pursuits, such as algebra.

Compelling games can help schools compete for students' attention, advocates say, even as many teenagers are tackling complex projects on the Internet in their free time.

The Federation of American Scientists is promoting educational gaming as a way to inspire a new generation of scientists. It has developed two games, including Immune Attack, in which players fly through blood vessels attacking fierce bacterial invaders. The free game, which has been tried out at McKinley Technology High School in the District, has been downloaded from the federation's Web site 6,000 times since April.

To make further inroads into the educational market, video game producers must win over teachers who are loaded down with curriculum demands and pressured to improve student test performance.

**Part 4: Comprehension Questions**

Answer these questions after you have read the article two times. You may work alone or with your groupmates.

- 1) What kinds of educational video games are being offered at Northern Virginia schools these days?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What stereotypes do people generally have about video games' effects of young gamers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What kinds of basic skills do people learn by playing video games in general?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) How many students in Fairfax play non-school-related video games for at least one hour per day?

**Part 5: Writing the Main Idea**

Now, can you find the main idea? Underline the sentence that you think explains the article's main idea best.

Finally, write the main idea below **in your own words**. Don't forget to start with an introductory phrase that includes the title of the article and the author's name! Work alone, and then share your main idea sentence with your groupmates.

*\*Hint: Don't look at the article while you write! This will help you to use your own words.*

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## Chapter 5: Paraphrasing 2

Newspaper article: "It's All about Who You Know -- and Who They Know"

### Part 1: Generating Background Knowledge

In this activity, you will read a newspaper article and practice paraphrasing parts of it. First, however, alone or in your group, answer the following questions related to the article's topic. Write your answers below each question.

- 1) How do people look for jobs? What are the various methods of job-hunting that you know about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What are Facebook and LinkedIn?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Do you have a Facebook or LinkedIn profile? If so, what do you use it for?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) Can you think of any drawbacks for using a social networking site to find a job?

### Part 2: Vocabulary

Now, make sure you know all of the underlined words in the text. Using a dictionary, write the definitions of the words that are new to you on a separate sheet of paper.

### **Part 3: Inferring the Article's Topic**

The title of the article you are going to read is "It's All about Who You Know -- and Who They Know." What does the title tell you about the article's topic? Below, write what you expect to learn from this article after reading only the title.

### **Part 4: Active Reading**

Next, read the article two times. The first time, try to read it very quickly so that you get the general idea. Then, read it very closely so that you understand it fully. After this, answer the questions that come after the article.

\*As you read, do the following:

- 1) Draw a star next to any information that you find particularly interesting.
- 2) Draw a question mark next to any information that you do not understand.
- 3) Circle any new words you find.

When you are finished, compare your markings with your groupmates.

*Good luck!*

It's All about Who You Know -- and Who They Know  
By Ted Knutson, The Washington Post

In job hunting, networking is the name of the game.

And it's also the name of the game at Facebook and LinkedIn, two of the most popular social-networking Web sites. These free sites provide job hunters powerful tools for connecting with current and long-lost friends or colleagues, strangers in positions to help a job hunt, and employers and recruiters combing the Web for workers.

How do you get started? At both sites (facebook.com and linkedin.com), the first thing you do after signing up via the home page is set up a profile (think mini-résumé). The next step is to search for people you know who use the site and invite them to become your online friends.

The result: a network. The other friends of your online friends can become valuable contacts. For example, if you are applying for a job at a company where one of your former co-workers knows an employee, that person could give you background information on the firm and possibly an in.

You can also join groups such as alumni associations, ad hoc organizations of current and former employees at specific companies and groups of workers in a related field.

Employment professionals point to LinkedIn and Facebook as the best social-networking sites for job hunting. Both sites have thousands of job listings. MySpace, by contrast, is not seen as suited for professional networking.

David Perry, author of "Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters," said a key to successful job hunting via LinkedIn is to create a profile that will be interesting to potential employers and other job contacts looking for you.

"A lot of people just list their accomplishments. That's being one-dimensional, and no one hires one-dimensional individuals. What you need to do is show in your profile what you're really passionate about," Perry said. He recommends looking at a number of LinkedIn profiles to find a compelling style.

He said you can sharply increase your visibility on LinkedIn and Facebook by opening a WordPress blog on both sites. The blog is an excellent way to show employers that you're up on your field. When you blog, your profile on that networking site gets updated.

He noted that recruiters are less likely to go directly to LinkedIn or Facebook than to search for your name on the Internet. The blog will appear high up in the list of a Google search of your name.

Sometimes, the best initial contact can be as close as your bedroom. Cynthia Gilmer, owner of Opus Plus, a technology product development firm in McLean, said her husband got a job through one of her Facebook friends.

Gilmer's husband, a software engineer, had applied for a job but had heard nothing after three weeks. Gilmer found a Facebook contact who knew someone who knew the chief technology officer of the unresponsive company.

"I sent my connection a message asking if he would check with his connection to see if my husband's résumé was in consideration," she said.

Quickly, she got a message back that the company could not find her husband's résumé but that the contact's contact was willing to send it directly to the chief technology officer.

Within a couple of days, her husband had a phone interview. Within two weeks, he had a job offer. He took it.

**Part 5: Comprehension Questions**

Answer these questions after you have read the article two times. You may work alone or with your groupmates.

- 1) Why will creating a Facebook or LinkedIn profile help you to find a job?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What kinds of groups can you join to help you find job opportunities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Why is it useful to use a blog with your profile?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What does the author say about MySpace?

**Part 6: Writing the Main Idea**

Now, can you find the main idea? Underline the sentence that you think explains the article's main idea best.

Write the main idea below **in your own words**. Don't forget to start with an introductory phrase that includes the title of the article and the author's name! Work alone, and then share your main idea sentence with your groupmates.

*\*Hint: Don't look at the article while you write! This will help you to use your own words.*

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## Part 7: Examining a Paraphrase

Below are collections of sentences from the article followed by paraphrases of them. They are different from others you have practiced because they condense **several ideas** into **one sentence**. As you read, answer the following questions for each:

- 1) What information is omitted from the original? ~~Draw a line~~ through any information that is in the original, but is not in the paraphrase.
- 2) What words or phrases are exactly the same in the original and the paraphrase? Circle them in both versions.
- 3) What words and phrases do you see that have similar meaning, but are written differently in each version? Underline them in each version.

### Sample No. 1

From the article:

David Perry, author of "Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters," said a key to successful job hunting via LinkedIn is to create a profile that will be interesting to potential employers and other job contacts looking for you.

"A lot of people just list their accomplishments. That's being one-dimensional, and no one hires one-dimensional individuals. What you need to do is show in your profile what you're really passionate about," Perry said. He recommends looking at a number of LinkedIn profiles to find a compelling style.

Paraphrase:

A job search professional suggests that job seekers create a profile that not only lists experience, but also describes the person multi-dimensionally.

Notes on Paraphrase: ↑

This paraphrase is taken from two paragraphs. But if you look closely, you will see that the original paragraphs are actually related to each other. This is a common structure. The author will write an idea, and then follow it with a quotation that supports it or explains it in more detail. Our paraphrase does not need this extra detail.

Also, take note that the name "David Perry" was not used. Rather, his job, "job search professional" was used. Also, "job hunters / job hunting" (those who are looking for a job) was changed to "job seekers." The word "accomplishments" was changed to "experience." Since the advice is to have multi-dimensions (more than one aspect) to your profile, the phrase "one-dimensional" was changed to multi-dimensionally. Also note that the word "profile" was not changed since it is really the best word to use.

## Sample No. 2

### From the article:

How do you get started? At both sites ([facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)), the first thing you do after signing up via the home page is set up a profile (think mini-résumé). The next step is to **search** for **people you know who use the site** and invite them to become your online friends.

The result: a network. The other friends of your online friends can become valuable **contacts**. For example, if you are applying for a job at a company where one of your former co-workers knows an employee, that person could give you background information on the firm and possibly an in.

### Paraphrase:

*You can create profiles at [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com), **locate people you know who are there**, and then use them as **contacts to help you job search**.*

### Notes on Paraphrase: ↑

This section describes a multi-step process to help you set up a profile page on one of these sites. But we don't need to give the exact details of every step in our summary. Only the basics are necessary.

Also, notice that, in the original, the author follows the final step with an example. This is used here much like the quotation is used in the first section we paraphrased. The author adds it to give us more detail about the step he just described. Since details are not important to us, we can omit it.

\*Note the phrases and words that have been paraphrased; they are in bold and in matching colors above.

## **Part 8: Write Your Own!**

Create concise paraphrases of the article sections below. Feel free to work alone, with a partner or in a small group.

### **From the article:**

Gilmer's husband, a software engineer, had applied for a job but had heard nothing after three weeks. Gilmer found a Facebook contact who knew someone who knew the chief technology officer of the unresponsive company.

"I sent my connection a message asking if he would check with his connection to see if my husband's résumé was in consideration," she said.

Quickly, she got a message back that the company could not find her husband's résumé but that the contact's contact was willing to send it directly to the chief technology officer.

Within a couple of days, her husband had a phone interview. Within two weeks, he had a job offer. He took it.

### **Your Paraphrase:**

### **From the article:**

He said you can sharply increase your visibility on LinkedIn and Facebook by opening a WordPress blog on both sites. The blog is an excellent way to show employers that you're up on your field. When you blog, your profile on that networking site gets updated.

He noted that recruiters are less likely to go directly to LinkedIn or Facebook than to search for your name on the Internet. The blog will appear high up in the list of a Google search of your name.

### **Your Paraphrase:**

These sections are taken from previous articles we have already read:

### **From the article:**

Electronic prescribing helps minimize errors because the computer automatically checks a patient's record and alerts a doctor to potential trouble.

"This definitely improves quality and safety," said Benesh, who began e-prescribing as part of a pilot project with CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield.

### **Your Paraphrase:**

**From the article:**

"When we talk to clinicians across the country, the key barrier to getting to electronic prescribing is financing," said Janet Marchibroda, chief executive officer of the eHealth Initiative. Some Web-based systems, including the DrFirst portal used by Benesh, are free. But others -- especially those that combine e-prescribing with full electronic medical records -- can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

**Your Paraphrase:**

**From the article:**

In all, what seems like a fairly simple and straightforward task is in truth hard and messy.

"It's a bit like making sausage," said Christopher J.L. Murray, a physician and epidemiologist who heads the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

"As soon as you start to explore how surveys are made," he said, "you begin to see how difficult it is to get consistent information at the population level over time."

**Your Paraphrase:**

**More practice with paraphrasing:** pick the best replacement word / phrase for those underlined. In some cases more than one of the words/phrases in **bold** letters would be okay; however, one choice would be more appropriate in an academic summary.

**Enthusiasm in Fairfax for Grade Policy Change**  
**By Michael Alison Chandler, *The Washington Post***

Sydney Sampson, 16, was getting ready for school at 5:30 a.m. yesterday when her father told her that the Fairfax County School Board had voted to abandon (**continue to use / stop using**) the tough grading policy that thousands of parents and students had rallied against.

"I started doing a little happy dance around my room," the Madison High School sophomore said.

Sydney, who gets mostly A's and takes two Advanced Placement courses, said the school system's current (**new / present**) grading scale does not show what Fairfax students "are capable of." She hopes the new policy will better showcase (**illustrate / show off**) her academic achievements when she applies for college. Her dream since age 4 has been to go to the University of Virginia, she said.

Her enthusiasm (**happiness / interest**) for the change in policy was shared around the county. Students and parents have been lobbying (**hoping / pushing**) for years for the change, citing intense (**strong / painful**) competition for spots at select colleges. On Thursday night, the board relented (**conceded / got angry**).

**Few Doctors Sign Off on Online Prescribing**  
**By Ceci Connolly, *The Washington Post***

Samuel Benesh, an internist who practices in Owings Mills, Md., tossed (**trashed / threw out**) his prescription pad nearly three years ago, and he hasn't missed it since.

Benesh is among a small group of physicians nationwide using technology to transmit prescription orders from a computer to the pharmacy. In an effort to nudge (**push / shove / direct**) more physicians in that direction, the federal government will begin offering bonuses in January to Medicare physicians who write electronic prescriptions.

Patients say the system, known as "e-prescribing," is much more convenient. More important, it offers the hope of sharply reducing dangerous and costly medication errors (**mistakes / blunders**).

**"More and More, Schools Got Game"**  
**By Michael Alison Chandler, *The Washington Post***

The Federation of American Scientists is promoting (**endorsing / selling**) educational gaming as a way to inspire a new generation of scientists. It has developed (**dreamed up / created**) two games, including Immune Attack, in which players fly through blood vessels attacking fierce bacterial invaders. The free game, which has been tried out (**put to use, attempted**) at McKinley Technology High School in the District, has been downloaded from the federation's Web site 6,000 times since April.

**\*\*What other words or phrases could replace the underlined words above?**



## Part 2: Vocabulary

All of the words below appear in the article we are going to read. Match the word on the left with its definition on the right. Before using a dictionary or asking a neighbor, first try to find the meaning by looking at the word in context. The words are underlined in the article.

- |                     |                                            |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. Abandon ____     | a. Worry                                   |
| 2. Rally ____       | b. To show off                             |
| 3. Sophomore ____   | c. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> year in high school |
| 4. Showcase ____    | d. To give up                              |
| 5. Lobby ____       | e. To compete for                          |
| 6. Relent ____      | f. Without disagreement                    |
| 7. Vie ____         | g. To promote a cause                      |
| 8. Unanimous ____   | h. To give in                              |
| 9. Anxiety ____     | i. Thinking positively                     |
| 10. Optimistic ____ | j. To assemble together                    |

## Part 3: Active Reading

Next, read the article two times. The first time, try to read it very quickly so that you get the general idea. Then, read it very closely so that you understand it fully. After this, answer the questions that come after the article.

\*As you read, do the following:

- 1) Draw a star next to any information that you find particularly interesting.
- 2) Draw a question mark next to any information that you do not understand.
- 3) Circle any new words you find.

When you are finished, compare your markings with your groupmates.

*Good luck!*

Enthusiasm in Fairfax for Grade Policy Change  
By Michael Alison Chandler. *The Washington Post*

Sydney Sampson, 16, was getting ready for school at 5:30 a.m. yesterday when her father told her that the Fairfax County School Board had voted to abandon the tough grading policy that thousands of parents and students had rallied against.

"I started doing a little happy dance around my room," the Madison High School sophomore said.

Sydney, who gets mostly A's and takes two Advanced Placement courses, said the school system's current grading scale does not show what Fairfax students "are capable of." She hopes the new policy will better showcase her academic achievements when she applies for college. Her dream since age 4 has been to go to the University of Virginia, she said.

Her enthusiasm for the change in policy was shared around the county. Students and parents have been lobbying for years for the change, citing intense competition for spots at select colleges. On Thursday night, the board relented.

The decades-old policy set the bar for earning an A at 94 and the bar for passing at 64. Most school systems use what is called a 10-point scale, under which scores between 90 and 100 earn an A. At those schools, 60 often is a passing score.

Many districts also add points to grade-point averages for students who take college-level or honors courses. Thousands of Fairfax parents and students have maintained that a more commonly used, and more generous, grading policy would help seniors who are vying for college admissions and scholarships.

"The depth of the concern was tremendous," said School Board member Jane K. Strauss (Dranesville).

The board's unanimous vote in favor of the more common system acknowledged the anxiety, as well as the fact that today's students are taking tougher classes and attending college in greater numbers, Strauss said. But she cautioned parents about being overly optimistic about what the change will bring.

A school system report showed that the average student's GPA would rise by about a quarter-point with the new policy.

Megan McLaughlin, co-founder of Fairgrade, a parent group formed last winter to lobby for the change, said that although most parents have a realistic view, the increase could still help.

Thursday's vote did make some things clear: There will be a new grading system in place by September, and it will be based on a 10-point scale, which means that 90 to 100 percent will result in an A. The scale also will include pluses and minuses.

Many students would like the changes to be made as soon as possible. Throughout the day at Madison High, the grading scale was the "number one" topic of conversation, Sydney said.

"Kids were very excited," she said, and some were hoping the new scale would be in place before the next round of midterm exams. "We can dream," she said.

**Part 4: Comprehension Questions**

Answer these questions after you have read the article two times. You may work alone or with your groupmates.

- 1) Why was the old grading system in Fairfax so unpopular?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) When will the new grading system go into effect?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) How will the change affect the average Fairfax County student's GPA?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) How did the change in school system policy come about?

**Part 5: Writing the Main Idea**

Now, can you find the main idea? Underline the sentence that you think explains the article's main idea best.

Write the main idea below **in your own words**. Don't forget to start with an introductory phrase that includes the title of the article and the author's name! Work alone, and then share your main idea sentence with your groupmates.

*\*Hint: Don't look at the article while you write! This will help you to use your own words.*

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## Part 6: What is an Outline?

An outline is a list of short paraphrases which describe all of a text's most important details. It also contains the text's main idea. We use our outline to write a summary.

Look back at the article, "It's All about Who You Know -- and Who They Know." From Lesson 3 Here is what an outline of this article might look like:

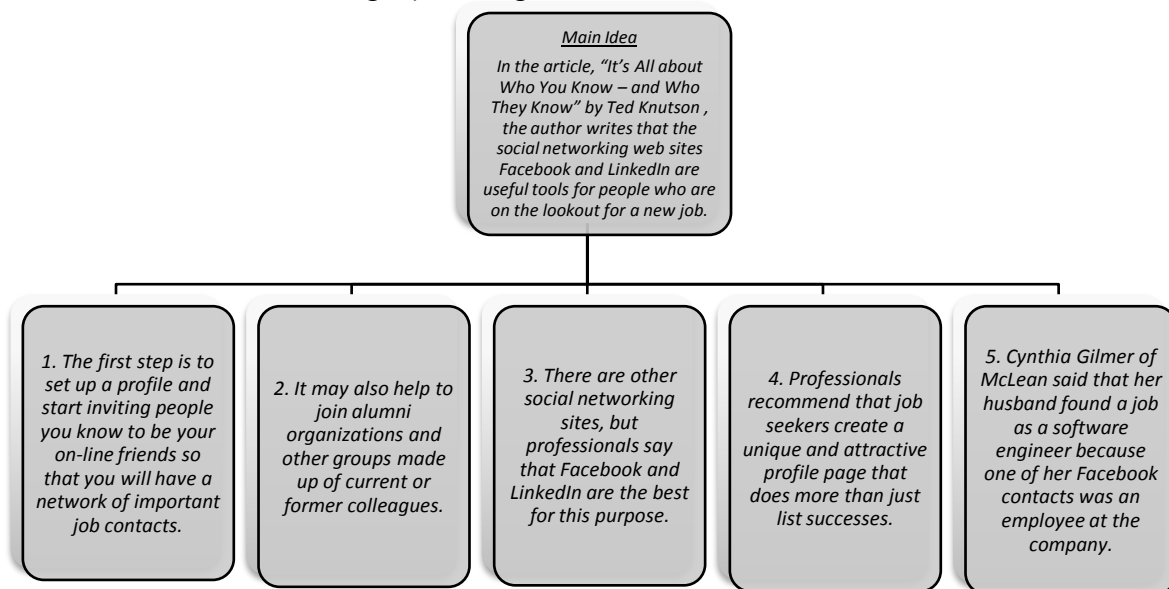
### Main Idea

*In the article, "It's All about Who You Know – and Who They Know" by Ted Knutson , the author writes that the social networking web sites Facebook and LinkedIn are useful tools for people who are on the lookout for a new job.*

### Important Details

- 1. The first step is to set up a profile and start inviting people you know to be your on-line friends so that you will have a network of important job contacts.*
- 2. It may also help to join alumni organizations and other groups made up of current or former colleagues.*
- 3. There are other social networking sites, but professionals say that Facebook and LinkedIn are the best for this purpose.*
- 4. Professionals recommend that job seekers create a unique and attractive profile page that does more than just list successes.*
- 5. Cynthia Gilmer of McLean said that her husband found a job as a software engineer because one of her Facebook contacts was an employee at the company and was able to forward his resume directly to the chief technology officer.*


You can also draw it as a graphic organizer:



Notice how the main points are basically paraphrases of different sections from the article. Also, notice how some details that are in the article are not included in the outline.

### Part 7: Find the Sections of an Article

Look at this same article and draw [brackets] around the main idea and each of the five sections where these important details were taken from. The first one (the main idea) should look like this:

*Main Idea*  { In job hunting, networking is the name of the game.  
And it's also the name of the game at Facebook and  
LinkedIn, two of the most popular social-networking Web sites.  
These free sites provide job hunters powerful tools for  
connecting with current and long-lost friends or colleagues,  
strangers in positions to help a job hunt, and employers and  
recruiters combing the Web for workers. }

### Part 9: Create Your Own Outline!

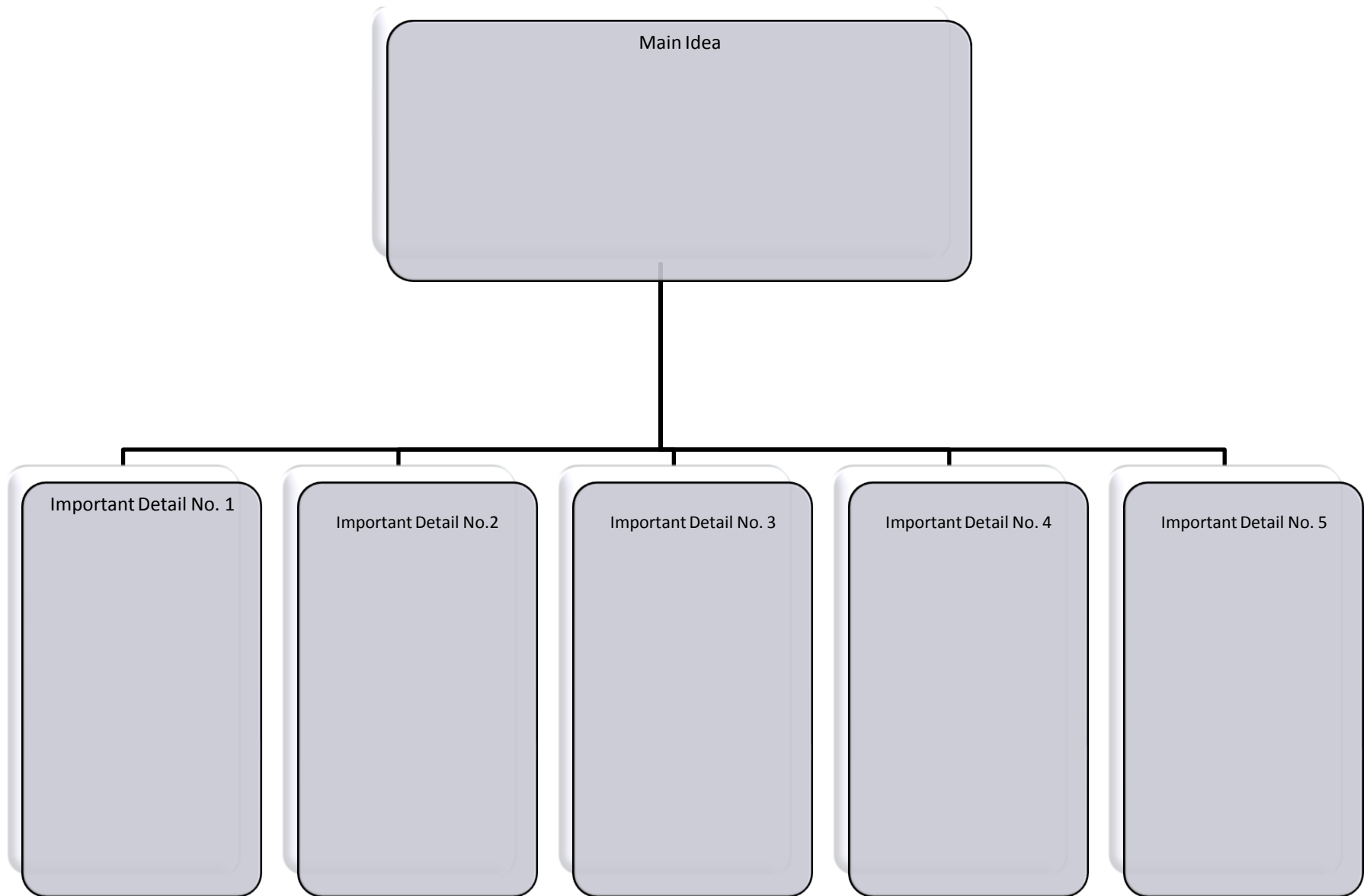
Now, look over "Enthusiasm in Fairfax for Grade Policy Change" again and see if you can find the article's different sections. Draw brackets around the main idea and each section that you find.

*Hint:* You can tell when one section ends and another begins by when the author moves from one detail to another. Notice how between sections two and three of the sample outline, the author **stops** writing about joining different groups and **starts** writing about the benefits of Facebook and LinkedIn. Watch for changes like this!

Also, a new section always begins with a new paragraph, but a new paragraph does not always start a new section!

Once you finish, use the graphic organizer on the next page to draw your outline. There are boxes for the main idea and five important details.

Outline of "Enthusiasm in Fairfax for Grade Policy Change"



## **Chapter 7: Working with Verbs**

Newspaper article: "ESOL Students in Md., Va. Leaping Ahead of U.S. Peers"

### **Part 1: Generating Background Knowledge**

In this activity, you will read a newspaper article and practice using verb tense for a summary of it. First, however, alone or in your group, answer the following questions related to the article's topic. Write your answers below each question.

- 1) What do you know about ESOL programs at local elementary schools? Do you know any children in such programs?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How do you think young children who are immigrants benefit from taking ESOL classes at their elementary school?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Can you think of a reason why schools in our area prepare ESOL students better than in most other parts of the country?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What do you think happens to immigrant children who do not take ESOL classes?

## Part 2: Vocabulary

All of the words below appear in the article we are going to read. Match the word on the left with its definition on the right. Before using a dictionary or asking a neighbor, first try to find the meaning by looking at the word in context. The words are underlined> in the article.

- |                     |                                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Accolades ____   | a. Space between two things        |
| 2. Gaps ____        | b. Praise                          |
| 3. Designated ____  | c. Something that is productive    |
| 4. Proficiency ____ | d. Knowledge or skills             |
| 5. Powerhouse ____  | e. To decrease in size or number   |
| 6. Affluent ____    | f. Someone with a similar function |
| 7. Counterpart ____ | g. Success                         |
| 8. Achievement ____ | h. Very strict or harsh            |
| 9. Dwindle ____     | i. Rich                            |
| 10. Rigorous ____   | j. Having a formal description     |

## Part 3: Active Reading

Next, read the article two times. The first time, try to read it very quickly so that you get the general idea. Then, read it very closely so that you understand it fully. After this, answer the questions that come after the article.

\*As you read, do the following:

- 1) Draw a star next to any information that you find particularly interesting.
- 2) Draw a question mark next to any information that you do not understand.
- 3) Circle any new words you find.

When you are finished, compare your markings with your groupmates.

*Good luck!*

ESOL Students in Md., Va. Leaping Ahead of U.S. Peers  
By Daniel de Vise, The Washington Post

English language learners have become star pupils in the Washington region, drawing accolades for top-performing schools that serve immigrant communities and showing standout results on state reading tests and national rankings.

From 2003 to 2008, gaps in the pass rates between English learners -- pupils designated as having limited English proficiency -- and other students narrowed by half on Maryland and Virginia state tests. The latest National Assessment of Educational Progress ranked Virginia's English learners first in the nation for fourth-grade reading and Maryland's fifth.

In January, the trade publication Education Week reported that achievement gaps in the reading for students of limited English proficiency were smaller in Maryland and Virginia than in most other states. According to D.C. data, English learners in the District's public schools perform at about the citywide average in reading, which is low but climbing.

The success of English learners in the region is partly a matter of where many of them live: Montgomery and Fairfax counties, achievement powerhouses that have trained their formidable resources on burgeoning populations of immigrant students. Montgomery has more than 17,000 such students, Fairfax about 34,000.

It's significant, too, that English learners in Maryland and Virginia tend to come from families that are more affluent and better educated than their counterparts in other states. But education leaders say progress is being made across income levels and county lines, and among students of many different native tongues.

"These kids can learn, and they can learn at high rates, and both systems have shown that," said Montgomery Superintendent Jerry D. Weast.

At the Silver Spring school, the effort to close the gap begins before English learners reach kindergarten. The school, with 432 students, offers pre-kindergarten to 60 students, most of limited English ability.

Last year, two local schools in which a majority of students are English learners won national and state awards. Highland Elementary School in Silver Spring received a Maryland Blue Ribbon and Graham Road Elementary School in the Falls Church area a National Blue Ribbon for achievement.

Statewide, the share of Maryland students with limited English proficiency who passed reading tests rose from 18 percent in 2003 to 65 percent in 2008, according to results for the Maryland School Assessments in grades 3 to 8 and a related high school test. The achievement gap for English learners dwindled from 45 percentage points to 18 points.

English learners in local schools typically get structured, rigorous English lessons for about an hour a day, learning the vocabulary of academic subjects rather than conversational skills. They spend the rest of the day in regular classrooms, studying the same content as their classmates, with help from the classroom teacher and from trained ESOL teachers. Over time, English lessons become fewer, and students eventually spend all of their time in regular classrooms.

**Part 4: Comprehension Questions**

Answer these questions after you have read the article two times. You may work alone or with your groupmates.

- 1) What has happened to testing achievement gaps in Maryland and Virginia ESOL students?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Why do Maryland and Virginia ESOL students perform so well? Give two possible reasons.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Describe the average day of an ESOL student in local schools.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What is Silver Spring School's strategy in teaching ESOL students?

**Part 5: Writing the Main Idea**

Now, can you find the main idea? Underline the sentence that you think explains the article's main idea best.

Write the main idea below **in your own words**. Don't forget to start with an introductory phrase that includes the title of the article and the author's name! Work alone, and then share your main idea sentence with your groupmates.

*\*Hint: Don't look at the article while you write! This will help you to use your own words.*

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**Part 6: Write an Outline**

Below, write an outline or draw a word map of this article (Use the back of this page if you like). Don't forget to draw brackets around the different sections in the article. Feel free to look back at the previous lesson for help. Remember to keep your main points brief. Don't worry about writing complete sentences.

**Main Idea:**

**Supporting Details:**

### **Part 7: What Verb Tense Do I Use?**

Imagine you are the journalist who wrote this article. You are now sitting at your computer and writing what will become the article the class just finished reading. How do you know what verb tense to use? You can ask yourself these three questions:

- 1) What has already happened?**
- 2) What is happening now or is true today?**
- 3) What is going to happen next?**

Alone or in your group, decide where above you would use the following verb tenses. Write a number (1, 2 or 3) next to each. Be ready to explain your answer.

*Present Tense*

*Past Tense*

*Present Perfect Tense*

*Present Continuous Tense*

*Past Continuous Tense*

*Future Tense*

When you write your summary, you are putting yourself in the same place as the journalist who is writing the article. In other words, what is past, present and future for the journalist is also past, present and future for you.

This means you should not change the verb tense that is used in the original. Easy!

Now, look again at the article. Most sections in a newspaper article have a primary verb tense. This makes sense, because sections tend to focus on specific events which take place at specific times. Next to each paragraph, write the name for the verb tenses the author uses.

What did you find? Compare your answers with your groupmates.

Next, look at your outline. As you did with the article, decide which verb tenses you will need to use when you write your summary. You may need to refer back to the article to make sure. Next to each item in your outline or word map, write the verb tense or tenses you will use.

*\*Hint:* Any time you write that the author writes, says, explains, etc. in your summary (like we do in our main idea sentence), you should always use present tense. Even though the author wrote the article in the past, we always act as if the article is brand new when we summarize it.

## **Chapter 8: In-class Writing**

You know by now that writing a summary is a lot of work. It takes time to read an article, understand it completely and then turn it into a concise and coherent summary that is relatively free of grammatical errors.

For most of your assignments, you have several days, sometimes more than a week, to plan and revise your summary. But in this class (and in many others) your teacher will ask you to write a summary during class.

Writing an in-class summary is very different from writing a revised summary. You have a limited amount of time (usually only one hour) to complete every step from start to finish! Before you panic, consider the following:

- 1) Your teacher knows that you have less time and that your work on an in-class summary will not be as good as your work on a revised summary.

and

- 2) There are steps you can take during an in-class summary that will help you to take better advantage of the time that you have.

Why do teachers require you to write in-class summaries? First of all, it is the best way for your teacher to make sure that the students are doing all of their own work. But it is also something that you may be required to do in non-ESL classes, and having the practice will help you to be more successful.

In this lesson, you will learn how approach the writing of an in-class summary and you will learn skills that you can apply any time you have to do a timed writing for your teacher.

Ready? Let's start!

### Part 1: Make a Plan of Attack

The most important thing to do when writing an in-class summary is something you actually do before class starts. We'll call this your **plan of attack**. This means that you should look at every step in the process of writing a summary and assign yourself a certain amount of time for each. Then, while you write, you pay very close attention to the clock (or wear a watch!).

Here are the steps you will need to complete, but they are **out of order**. Alone or with you groupmates, put them in the right order by writing a number next to each.

Edit and proofread \_\_\_\_

Find the main idea \_\_\_\_

Write an outline \_\_\_\_

Divide the article into sections \_\_\_\_

Read the article \_\_\_\_

Write the summary \_\_\_\_

Now that you know the steps, you need to decide how much time you want to spend on each. Remember that everyone is different. For example, you may read a little bit slower than your classmate, but you may also be a little bit more confident about language. This means that you can decide to spend more time reading, but less time proofreading than the other student. This is OK!

Below, write each step in the process in the correct order. Then, after each, write the number of minutes you want to spend on that step. Use a pencil! Your total should be 60 minutes.

### Plan of Attack

Step 1:

Time: \_\_\_\_ minutes

Step 4:

Time: \_\_\_\_ minutes

Step 2:

Time: \_\_\_\_ minutes

Step 5:

Time: \_\_\_\_ minutes

Step 3:

Time: \_\_\_\_ minutes

Step 6:

Time: \_\_\_\_ minutes

**TOTAL: 60 minutes**

## Part 2: Other Tips

In addition to writing a plan of attack ahead of time, there are several other simple things you can do to increase your chances of writing a passing summary. For example:

1) Bring two dictionaries

In addition to using an up-to-date American English monolingual dictionary, you should also bring your favorite bilingual dictionary. This is helpful because it may be faster for you to read a translation than an entire definition. Also, when writing your summary, you may think of a word in your native language which you cannot remember in English.

2) Practice!

It is true that many students are too busy to do extra work, but it is often those students who find the time to do extra work who succeed the most. In other words, it is a good idea to practice! For example, you know that our articles come from *The Washington Post* newspaper. It may be helpful to look for similar articles and practice the skills of summarizing on your own.

3) Get some sleep

It may seem obvious, but many students don't remember to get a good night's sleep the day before a big test. If you are well rested, you will do better work. It is as simple as that!

4) Don't skip meals

Another one that goes without saying. Eat well on the day of the test and try to stay away from fatty foods that make you want to take a nap.

5) Relax!

Remember that all you can do is your best. Your teacher knows this. You are here to learn, not necessarily to get good grades. If you treat every assignment (even those on which you don't perform as well as you hoped) as a learning experience, you will always benefit from them.

**What advice do you have?** Below, write one or two things you do to help you perform better when you have a test or an in-class writing. Choose strategies that are not in the list above. After you have written them, share them with your groupmates.

### Part 3: Practice Planning an In-class Summary

Below is a newspaper article very similar to the kind you will be expected to summarize in class. Using your **plan of attack**, complete a practice in-class summary. Don't forget to time yourself!

Study: Triathlons can pose deadly heart risks  
By Marilyn Marchione

ORLANDO, Fla. -- Warning to weekend warriors: Swim-bike-run triathlons pose at least twice the risk of sudden death as marathons do, the first study of these competitions has found.

The risk is mostly from heart problems during the swimming part. And while that risk is low - about 15 out of a million participants - it's not inconsequential, the study's author says.

Triathlons are soaring in popularity, especially as charity fundraisers. They are drawing many people who are not used to such demanding exercise. Each year, about 1,000 of these events are held and several hundred thousand Americans try one.

"It's something someone just signs up to do," often without a medical checkup to rule out heart problems, said Dr. Kevin Harris, a cardiologist at the Minneapolis Heart Institute at Abbott Northwestern Hospital.

He led the study and presented results Saturday at an American College of Cardiology conference in Florida. Statistics show that for every million participants in these 26.2-mile running races, there will be four to eight deaths.

The rate for triathletes is far higher - 15 out of a million, the new study shows. Almost all occurred during the swim portion, usually the first event.

Cold water constricts blood vessels, making the heart work harder and aggravating any pre-existing problems. It also can trigger an irregular heartbeat. On top of this temperature shock is the stress of competition.

Swimmers can't easily signal for help or slow down to rest during swimming as they can in the biking or running parts of a triathlon, said Harris. Rescuers may have trouble spotting someone in danger in a crowd of competitors in the lakes, rivers and oceans where these events typically are held, he added.

For the study, researchers used records on 922,810 triathletes competing in 2,846 USA Triathlon-sanctioned events between January 2006 and September 2008.

Of the 14 deaths identified, 13 occurred during swimming; the other was a bike crash. Autopsies on six of the victims showed that four had underlying heart problems. Two others had normal-looking hearts, but they may have suffered a fatal heart rhythm problem, Harris said.

Fundraising triathlons have enticed many runners to try to expand into areas like swimming, which they may not have learned to do very efficiently, to benefit particular charities.

## Appendix: Worksheets and Rubrics

**Newspaper Article Summary Evaluation**  
**ESL 006**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary Grade (circle one):**     **S**     **R**

Note: A student needs to receive a rating of Pass in each category to receive a grade of Pass on the summary.

✓ = satisfactory    N = needs work

**Part 1: Language    Section Grade: S   R**

- \_\_\_ Verb tense is mostly consistent
- \_\_\_ Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are acceptable
- \_\_\_ Mistakes in grammar do not generally interfere with the summary's readability

**Part 2: Structure/Organization    Section Grade: S   R**

- \_\_\_ First sentence contains the title of the article and the author's name
- \_\_\_ First sentence contains the article's main idea
- \_\_\_ Written in one paragraph
- \_\_\_ Roughly 10-25 percent the length of the original article

**Part 3: Content    Section Grade: S   R**

- \_\_\_ Unnecessary details are omitted
- \_\_\_ Necessary details are included
- \_\_\_ Paraphrases are skillfully constructed
- \_\_\_ Contains little to no distortion of information
- \_\_\_ Contains no intrusions of the student's opinion
- \_\_\_ Is written in the student's own words

**Part 4: Overall    Section Grade: S   R**

- \_\_\_ Would someone who has not read the article understand this summary?
- \_\_\_ Does the summary suggest that the author has read and fully understood the major themes of the chapter (or section)?



