

Four-Step Summary

What is a Four-Step Summary and why is it important?

A “Four-Step Summary” (Stanfill, 1978) is a writing strategy that helps students pull together and construct the gist of the most important information in a reading assignment. The strategy provides direction on how to synthesize and summarize several portions of text.

How can I use a Four-Step Summary with my students?

Use the form provided to help students outline the summary.

1. First, have students write what the topic of the passage is.
2. Then encourage students to write how the passage begins.
3. Next, students should write what is covered in the middle of the passage.
4. Finally, have students write how the passage ends.

Students can write a summary using the information in the outline. For example, a passage on ancient artifacts could be summarized as follows:

Topic: Artifacts of Shang China

Beginning: Archaeologists discovered ancient art that proved advanced societies lived in that time period.

Middle: Evidence of a complete writing system was found on bones that were used to make medicines.

End: Archaeologists also found pottery, bronze ornaments, and foundations of temples.

Summary: This passage describes artifacts found in Shang China. Archaeologists discovered ancient art that proved advanced societies lived in that time period. Evidence of a complex writing system was found on bones that were used to make medicines. Archaeologists also found pottery, bronze ornaments, and foundations of temples.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Four-Step Summary

Outline	Summary
Topic:	
Beginning:	
Middle:	
End:	

Name: _____ Date: _____

Four-Step Summary

Outline	Summary
Topic:	
Beginning:	
Middle:	
End:	

