

Summarising texts

8A – Give pupils structured written tasks that help them summarise main ideas

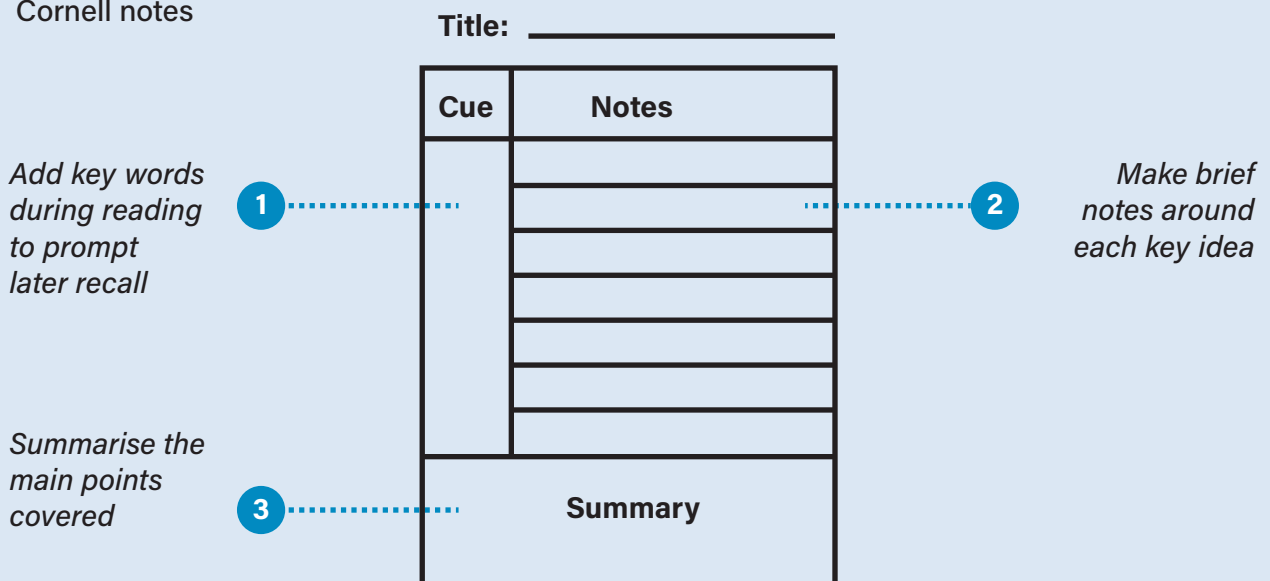
The EEF's *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report*⁵ recommends summarising as one of five impactful strategies to help develop pupils as strategic readers. Summarising encourages pupils to pick out key ideas in the text, consolidate and elaborate on their understanding, and monitor their own comprehension.

Like any reading strategy, summarising is a skill we should model, explain and de-construct to pupils, and over time encourage them to perform independently. There are a number of different ways pupils can summarise texts, all of which have their own distinct features and conventions.

1. Cornell notes

This established method of note-taking can be used for summarising texts both during and after reading. In the 'Cue' column, pupils can add key words to prompt later recall, with the 'Notes' section being used to elaborate on key concepts and ideas. Finally, the 'Summary' section can be used to bring together the most important ideas in a concise way.

Cornell notes



Reference:

⁵ EEF, *Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report*, p15.

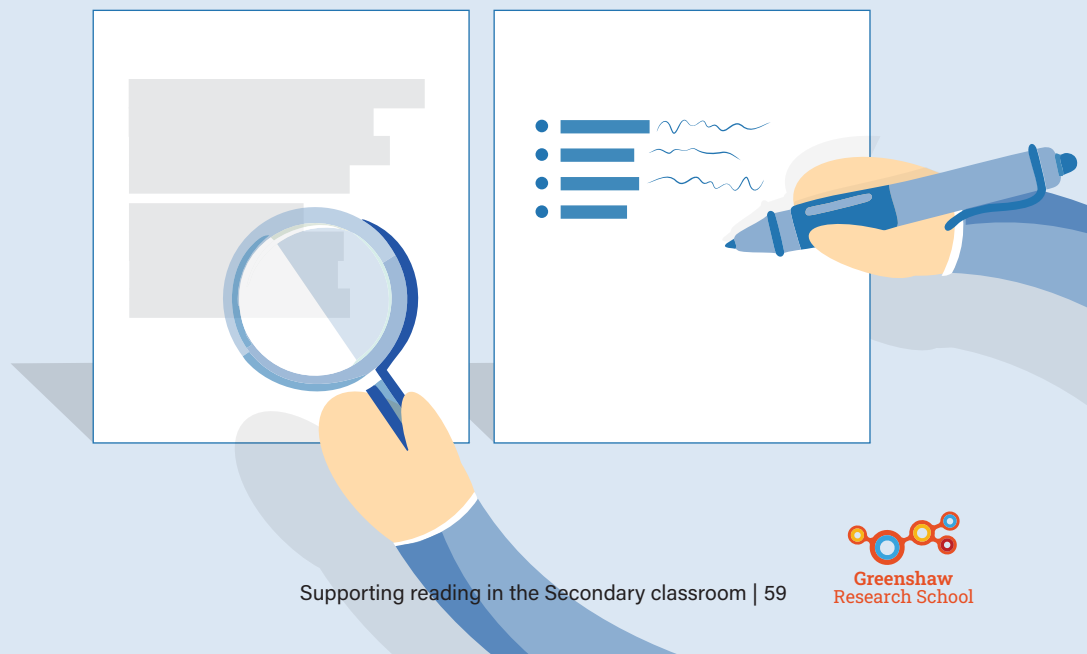
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2. Shorter summary prompts

These prompts are structured to focus pupils' attention on the most important ideas within the texts. Like with other methods, scaffolds can be gradually removed once pupils are confident with the features of this type of summary.

These prompts can take three main forms:

Sentence starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defeat in WW1 led to... ▪ It also saw the rise of... ▪ Economic crisis ensued...
Gap fills	<p>The rise of the _____ after _____ is often seen as a return to the _____ of the _____ Germany.</p>
Tables and lists	<p>Hitler controlled the people in two main ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2.



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3. Longer sentence parameters

This type of summary has a similar function in directing pupils' attention towards key ideas, using sentence starters which go together to form a summary paragraph.

The first few sentences are supported by key words and ideas that should be

included – these establish what is required of each sentence, and ensure that all pupils can begin the task successfully.

As well as encouraging comprehension and understanding of the text, this task is also teaching pupils the features and conventions of a clearly written summary. Again, over time scaffolding can be removed so that pupils summarise texts with more independence.

In 1912 there was a rise in workers standing up for their rights.

- Suffragettes smashed...
[shop windows, coal miners, national strike, minimum wage]
- Employers did not take...
[trade unions, powers, negotiated, employers, unorganised action]
- There was no job security for working people like...
- Dismissal without good references meant...
- There was no unemployment pay or benefits to help...