

# Functional Skills

## English

### Level 2 Reading R2a

Succinctly Summarise Information and Ideas from  
Different Sources v1.1

**Functional Skills English:**

Level 2

**Skill Standard:**

Reading R2a

**Coverage and Range:**

‘Learners should be able to summarise information to capture key details from more than one text on the same subject, or relevant contributing subjects, for a purpose.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> QCA Functional Skills guidance: amplification of the standards June 2008 QCA/08/3700

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## Summarising

In your exam you may be asked to summarise or compare passages of text from one or multiple source documents, e.g. from two different newspaper reports about the same event, from a work report and a safety journal which refer to an accident, from an article listing the DOs and DON'Ts of learning to pass your driving test, and so on.

For summaries in general and comparisons in particular, it is often useful to be able to produce an outline of a document because it can be easier to read, understand and absorb than a full and continuous text. Therefore the most fundamental aspect of summarising is to determine what crucial information to keep in, and what superfluous material to leave out.

Consequently, summaries must:

- be brief – aim for half the word count or less of the original text;
- be structured using complete sentences, correct grammar, correct punctuation and appropriate paragraphs;
- contain ALL the important points from the source texts;
- be organised so that related points are brought together;
- and be in YOUR OWN words.

A summary is NOT a collection of directly copied quotes or paraphrases of the provided source materials.

A checklist of suggested techniques can help you when summarising pieces of text:

1. Identify what the focus of the question is. This will direct you towards which points you need to put into your summary.
2. Read the source text(s) at least twice. Check any words or information you do not understand by using a dictionary.
3. Highlight/identify the key ideas/sentences in the source text(s) and perhaps list them in note form.
4. Rephrase these into your own words, being as concise as you can without losing the essential meaning of the original text.

Below are a couple of brief examples to demonstrate how summarising works.

### Example 1

#### Source (31 words)

I walked into the workshop and saw, lying on the bench in front of me, a large quantity of drills, saws, hammers, nails... indeed, all the accoutrements of the carpenter's trade.

#### Key Points

Walked into workshop. Saw tools on bench.

#### Summary (11 words)

Entering the workshop, I saw many carpentry tools on the bench.

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## Example 2

### Source (34 words)

“Good morning sir,” the young administrator said to her boss, the company’s Managing Director. “Here are the files and statistics you asked for last night about the firm which is merging with our company.”

### Key Points

Administrator greets boss. Hands over requested information about merger.

### Summary (14 words)

The administrator greeted the Managing Director and submitted the requested information concerning the merger.

## Example 3

### Source (59 words)

During the first half of this year trading conditions have been very good. Of our four sectors, three have reported improved efficiency savings of up to 15%, with sales increases taking our turnover to £3.2 million. However, many managers have reported that they are cautious with regard to future projections, this level of growth is likely to soon fall.

### Key Points

First half year good. Increased turnover. Doubtful future will be same.

### Summary (21 words)

Savings and sales are up in the majority of our sectors this year, but managers are concerned these trends won’t continue.

## Tips

- Remember that all your summaries must be concise, condensed and focussed.
- Do not include facts or descriptions that will take you away from the main point. Ask yourself: ‘If I leave this out will it alter the message?’
- If several sentences/paragraphs seem to have similar themes, you can omit the duplicates from your summary.
- Your opinions and ideas should not appear in your summary. Nor should you add additional detail or make unsubstantiated claims. Use only the material and ideas provided.
- Make full use of your vocabulary when summarising, but be conscious of why you are making a summary and who/what it is for.
- Also do not be afraid to reorder the points if you feel it would make for a better summary, and or create more than one draft which you pare down to a final version.
- When making your notes, use questioning words such as What, When, Why, Who, Where and How to help you identify the key topic points.
- In general, you can leave out repeated arguments or details plus overly detailed information, e.g. statistics.
- Lastly, when summarising long pieces of text, it is often a good idea to use headings to group your ideas together.

**Exercise 1**

Read the text below and then summarise the main points from each paragraph.



ExtraValue is a fast growing company with approximately 100 supermarkets nationwide. It is now planning to develop a number of out-of-town hypermarkets. These are very large stores on one level selling food and non-food items under one roof. Recently, the company applied for planning permission to build an ultra-modern hypermarket on the edge of the attractive village of Ravenswood, which lies on the outskirts of Mansfield next to the main road to Nottingham.

The plan is for a store of 85,000 square feet plus 37,000 square feet of warehousing and office space. There will also be a large car park and petrol station. The proposed store is described by ExtraValue as 'a paradise for shoppers.'

The village is in an area of natural beauty and, because of Newstead Abbey, it is a popular tourist attraction. It also has many other beautiful old buildings including public houses, antique shops, a manor house and a working water mill.

Objections to the hypermarket have been raised, particularly from existing shop owners. They fear that it would affect their trade and cause many of them to close. Residents too, are expressing their doubts about the scheme. An action group is being formed to represent the interests of those who have strong objections.

However, those in favour of the proposed scheme claim that the store will provide hundreds of new jobs and bring additional money and prosperity to the village.

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## Summary

### Exercise 1

1. Which of the following statements best summarises the first three paragraphs of the text?
  - a. Objections have been raised to ExtraValue's plan to build warehouses, offices and a huge hypermarket on the edge of the beautiful village of Ravenswood.
  - b. The picturesque village of Ravenswood, Nottinghamshire, a magnet for tourists attracted by its tranquil and historic setting, is to be permanently scarred if plans for a gigantic 122,000 square foot hypermarket complex by fast-growing chain ExtraValue are allowed to proceed.
  - c. ExtraValue is a fast growing company with approximately 100 supermarkets nationwide. Recently, the company applied for planning permission to build an ultra-modern hypermarket on the edge of the attractive village of Ravenswood, which lies on the outskirts of Mansfield.
  - d. With approximately 100 supermarkets nationwide, ExtraValue is planning to develop a number of out-of-town hypermarkets, one of which they hope to build on the edge of Ravenswood, which lies on the outskirts of Mansfield. The plans include a store, warehousing, office space, a large car park and petrol station.
  - e. ExtraValue plans to build warehouses, offices and a huge hypermarket on the edge of the beautiful village of Ravenswood, Nottinghamshire.
  
2. Which of the following statements best summarises paragraphs four and five of the text?
  - a. Objectors fear the hypermarket will affect existing shop trade and cause traffic problems, with an action group being formed to oppose the plans. Others, though, suggest that the store will bring new jobs and wealth.
  - b. Opponents: hypermarket will have negative consequences on local shops. Proponents: hypermarket will bring jobs and affluence.
  - c. The plans of ExtraValue are being challenged in Ravenswood in a modern-day tale of David versus Goliath. Plucky local traders and residents are fighting others who insist that jobs and wealth are on their way once planning permission for a new hypermarket is granted.
  - d. Residents and shop owners who oppose the plans have formed an action group, whilst supporters insist the hypermarket will benefit the village.
  - e. Objections to the hypermarket have been raised, and an action group is being formed to represent the interests of those who have strong objections. Others, though, claim that the store will provide hundreds of new jobs and bring additional benefits.

### Exercise 2

Read the text below and then summarise the main points from each paragraph.

## Peanut Allergy Breakthrough

A treatment for peanut allergy using peanuts themselves is within reach after a “dramatically” successful trial. Nine out of ten allergic children were gradually able to eat five peanuts a day in a study that freed them of the fear of accidentally eating nuts. NHS clinics could start using the method within a year, though experts told parents not to try the therapy at home, saying that it must be done in specialist centres.



About one per cent of children have peanut allergies, which were unknown 20 years ago. Several children die each year from anaphylactic shock after eating peanuts and thousands more live in fear of setting off an immune reaction.

Researchers in Cambridge looked at 99 children aged 7 to 16, half of whom were given a daily dose of peanut protein equivalent to a seventieth of a peanut. This doubled every two weeks until it reached 800mg, equivalent to five nuts. Although some children felt sick, 84 per cent tolerated this dose. Half could cope with ten peanuts and when the control group was later given the therapy, 91 per cent were able to eat five peanuts, researchers say in *The Lancet*.

### Summary

1. Which of the following statements best summarises paragraph two?

- a. Unknown two decades ago, around one per cent of children now have a peanut allergy, with several dying each year and thousands at risk of anaphylactic shock and other reactions.
- b. 1% of kids have peanut allergies. Unknown two decades ago. Several annual deaths. Thousands risk immune reactions.
- c. One per cent of children have peanut allergies, several die each year, and thousands more are at risk from reactions that were unknown 20 years ago.
- d. Several children die each year from anaphylactic shock after eating peanuts and thousands more live in fear. About one per cent of children have peanut allergies, which were unknown 20 years ago.
- e. If eaten, the peanut, a member of the bean family, is potentially fatal to around 1 in 100 children, although such life-threatening reactions were unknown 20 years ago.

2. Which of the following statements best summarises the entire article?

- a. A treatment for peanut allergy sufferers has been found.
- b. Peanut allergy sufferers are celebrating today after a clinical trial successfully treated 99 children with the condition.
- c. *Go bonkers for nuts* is the message from researchers today, after an NHS trial successfully cured 91 per cent of children suffering from peanut allergies.
- d. A treatment for peanut allergy sufferers, which in trials cured over 90 per cent of patients, could be available on the NHS within a year.
- e. NHS clinics could soon be offering a cure to peanut allergy sufferers, after a successful trial in which more than nine out of ten sufferers were cured of their debilitating and potentially life-threatening afflictions.

### Exercise 3

Read the texts below and then answer the question that follows.

#### No More Boar War!

Along with bears, lynxes and wolves, boars were idiotically hunted to extinction in the Middle Ages. Unlike their former predators, though, boars were haphazardly reintroduced in the 1970s in order to be a diversified source of income for farmers, and once again the quarry for bloodthirsty field sports *enthusiasts*. Like the A-Team, however, some escaped from their maximum-security stockades and returned to the Dartmoor and West Dorset undergrounds. Despite the spurious claims of some landowners that conservation is their aim, today these intelligent, doting creatures teeter on the brink of survival in small family groups, with no legal protection whatsoever.

Let's face it: *people* are the problem here, not boars. 14th century *people* were responsible for their original eradication, other *people* brought them back, and yet more *people* are now complaining about boars being, well, *boarish*.

Having caused this mess all by ourselves, we owe it to the boars to give them the same status as badgers, hares, otters and other endangered native wildlife, before we wantonly extirpate them from our countryside for a second time just to save the odd lawn from looking less than pristine.

#### Bacon Behaving Badly

Let me lay my cards on the table. Boars = bacon. And gammon, chops, sausages and steaks. Imagine, for a moment, that you're in the kitchen; a lightly-oiled griddle pan's on the hob and in it is a slab of boar.

*Savour* the sizzle.

*Sense* the succulence.

*Feel* your salivary glands begin to tingle at the thought of your teeth sinking into that first tender mouthful, and you will be half way towards a sensible attitude towards these creatures.

They're pigs. Porkers, hogs, *swine*, if you will. They dig up people's gardens, occasionally attack their dogs, spread disease and generally cause a nuisance. In culinary terms they're no different to cows or sheep or any of the other feeble-minded, four-legged frolickers which, in various pasties, pies and other assorted pastry cases, end up on our steaming plates on a daily basis.

Low in fat but high in deliciousness, by eating a wild boar you aren't depriving poor little Peppa and George of a long-lost cousin, but rather reaffirming your position at the top of the food chain. If a boar could eat you it would, thus I say we should return the favour with interest. So say no to the misty-eyed squealers and man up, tuck in and pig out!

1. In order to compare these two texts, summarise each of them below.

No More Boar War!

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Bacon Behaving Badly

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