



## 5.1

## Writing a summary

In this activity, students summarise information from three different sources on the same topic. This will help them with more complex activities they will encounter later on, such as writing an abstract.

**Outcomes**

Students will be able to:

- locate and use three sources of information about a topic
- identify the key points covered in their sources
- write a summary based on their research.

**Time required**

Allow 60 minutes plus homework (the research activity could also be set for homework, but some lesson time would be needed to brief the students).

**Outline of the activity**

Management of the task depends on whether students are looking at the same topic (e.g. catalytic converters), or choosing their own. This outline assumes the former, but can easily be adapted.

- 1 Explain that the main purpose of the activity is to practise writing summaries.
- 2 Outline the topic that students are going to research in this activity.
- 3 Tell the students that they need to write a list of questions they would like to find out about. You could issue the briefing sheet to help them with this task. This should be done on an individual basis.
- 4 Give the students a few minutes to think about which sources of information they are going to use. Tell them to provide specific information about each source, saying 'the Internet' is not enough.
- 5 Explain briefly what you expect from the students in terms of their summary. See briefing sheet 2, issued to assist students with this task.
- 6 Students now need to carry out their research - this could be done in class time, or it could be set

as homework. Ensure that students have access to required resources such as the Internet, library and textbooks.

7 Students could write their summaries in class if time allows, but it is probably more appropriate to be set as homework.

8 If time allows, you might organise peer assessment of the summaries, or you may mark them yourself.

**Tips and strategies**

Do this activity after activity 3.5 'Making sense of text: representing it your way' where students learned about different ways of representing text.

If you specify the topic yourself and you wish to steer the students in a particular direction to suit your teaching, you could select one resource (e.g. an article or textbook entry) to get students started.

If some students find coming up with questions difficult, you could start a brief discussion so that students can share some ideas first.

Students should not get too carried away - they need to write a summary, not a review. You may choose to allow them to use more than three sources, but it would probably be inappropriate to use more than five.

Encourage students to explore using document templates. These can become more sophisticated as they learn about additional features.



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### Slides

#### The format of your summary

**Length:** 1 page of A4 (no more than 500 words in total)

**Font:** Times New Roman throughout

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Your name and institution (12 point font)

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