

Central Ideas and Summaries: Focused Practice

Find the whole-passage point

Read or listen to this invented passage. You will return to it during these practice tasks; those later responses are familiar-text practice.

Panels That Could Be Borrowed

The fictional Elm Workshop lent display panels to student clubs. Each panel had a smooth side for drawings and a pocket for a title card. Clubs first borrowed panels by leaving a note on the workshop desk. Sometimes two clubs expected to use the same panel on the same day. The workshop tried a shared booking sheet. A club wrote its name, the number of panels and the day it would return them. A helper checked the sheet before confirming a loan. During the next month, no confirmed loans overlapped. However, two clubs returned their panels after the promised day, so the next borrowers had to wait. The workshop kept the booking sheet and added a return reminder. The sheet had made planned loans clearer, but it had not made every panel come back on time.

A topic names what a passage is about. A central idea states an important point developed across it. A true detail may be too narrow to serve as the whole-passage point.

- “Panel loans”
- “Each panel had a smooth side.”
- “A booking sheet made planned panel loans clearer, but it did not prevent every late return.”

Classify the three statements as a topic, a narrow detail and a whole-passage point. Explain how the point fits both the earlier problem and the later result.

Write your own complete-sentence point. Keep the remaining problem visible.

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Choose and combine details

Use Panels That Could Be Borrowed from the preceding page. Read these accurate details.

- The panels had a smooth side for drawings.
- Two clubs sometimes expected the same panel on the same day.
- A club recorded its name, number of panels and return day; a helper checked the booking sheet.
- No confirmed loans overlapped during the next month.
- Two late returns still made the next borrowers wait.

Choose details that best explain the whole-passage point. Identify one accurate detail you could omit from a short summary and explain why.

A summary combines important related details rather than listing everything. Keep the difference between planned loans and actual returns. You may use more than two details when that helps preserve the point.

Write a 2–3-sentence objective summary in your own words. Include the point and at least two relevant details.

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Keep the meaning accurate

Use the same panel passage. These example student responses are invented for practice.

Example one: "The excellent booking sheet solved every borrowing problem. It stopped clubs returning panels late, so nobody waited again."

Underline or name the unsupported claims. Explain what the passage actually supports, then rewrite this as an accurate 2–3-sentence summary.

Example two: "The workshop cancelled panel loans because the sheet caused two clubs to return panels late."

Which relationship is distorted? Write an accurate replacement and explain which words in the passage helped you.

Now reread your own summary from Choose and combine details. Check each claim against the passage. Keep, qualify or remove it, and explain one decision.

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Compare defensible summaries

Use the same panel passage. These two summaries are invented examples; neither is the only acceptable wording.

Summary A: “A shared booking sheet made the workshop’s planned panel loans clearer but did not ensure timely returns. Recording loan details and checking them stopped confirmed loans from overlapping, while two late returns still left borrowers waiting.”

Summary B: “The workshop changed from desk notes to a checked booking sheet after clubs expected the same panels. Confirmed loans no longer overlapped, but two late returns still caused waits, so the workshop kept the sheet and added a reminder.”

Show how each summary preserves the whole-passage point and relevant evidence. Explain one useful detail present in one summary but omitted from the other.

Write a different defensible 2–3-sentence summary. Explain one accurate detail you left out and why it was less important for this point.
